



## ST BARNABAS MISSION ACTION PLAN

### PROGRESS MADE and FUTURE DIRECTION

March 2015

1. The Mission Action Plan (MAP) process was launched at the APCM in April 2014, and the Church's situation and options for the future were debated at a Parish Day meeting in July. Throughout the process comments were made by individuals and groups. A summary document "Going Forward" was issued following the July meeting. A "Progress and Issues" paper was produced in February 2015 which was considered at a congregation meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> and the PCC on 11<sup>th</sup>. This paper takes into account those discussions to report on progress against the earlier agreed actions and identify what is now being planned for the future.

2. The MAP is not intended to produce a fixed programme of activity captured at a single point in time. Rather it identifies areas for consideration and development that are important to sustain and grow St Barnabas into the future. Working on these priority areas and learning from experience as initiatives are tried is, and will be, a continuing process. The important thing is that people associated with the life of the Church understand what it is trying to do and have opportunities to comment and to contribute.

### 3. Reaching Out to Families, Children and Young People.

2014 Actions (i) To gather the views of young families to see if more can be done to meet their needs.

(ii) As regards making the Family Service shorter and more attractive

(a) Explore whether such changes would be appreciated by families and

(b) See if group of volunteers can be found to assist with the preparation of the Family Services.

3.1 A survey was carried out of families, children and young people who are currently involved with the various forms of provision made for them. The outcome of the exercise was summarised at a meeting of the Children & Young People Committee as follows: *"The response had been disappointing (in terms of numbers of responses), but this was thought often to be the case for this sort of exercise. A few practical comments had been made, but generally the forms indicated that the present provision is appreciated. The opportunity has been offered, but no suggestions for significant change have been made. The new arrangements for Busybees in particular are valued."*

A specific question had been asked about the length of the Family Service, but almost all who commented were happy with the present approach.

3.2 A Family Service Group has been set up, and has worked on the services from January 2015. The COGS logo has been introduced, efforts made to better publicise the Service, and to provide content of wide appeal. The consensus is that a good start has been made, but the challenge will be to sustain the effort and attract congregations into the future.

Opinions were divided on whether to make the Service non-Eucharistic. It would obviously shorten the Service, but there were concerns that an important part of the worship would

be lost. Since there was no obvious call for change from the families themselves, no plans were made to switch to non-Eucharistic services.

3.3 For 2015 the PCC encourages the Family Service Group to be bold and take risks in trying new service forms and content. It is accepted that not all initiatives will be successful. Views from the congregation are still welcome on their experiences of the new arrangements, but it is unlikely that everybody will be comfortable with everything being organised. Since it is fundamental to the new approach that it is reaching out to all, a spirit of compromise and tolerance should prevail.

#### 4. "Friends" Scheme

This proposal to be studied in the light of the work being done on recording and analysing information on people in contact with the church (see below).

#### 5. Communications

2014 Action To review the communications practices and resources.

5.1 New volunteers are dealing successfully with the newsletter and the web site.

Opportunities will be taken to update and improve both. A St Barnabas Facebook page has been set up, and is already demonstrating that attractive and up to date information can be quickly disseminated.

5.2 The databases and records covering people in contact with the Church are being reviewed with the hope that they can be consolidated and made more useful. The aim is to have relevant information on peoples' links with the Church. That in turn should allow communications to be better targeted.

5.3 More use is to be made of email, but experience shows that inappropriate or unnecessarily copied emails produce problems rather than benefits. It is appreciated that not all congregation members have internet access, and they must still be catered for when information is being disseminated.

#### 7. Fellowship Groups

2014 Action To better publicise the activities of groups and do more to encourage membership.

The role, organisation and activities of the various groups are currently being studied. The present diversity of structure and activity is valued, but there might be scope for more consistency. There is a strong feeling that the groups should generally remain limited in number (probably no more than twelve) to encourage closer relationships. If the aim is of increasing small group membership is to be achieved it will require the creation of more groups. A key to increasing participation will be providing more information so that prospective members can better understand what group membership offers.

#### 8. Care of Church Members

2014 Action To assess the feasibility of setting up a volunteer group to undertake this important work.

An appeal has failed to produce any volunteers. Much good work is being done in an ad hoc way, much of it in the Fellowships and the Parish Centre activities. A study of "befriending" ideas has shown that there are many ways to reach out to, and include, individuals. A concern is that at present we may not always be aware when an individual's link with the Church may be failing. Experience elsewhere shows that some machinery to gather information and co-ordinate contacts is helpful. More thought will be given to looking at ways in which more robust arrangements might be established and then publicising them in the hope of attracting volunteers to help.

## 9. Ministry Team

2014 Action To plan for the reduction in the team (Elizabeth's retirement)

David Little's attachment to St Barnabas, together with training activities for lay volunteers, have helped maintain the Ministry Team capability for the time being. This situation will not be sustained in the longer term, and difficult decisions on roles and resourcing will then have to be made.

## 10. Volunteers

2014 Action To see what might be involved in doing more to specify tasks, provide training, encourage people to come forward and support them when they do.

Efforts have been made to recruit more volunteers, but the response has been limited. Experience shows repeatedly that people are willing to take on, and carry out, tasks that they feel comfortable with. There is less response to appeals to fill positions that are organisationally justified but more demanding, particularly in leadership roles. This culture of fitting jobs to the people's preferences, rather than getting people into jobs that are needed, is good for the motivation of the individuals but can mean that things that need resourcing are not done. Efforts will continue to get a balance between the needs of the Church and the preferences of individuals. The feeling of the February congregation meeting was that more needs to be done to give information on tasks that need to be carried out and positions that need to be filled.

## 11. Leadership

11.1 For the future, and as holders of current positions come to retire, it will be essential to introduce newer and younger people into leadership positions. A need that is common to several of the development requirements above is for people to take some degree of responsibility for a task. Leadership is not just about a small group at the "top" of the organisation but covers everybody who has a role in sustaining an activity e.g. Fellowship and Children's Church leaders.

11.2 More study will be given to how people can be encouraged to take positions of responsibility. Part of the answer will be making the scope and nature of the role clearer so that people understand what is called for. It has been proposed that more meetings of people in leadership roles would provide some mutual support and help identify what help may be needed. It may be some form of collective training would be helpful.

## 12. Finance

2014 Action To produce information on finances more regularly and in accessible forms.

The PCC regularly received detailed information on finances. That information is publicly available, but it is probably more than most people need. A summary statement provided to the February congregation meeting was well received. Similar summaries will be produced on a quarterly basis in future.

## 13. Overseas Church Partnership

The MAP consultation process produced a suggestion that the Parish investigate what might be involved in setting up a partnership arrangement with an overseas church. Details have been received of the way in which the Diocesan partnering link with the South African Diocese of Kimberley and Kuruman operates. The implications and commitments involved in such an arrangement will be studied and discussed.