

Visitation Report

St Andrew Enfield 18.18

Date: 27th April 2015

Fr John Hawkins on behalf of the Archdeacon of Hampstead

Thanks to Rev'd Dr Steve Griffiths, Rev'd Olive Cope the churchwardens and all those who worked hard to prepare for the Visitation. Dr Steve has been very helpful in providing full and detailed accounts in all these areas prior to the visitation which have been copied to the Archdeacon and should be read in conjunction with this report.

The grounds of the church appeared in excellent condition and the church looked tidy and loved, even though there was scaffolding around the organ pipes and with evidence of work being done. I was most grateful for a sustaining supper at the vicarage during the evening.

Appended to this report is an action grid and an appendix containing the PCC action points for the next. Actions in the grid are prioritised 1 – 3 where 1 is for immediate urgent action, 2 is a request for action in the next few months and 3 is a desirable outcome.

Meeting with the Incumbent

Rev'd Dr Steve Griffiths

Dr Steve has been in the parish 10 months and in that time has already made a huge impact on the church giving leadership in the church community as it has begun a period of re-evaluation of its ministry and mission. Dr Steve had been anxious to do this without attributing blame to those who held office in the past as he has sought to bring the parish in to greater compliance with Diocesan expectation around Safeguarding, finances, the creation of a new Mission Action Plan following a congregation wide listening exercise and issues related to stewardship of the fabric of the church. Dr Steve has been very helpful in providing full and detailed accounts in all these areas prior to the visitation which have been copied to the Archdeacon and should be read in conjunction with this report.

Dr Steve has put an incredible amount of energy into his work and this was widely praised and appreciated by everyone I spoke with. It is clear that there is an intention behind the changes, some of them painful for those who have been working in positions of leadership in the congregation for many years. The intention goes beyond the simple, but necessary, need to get the churches own house in order into the areas mentioned above, Dr Steve speaks of the need to create a language of mission and

a mission shaped church. In Dr Steve's own analysis this is a massive culture shift and one that has begun, but one that will take the church and congregation beyond the bounds of complacency and legalism into a Holy Spirit led focus for the future. Interesting examples of this arise from a recent skills audit exercise with the congregation that now not only identified much needed laity with skills in accounting and finance who were then encouraged to join the PCC but an articulated desire from a number of members in the congregation to work with children with special needs. Dr Steve has devised a structure based on 5 marks of mission by which the congregation will own and take the initiative to further the work of the church in the areas of Telling the Good News of the Kingdom; Teach and nurture disciples; Tend and care for those in need; Transform the unjust structures in society and Treasuring God's creation.

Dr Steve has been careful to bring the congregation where ever possible along with him and has now got a PCC in place that holds in tension the memory and experience of the past with reality of the present and a willingness to own a shared vision for the future. There is clearly a focus on the needs of young people, once clearly articulated by the parish in its profile and in line with the Diocese own agenda through Capital Vision 2020, and steps are being taken to ensure that needs of the elderly are not lost sight of at the same time. Dr Steve is honest in his observation that at this time much in the vision of the parish is yet to be seen but I believe, certainly in conversation with him, Rev'd Olive Cope, Churchwardens and PCC members that there is a tremendous sense of excitement and energy for that vision and the future that God will bring through this congregation. There is a willingness to trust what it will be like but as yet don't know what it looks like is how Dr Steve puts it.

It is clear that a great deal of work has been done in the first 10 months of Dr Steve's ministry at St Andrew's Financial stability is much closer, Safeguarding has been addressed, a new website has come online, new ministries have developed, every-member ministry is developing, a Mission Action Plan is in place, a major Youth & Community Project is about to be launched, 2 new full-time workers have been appointed (Youth & Community Worker and Families Chaplain), links with the school have been strengthened, fabric issues have begun to be addressed.

Dr Steve spoke about the arrangements for the retirement of Rev'd Olive Cope in December with the Bishop of London attending and the awarding of the St Mellitus medal. Her ministry has been massively appreciated by himself and the congregation over the years.

There is one issue that I think needs urgent attention and that is the main gate of the vicarage that opens on to the main road (silver street) does not close and so cannot be closed and locked at night time. This I think places the Vicar and family as some risk and needs to be attended to as a matter of urgency.

Meeting with the Assistant Clergy

Rev'd Olive Cope

Olive has lived in Enfield for over 80 years and has served the community first as a community Deaconess licenced to the LEP then as Deacon and Priest. She will be "retiring" from St Andrew's in December 2015. She has seen her role as primarily providing pastoral support for the congregation over the last three years, firstly with a year long sabbatical by the previous incumbent Mike Edge and then in

the interregnum and in the last 10 months helping people in the congregation talk through the changes brought about with appointment of the current incumbent Revd Dr Griffiths. She identified a general sense of enthusiasm for the way the parish is being led. Olive spoke of her concern about the lack of clerical staff once she has left the parish in December. We spoke of the need to raise up new readers from the congregation, the previous 4 have now all left, and the wonderful opportunities that a training curate would have with Dr Steve and the parish. We spoke about the LEP, not as strong as it once was, with a neighbourhood scheme still running that Olive set up along with the Enfield counselling service and "Little Park Luncheon Club" still going strong.

Meeting with the Churchwardens

Meeting with the Church wardens I felt I was seeing the parish in microcosm! Jackie has served for 5 years and Vicky has served 3 years with Fliss joining the team since the last APCM two weeks ago. They spoke well and seemed a supportive team and spoke of their commitment to Dr Steve and the vision of the parish, as well as being honest about feeling some of the anxiety that comes with change for themselves. They feel very supported by the congregation, especially Jackie and Vicky during both the previous incumbent's sabbatical and the interregnum. They reflected on the last three years where the congregation has had to deal with change and different clergy supporting the parish as a good preparation for the changes that are taking place now through the new vision set by Dr Steve and embraced by so many in the church. They were also very appreciative of Rev'd Olive's support through many years in the parish.

They shared their experience of the listening exercise that was very thorough and along with a more recent skills audit has in their view led to a greater ownership of the MAP than might of otherwise been the case beyond PCC.

We spoke about Enfield and the wider transformation of this London borough, bringing with it greater churn and cultural diversity. Enfield Town has had less investment from the LA than other parts of the borough, ie Meridian water. This gives the church a great opportunity to step up and engage with the social needs as is reflected in Mark 4 of the MAP, this is certainly helped by the location of the church plant and the openness of the whole plant to the public. The two new appointments reflect as desire of the Church to engage with the local community rather than simply look inwardly to their own needs.

We spoke about the possible benefits of the congregation doing the "Everybody Welcome" course by Bob Jackson that many churches have found to be truly transformative within the life of the church and how it looks at its buildings and welcome to the wider community.

We spoke about the MAB's project and how they hoped it would become part of the DNA in the parish. At the later PCC meeting the MAB project was referred to as an excellent example of the need for a legacy policy that the parish is committed to in its MAP.

The warden's were very appreciative of the contribution that Jo, Dr Steve's wife, makes to the life of the parish and look forward to her contribution to the life of the church and the community through the family chaplain post that will complement the work of the new Youth and Community worker.

There was a conversation about support for Dr Steve who works as a dynamo generating energy that others are able to draw inspiration and energy from.

We did speak about the wonderful opportunities that a Deacon would receive if one was appointed to the parish, and this was picked up at the PCC meeting later in the evening.

Meeting with the PCC (20 attended out of 21)

The results of the Quinquennial inspection have not yet been published but it is clear that there will need to be some focused work on the fabric of the Church. Currently the Organ is being rebuilt and the new boiler is to be installed shortly.

There were 20 members in addition to Rev'd Olive Cope. Approximately 35% of the PCC is new with members serving on a PCC for the first time and I think this was the first time that the new PCC had met since the APCM. I was conscious therefore to ensure that everyone spoke, and they did. I came away feeling very positive and hopeful from all that I heard when every member spoke about what excited them in their new MAP.

The Secretary has made full notes of the meeting that can be read along side this report.

I believe that Dr Steve should be commended in the way in which we has managed to keep around the same table those who have served for many years, some of whom are feeling a little anxious about the changes being brought about, who have had places in the centre of the churches life and those who sit on the edge of church life who know little about the machinery of the Church of England but who are willing to commit none the less. I am confident that Dr Steve has the ability and energy to not just keep them together but to play to their strengths and forge a confident and coherent team with which to work.

We spoke about the past, and a number of times I heard people say that maybe life had become a little comfortable over the last few years. Certainly there is still pain over the realisation of the many areas where compliance was inadequate and over the changes brought about by a more robust and realistic understanding of the finances of the parish that have resulted in change; for example the decision not to appoint at the moment a director of music. However because the PCC is a broad and representative body there were in equal measure those who saw the possibilities that change and compliance brings.

A few quotes from the meeting:

- Looking forward to strengthening and enhancing the links with the school
- A place where the people of Enfield are welcome
- looking forward to the future of working with families and young people regardless of faith
- appreciated the listening exercise
- moving out of the comfort zone encourages me, we are like a ship moving rather than staying in the dock
- focus on young people and not to loose sight of Elderly seeing a balance to all ages
- opportunity for learning and teaching

finally there was much appreciation of Dr Steve's preaching.

Three direct suggestions from myself:

1. Bob Jackson Everybody welcome course might be a useful tool for whole congregational engagement with mission in terms of use of building and welcoming those who God brings through the doors of any church
2. Promoted the Christian Studies course in the Area to develop confidence and theological literacy amongst the congregation that might lead to development of Reader ministry within the parish
3. Attendance at the Deanery Common Fund meeting by the finance committee to hear from the Archdeacon and Finance advisor for the diocese the wider story around common Fund.

The PCC although reflective of the dynamics of the congregation in terms of age, gender, economic and longevity of attendance profile does not at the moment reflect any ethnic diversity of the congregation or wider community. Dr Steve is fully aware of this.

Conclusion

I am extremely grateful to the Rev'd Dr Steve Griffiths for the detail that he supplied in advance of the visitation. It appears to me that St Andrew's is an exciting place to be part of and under his leadership St Andrew's will prove to be a blessing to Enfield. The past has been honoured and Dr Steve has been careful to honour the past ministry of the parish clergy and lay leadership at a time of needing to bring in a whole raft of essential compliance to ensure that the parish and all that it undertakes is done safely and with financial probity. The new MAP has generated a real excitement for what God is able to do through the ministry of this parish in terms of mission and begun to create an increase sense of ownership of these priorities by all members and sections of the worshipping community.

There is an honest and realistic understanding by the Vicar and his three Churchwardens of what is needed to be done and this includes investment not just in the building, the Quinquennial report had not at the time of the visitation been published but its most urgent works are known to the Churchwardens and Vicar, but also in developing a language and culture of mission so that the church is focused on the Great Commission.