



People Fully Alive Strategy Consultation

**Summary of Findings
(Draft Version 6)**

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Introduction

The survey was commissioned by Paul Evans, Diocesan Secretary at Ely. The aim of the survey is to gather responses to the People Fully Alive report published by the Diocese of Ely.

Method

The People Fully Alive Report was published in January 2015. The survey was made available to be completed, online or in print, between January 2015 and April 2015. To encourage respondents to complete the survey, clergy were responsible for organizing local meetings at which the report was presented, opportunities for discussion encouraged and feedback gathered.

Data

The survey comprised 16 questions. Questions were grouped into three categories (1) respondent and biographical data, (2) quantitative responses to the five levers for change outlined in the People Fully Alive document, and (3) qualitative responses to People Fully Alive.

Responses

The survey was completed by 681 respondents comprising clergy (19%), licensed ministers (10%) and the laity (71%). The percentage of respondents that judged each lever for change to be either important or extremely important was:

- (1) Nurturing a confident people of God (91%),
- (2) Developing lay and ordained leadership (93%),
- (3) Targeting support to key areas (88%),
- (4) Reviewing the use of our church buildings (74%), and
- (5) Reshaping the church during vacancy (52%).

The two levers evaluated to be the most important were nurturing a confident people of God (ranked either first or second by 85% of respondents) and developing lay and ordained leadership (ranked either first or second by 71% of respondents).

In the raw text data, the qualitative responses comprise more than 30,000 words. After editing the total text was reduced to: survey responses (11,145 words), emails (11,049) and children's responses (2,126).

The software, Nvivo, was used to analyse the texts and the main body of the report that follows presents a thematic analysis of the qualitative responses.

The report is presented in three parts: Context (Part I); Strategic opportunities (Part II) and additional issues for reflection when crafting the strategy (Part III). Appendix I presents the analysis of the responses from the children and Appendix II some practical suggestions for action.

Thematic Analysis of Text

The most frequently employed word clusters across all the text responses account for 12.9% of all words spoken in the text:

- (1) Church, churches, God, parish, parishes, services;
- (2) People, clergy, lay, congregation, children, young;
- (3) Need, support, needs;
- (4) Diocese, strategy/ies, change, diocesan
- (5) Community, communities.

The following sections identify dominant themes in the text responses to the survey and email correspondence.

PART I Context

1.1 Church and ministry

The responses link the People Fully Alive report to the church and ministry and endorse the view that any strategy should be fully integrated with mission.

Church, Christian, prayer, faith, Christians, ministry, Jesus, Bible, discipleship, prayers, Communion, spiritual, cathedral

- I strongly believe that the decline of the Church of England stems from the abolition of Christian education in schools and the secularization of modern society.
- Clarity about what the Church of England stands for – what makes it stand out from the other Christian denominations.
- The emphasis on fundraising for the both the church and the fabric, means there is little time to focus on enjoying being a Christian.
- Developing a better theology of a priesthood of all believers.
- Why is not our vision Matt 28:18-20 and our strategy discussion about what it means to make disciples and teach all nations to obey the commands of Jesus?
- Saving souls is more important than saving cash. It was not the practice of our predecessors to exclude or make it hard for any section of the Christian community to worship – I do not think Ely Diocese should consider setting a precedent in this respect.

- Our leaders therefore need to know God and be in an ever-deepening relationship with him. They need to have experienced his grace and be prayerfully relying on him each day.
- In relation to targeting resources, we have taken a diocesan perspective.
- We have been fortunate in enjoying the ministry of retired clergy who have settled in and around Ely and who value the opportunity to continue conducting services in an honorary assistant capacity.
- Living a Christian life, faith, listening but it needs to be exciting, interesting and relevant.
- In our view it is really good that the document starts with God and His people and recognises that it is He who grows the church, that we need people who are mature in Christ, and confident witnesses. These are absolutely essential. We strongly support an emphasis on discipleship.
- Things will work best when ministers stick to their calling to people, prayer and preaching.

1.2 Geography and location

The responses refer to the location of the church and parish and are predominantly related to rural context.

Parish, parishes, local, area, place, village(s), locally

1.2.1 Rural

- The rural church needs the expertise of those who have the big picture of what is happening across the diocese.
- Reshaping rural ministry is important.
- Valuing rural ministry even though it is small.
- We are rural, but not in the fens and that means the makeup of the parishes is very different.
- Given that a huge part of this diocese is rural I only heard the word rural mentioned once. I would have hoped that there might have been a little more than that.
- Strategies for coping with small rural churches.

- There needs to be another lever inserted at this point which deals with the need to restructure, mainly rural, multi-parish benefices into United Benefices with a single Parochial Church Council.
- Perhaps to help isolated churches the deanery could come together more for deanery days focusing on certain things such as children's work or issues in the wider world.
- Recognition of rural needs not often given and causes resentment.

1.2.2 Ely, town, Cambridge

- Diocesan focus on town, suburb and city churches as they are larger.
- However this does not mean we are any less worthy of resource than a large urban church or a community with drug problems or extensive poverty.
- I would like to see us reorganize so that our market towns are led by strategic, visionary, generous and prayerful clergy who are willing to act as centres of mission, training and change with the village communities around them.

- The distance from the centre, Ely, needs to be considered as our deanery is further west than any others and it can be a discouragement to some.

1.3 People and the congregation

The responses refer to contextual constructs relating to people and specific categories of youth, families, elderly and the disadvantaged.

People, congregation, members, congregations, ministers, minister, member, membership, volunteers, friends, folk

1.3.1 Young, schools, younger, school, youth

- We need support and ideas on how to develop strategies to interest the young people of today. Those who have had no contact through families with any church.
- Encouraging and involving children, families and young people.
- The lack of young people in the village is a problem – and we are ageing.
- Discovering people of peace in each place, town, village, road, school, organisation – people of peace can act as the very early pioneers in each neighbourhood by using their gifts of hospitality, opening their homes, welcoming young families, encouraging teenagers.
- Could resources be made available for youth workers?

- Children require groups and we all need regular teaching and discipling in a way that is not provided at the moment.
- Teenagers are more likely to return if they are not bored. But with all the other things that vie for their attention, actually having a significant slot where they are engaging with God's word for themselves and praying with one another about what it looks like to follow Jesus, is distinctive, relevant and life-changing. It is amazing how spiritually hungry young people are.
- Changing the pattern of services to encourage more young people, families and our largely-missing middle-aged generation to join us.
- At present there is no explicit concern expressed towards young people, young adults, working ecumenically, and engaging with the wider issues of the world.
- We recognize that the diocese's engagement with schools is sometimes seen as a fringe activity. We believe that the development of a diocesan strategy provides an opportunity to correct this view, to galvanize support for church schools, and church work within other schools, and to renew our vision of church schools standing at the centre of the church mission to the nation.
- Meet at different times and different places, use more lively music and make services more appealing, provide childcare when needed. Younger generations do not do clubs.

1.3.2 Mothers, families, family, parents

- To bring young families in order to encourage more to come.
- Focus extra, specialist resources on children and families, to encourage the growth of congregations.
- A more strategic and modern approach to consulting the younger element in this country.
- Communication of the Christian faith needs to be more acceptable to younger people – under forty-year olds – in the light of modern scientific discoveries and advances in technology.

- Changing the pattern of services to encourage more young people, families and our largely-missing middle-aged generation to join us.
- The families coming into our churches will also need some help and training later.
- Through strengthening our own faith and commitment to Christ we can be empowered to reach out to families
- The church, not our faith, has to fit in with young families not the other way round.

1.3.3 Older, ageing, elderly, retired, aged

- Do not neglect the needs of folk who have maintained local churches over many years and may now need a bit of support themselves.
- Older church members need to accept the world has changed and be prepared to embrace new thinking.
- Particular concern should be given to our ministry to older folk in rural areas.
- Ageing congregation and increasing struggle to find the money needed.
- There is a danger that the people of God who have worked hard for decades are being told they have failed. We live in a different world to when I first came into the Church and we must adapt or die. But those who came before us have not failed in any way. They need to be thanked for their time in the vineyard. Saying thank you is important.

- I am also conscious that the church located closest to me is ageing fast. There are not the resources, money or people to support even me and a few others coming.

1.3.4 Different, others, welcoming, homeless, consideration, caring, unchurched, deprived, disabled, poverty

- I am disappointed that there is no reference to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Implementing a policy of radical and inclusive welcome that actively seeks out groups not widely represented in our congregations.
- How to implement and make known an inclusiveness that shares communion with all, and values belonging, more than believing.
- How to welcome, accept, encourage and engage seriously with doubt, scepticism and intellectual challenges to faith.

- Slightly different aspect of the diocese's generous and visible people of Jesus Christ. This means that we reach out to people of all faiths and none in our communities because of the love Christ has for us.

PART II Strategic opportunities

The responses in sections 2.1 to 2.6 identify specific opportunities for developing the strategy for the diocese.

2.1 Community engagement

The responses endorse the view that the communities and community engagement are central the church mission and strategy.

Community, communities, group, meeting, opportunities, fellowship, opportunity

- Identifying the needs of our communities so that we are able to serve them effectively.
- Not one thing in the strategy report dealt with people – there is nothing taking into consideration of love, caring and wellbeing of members of the congregation or local community.
- The two main challenges are that the church members finding time in their busy lives for worship, fellowship and opportunity to engage with the wider community. Many in the village community see the church members as being inward looking and not relevant to their daily lives and needs.
- Lack of fellowship that makes people feel they really belong – a lot more could be done to encourage existing members of the congregation, particularly those who may not have been in the locality since birth, and to nurture them and make them feel involved.
- Welcome – improve welcome to new members of the congregation and help them to feel part of the life of the church.

- God is giving me an increasing heart for my local community and I would love to be part of an initiative there.
- Although it will be significant to us in due time, our priority now lies in reaching out to the existing community.
- Making our church more relevant to the (name of) community.
- How can we encourage the community to share? It will cost about £30,000 each for three of your churches to stand still this year. That is hard to raise from a small congregation. How do we get the community to recognise that they have a stake in what is happening?
- Are we hampered or empowered by a church in every community? We need to think about how we value our local churches – one in every old community.

2.2 Working in partnerships

The responses communicate a keen awareness of the need for working in partnership and reflect the view that this is wanting in the current structures, practices and processes.

Share/ing, together, relationship(s), partnership, participation

- Linking larger churches with smaller rural ones.
- Dissolving boundaries between denominations. People who are not churchgoers do not necessarily care about our differences. They can be impressed when we work together on social and community projects, share buildings or join in secular activities.
- Developing a strategy that involves other denominations.
- The church will not grow if we do not look outward as well.
- The stronger churches need to take seriously the sharing of their resources to help the weaker ones – too much energy is spent in the south of the diocese.
- Learning from the experiences of other churches, good and bad, of trying to meet some of the current challenges.

- Maximising exchanges with other parishes, including clergy, lay reader and congregation swaps or combinations, to broaden our horizons.
- Introducing a formal system to enable parishes to share good practice.
- We believe that the diocese needs to increase its missional capacity. To do this it needs to search for new partners, both those on the fringe of the church and those not yet engaged, and, secondly, to identify change makers in future generations.
- This would include missional partnership in terms of inviting additional specialist mission agencies, financial partnership in terms of adding financial capacity and ecclesial partnership in terms of ecumenism.
- We cannot, and should not, attempt to do this on our own. All churches are facing the same challenges. Despite the special position of the Church of England as the national church, we need to involve our ecumenical partners as much as each of them is willing to be involved.

2.3 Resources

The responses relate to the constraints encountered by the parishes and concern buildings, leadership and skills development.

2.3.1 Physical resources

Building(s), facilities, space, toilet(s), maintenance, door

- More encouragement for community events and not just religious ones.
- Feel there should be consideration of the church in its context – what do parishioners eg those who do not see the church as a place of worship but are very interested in the historical value of it, think about the future of the building and what goes on there?
- Hold house churches, particularly in the winter months. Allow house churches to be more informal so non-churched could be invited.
- We spend too much time and energy keeping the building watertight. I do not know what to do about this, but there is little energy left for mission.
- I would like to see a considered strategic review of the property and the possibly outdated rules, concerning them. How can we use the buildings to serve the community as generous and visible people of Christ?
- I would like much faster and braver decisions at diocese level about buildings, with real vision, not deference to tradition.

- I currently attend a gathered church which has seen steady growth and is beginning to run out of space in our building on a Sunday morning.
- Resolving the problem of heavy doors that only Samson can open. Moving the church furniture to make the building more inviting, accessible and useful.
- Facilitating changes that make church space more flexible.
- Consideration should be given to the use of school buildings for worship and other church activities.
- I understand that there are plans to dispose of a significant amount of property, and it could be prudent to retain a sufficient stock to put innovatory ideas of that kind into practice.
- Although Christians can worship anywhere, we do actually appreciate our buildings. The history attached to our buildings is important and we need to make more of it. However, we are aware that they lack modern facilities – and need warmth, toilets, decent car parking areas. If they were adapted inside eg removal of pews, the community may be able to make more use of them.
- We need to think seriously when the church is the last place of faith in a community. Churches mark a community; it is the physical heart of our places and can be seen from many angles.

2.3.2 Human resources

Lay/laity, leaders/ship/ing, training, clergy, vacancy, skills, confidence, courses

- We need stronger rural deans to provide line management support and leadership locally delivered.
- Developing a diocesan support team at diocesan office to give advice, answer questions and queries.
- Assessing use of resources, finances and efficiency of workers should be done from the top down – at diocesan level first rather than at parish level. Leadership. The top of the shop is largely invisible in day-to-day work. So much is unclear.
- I would like to see examples of good practice passed onto local Parochial Church Council.
- Training for leaders.
- We should not even consider selecting leaders for parishes unless they have proven leadership experience in their sending church.

- Let us invest in Bible-centred, applied courses that properly equip leaders for a lifetime of ministry.
- Burn out and emotional exhaustion is already a major problem within the Church. My fear is that, for many, the threat of being a failure or of being the one at the helm when a church is closed might do serious spiritual damage.
- Providing coaching in Christian confidence, including online training.
- There was some concern about future leaders coming forward.
- One very practical area of support was for training for treasurers before they begin their work. Some who had done this felt that they were expected to swim in the confusing waters of finance and charity law without any training at all.

2.4 The scope and reach of the church

The responses identify the need for increasing the scope and reach of the church in particular reaching out to new members and creating impact.

Services, mission, outreach, inviting, attract, anywhere, impact

- Ensure that church services are in a form that is accessible and meaningful to people who are not necessarily regular church goers – especially the important services such as at Christmas and Easter.
- If a congregation does not take the church community seriously then the

church will not grow, it will not be able to resource outreach either with people or financially.

- Enhance lay and ordained leadership training by integrating them more.
- Moving away from encouraging people to attend church and replacing the strategy with taking the love of God to the people where they are.
- The supreme importance of clergy implementing a programme of visiting all parishioners. Organizing attractive events to start contact and following it up with friendship to bring in the unchurched to reduce misconceptions.
- Mission to the marginalized – the homeless and the urban poor. Mission to the busy – weekday services for shop and office workers.

- I am excited by the prospect of more church plants and grafts, Fresh Expressions and opportunities to reach out to unchurched communities.
- Linking prayer for individual streets in the parish with inviting their residents to join us.
- Put another way the church needs not only to sharpen up what it is currently doing but to venture into new areas and make new friends. It needs to increase its missional capacity rather than rely completely on an ageing and tired congregation.
- There are now many people who are not regular worshippers but who retain an attachment to their local church in various ways. Some attend on special occasions such as harvest festival and Remembrance Sunday, some look to the church for baptisms, weddings and funerals, and some without necessarily appearing on any of those occasions support fundraising events which bring the wider community together socially. We cannot afford to lose such support, but should foster it and seek opportunities to build on it to bring people fully into the fold.
- Reaching out to new communities.

2.5 Modernisation of church business and management processes

Responses identify shortcomings in the current practices and processes of the church that might benefit from learning from processes and practices in other sectors eg training, management development, work allocation, recruitment and appointments.

Finance/cial/ally, money, growth, vision, growing, modern, development, costs, market

- Accepting training they have had with other denominations.
- Change the archaic system of long interregna to bring Church of England up to modern employment practice.

- Developing efficiency of diocesan management and administration.
- We should not wait until a vacancy before we put leaders in place in those strategic places – a business would not stand for a lack of leadership in its strategic geographical branches – nor should we.
- Follow Tesco's lead and put into mothballs or change the use of those buildings that are redundant.

- It will begin the process of helping people see the larger parish as the church with activities not needing to be duplicated in every separate community. It will better use the time and energy of laity and clergy in work which is about growing the church rather than only maintenance. It should be based on a group of communities which is assessed, by both external and self-assessment, as being able to sustain themselves, with support if necessary, over the next ten years.
- It seems an absurd waste that a vicar responsible for five rural parishes should have to operate with five separate Parochial Church Councils as legal entities with all the duplication that requires.
- Diocese should give treasurers training before they take on the work.
- There is also a need to have something in place to resolve possible conflict and confrontation. This could be helpful. A need to look at structures which do not at present give senior clergy time to come alongside priests and laity to help. Limited resources means this is always a difficulty.
- Most useful for new posts are a realistic profile and a clear mandate for change for the new person.
- It must be wise to work towards growth, rather than subsidising decline.
- Ten strong comments requesting a speeding up of the appointments process.

2.6 Communications

Responses include improving communication within the church (internal) and between the church and communities (external). Specific reference is made to embracing social media to communicate with different audiences.

2.7 Communication(s), media, Facebook, information, image, posters, website

- Communications are awful, not fit for purpose and will not work for what is needed here to change.
- Developing the use of technology and social media, Facebook and Twitter
- It is the usual problem of people at the top not really knowing what the problem is in individual churches.
- Would be useful to encourage parishes to share with other parishes things

that have worked for them.

- To actually engage in open and honest dialogue with the parishioners of the diocese.
- Church leaders need to talk to people in the pews not at them.

- Demystifying what we do in church, simplifying the language we use to make it more understandable, and being more adventurous in our worship.
- Improving awareness of church services and parish activities.
- We should heavily advertise these services to the children, not the parents, using posters – flyers and social media.
- We could hold an open parish meeting, for people outside the usual people, and lay it on the line that this is their parish church, and spell out what will happen if they do not support it.
- It was agreed that people do need to know the Bible. For newer Christians courses need to be pitched differently to those with a greater understanding. The material on offer is not at present suitable for everyone, one size does not fit all.
- We need to be different from the old image and accept that this generation does things differently.
- Develop a job vacancy page.

PART III Support for change and taking strategic action

The responses provide tangible evidence of support for following up the consultation process with action.

Strategy, action, changes, strategic

- We need a real sense of urgency. This is all hugely long overdue. Speed.
- All new initiatives need to value and cherish the past and present as well as invest in the future.
- It is good that things are being looked at that should have been addressed 20 years ago, but now – do not throw the baby out with the bathwater!
- In the levers for change there has to be a commitment to act – so many earlier studies over the last 50 years have failed to deliver.
- The final strategy needs to have a real sense of energy and purpose, not just words that people will nod through and then do nothing about. If it is going to work, all the people of the diocese, the lay, ordained, elderly and young need to catch the vision of what is going on.
- It is vital to do this now.
- Put to the nation the plight of its national church – paint a picture of mosques outnumbering Christian churches and try and awaken us all to the loving heart of God in our midst in the beacon buildings all over our country and the work they do.

- I am grateful that you are seeking to be wise with the resources God has given us but let us not measure spiritual success in a worldly way.
- Having the confidence to carry through initiatives such as this one!
- As a Mission Department we are enthusiastic to embrace this period of consultation, reflection and change. We rejoice in our diocesan vision statement which reminds us in whom we live and move and have our being. We respond to this new identity by living prayerful, visible and generous lives as sisters and brothers together.
- Indeed the Church does need to work better and several cries have been made as to where.
- It was so encouraging to be at last night's presentation. I sat next to a lay person who was clearly very impressed with the vision and the credibility of your arguments to support the action.
- Our congregation supported those priorities.
- Overall the strategy document does raise the fundamental questions in a helpful way.
- I think the current process has made a fine start in identifying the issues we face but we need to engage church members on the widest possible basis if they are to accept the outcome and work to achieve the strategy that results.

- Essential
- In the old days, there was no lay involvement in church services apart from reading lessons. That was always done by men. We appreciate the way things have changed.
- We need a commitment to keep things going – but also a realism about the constraints under which we work.
- We need to develop this in ourselves.
- As the strategy is a draft one at present it is hoped the diocese will act fairly to the reports gathered. The way it has been written it was generally felt that there is not a great deal of room for change.

Critical perspective of the strategy process

The responses highlight specific issues to be aware of when crafting the new strategy and relate to achieving a balance between mission growth and financial sustainability, representation, accountability to communities and general scepticism.

Concern, problem, questions, struggling, negative, impossible, rhetoric

- The strategy should not be all about numbers.
- Wider support for the church from national level.
- We should be looking urgently at ways to encourage committed engagement, not threatening to withdraw support which the center defines as declining. This demotivates clergy and volunteers and is unchristian language.
- Bin it.
- An assurance for existing church members that they are as important as new members and that any change will not be for the sake of change.
- The strategy document itself reads like the script for a long rambling sermon, full of rhetoric and reputation, low on relevant information.
- The present proposals stick to the hierarchical structure we now have.
- As with a Celtic model, our leaders should be modelling simplicity of life and lifestyle, not, as in the Roman model, sitting on rich thrones and telling the peasants to do the work. I do love the Bishop, but I think this is the perception of most of the laity, and it is the first thing that needs to change if the church is going to change.

- The strategy would be more useful if detail was given as to how these levers might be achieved. Jargon can easily lead to miscommunication.
- What is most important is not how many people come through the door of our churches or how much money is collected, but who is saved, who will hear well done, good and faithful servant on the last day.
- While it clearly has a role in coordinating those activities, we would like the

diocese to be active in facilitating lay involvement at sub-leadership level. After all, the last shall be first.

- More radically we would like to pose the question as to whether the present structures of the diocese are truly set up for mission and are able to deliver growth? We had hoped that the idea of missional units would be explored thereby making structurally explicit a commitment to mission.
- This is also an effective way of engaging a large group of people in contributing to the task where there is always a risk that it gets confined to a few and then not owned when the result is not what is expected.
- They are up for consultation. It may be that important areas of church life have been omitted.
- This is reminiscent of Mission Communities which failed to an extent.

Some difficult conversations

The responses make specific reference to the tensions inherent in seeking to reconcile conflicting demands.

- Coping with reducing congregations and thus diminishing resources.
- We spend too much of our time on maintenance ie buildings, finances, administration and not sufficient on reaching out to the community and in mission.
- We should not wait until a vacancy before we put leaders in place in those strategic places – a business would not stand for a lack of leadership in its strategic geographical branches – nor should we.
- There are too many buildings with very small numbers to support them and this must be addressed, no matter how painful. In my area there are church buildings with three in the congregation.
- Follow Tesco's lead and put into mothballs or change the use of those buildings that are redundant.

- The church presence in every community is not something to be abandoned lightly.
- The decline in the number of clergy has to be faced, but opportunities to reduce the impact of that decline should not be neglected.
- It is impossible to provide for hundreds of rural churches, as sad as that may be.

Appendix I

Responses from Children*

The text responses from children reflect a child-centred view of church. The most frequently used words are children, church and people. Actions feature prominently in the texts ie like, think and make. Caring and positive emotions also feature prominently eg fun/enjoy/happy, good and kind. Caring for the disadvantaged, especially the homeless, is mentioned five times.

Practical suggestions from the children include:

1. Buildings. Children are very aware of their environment and are realistic about what improvements are needed to make the building a better place for all to use eg replacement of a lift for disabled, warmth to make a place more welcoming.

- I think it should be used for underfloor heating because if it is warm maybe more people could come to pray in there! Warm is welcoming.
- Make the church look bright and colourful.
- Make the entrance more welcoming; make a special area in the church for children to pray because more children might come to the church and become Christians.

Suggestions for new uses for the church buildings include: clubs and after school clubs; choir and concerts; dance and drama; coffee mornings and café.

2. Services. Nearly all children wanted to see more involvement from children in services although they acknowledged that not every child would want to have that responsibility. Some preferred just to listen and observe.

- To make it more fun for children coming to services.
- I enjoy the family service where we get involved and it is lively.
- I think if children did the service it would be easier for children to understand.
- Because we get to do lovely singing.

3. Communications. Posters or leaflets and many suggested these could be designed by children.

- To share the message about God and Jesus is to tell to people about it and

explain to them what it is about.

4. Social media. Website, text messaging, mail, blogging, Facebook, business cards in shops, radio, newspaper.

- Put up a website; make the service very interactive and have volunteers.
- They could go on YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.
- Have a blog to write about events and their thoughts about God and Jesus.

5. Outreach. Children are also altruistic, many suggesting a homeless or missionary project would be valuable, along with several who suggested that improving the outdoor environment would benefit others.

- To have more church lunches or bring and share picnics, because it is a brilliant way to get other non-Christians to get to know Christians.
- Find people in need or at a tough stage in their life, take them to church, pray with them and help them;
- Lunchtime they could feed the homeless and give them shelter.

6. Desirable qualities in a church leader. Children had much to say about the qualities they would look for in a vicar. Many mentioned their own clergy as good role models and were realistic that being good with children was not a prerequisite. Rather, a positive outlook and ability to show a cheerful disposition were desirable.

- Need to be full of joy.
- Be happy to embrace new technology and information technology.
- Joyful, helpful, resourceful, enthusiastic and a great listener.
- I would like them to be a good leader and answer every question with all their thought and wisdom.
- Them to take assemblies and be happy around children, also to make sure we are happy and talk to us about what we think.
- Kind, loyal, truthful, giving and forgiving.

*This section relies on the analysis of the responses from the children conducted by the Diocesan Children's Adviser, Debbie Hill, and for which I am truly grateful.

Appendix II

Some practical suggestions

The sections below list specific practical suggestions to be considered when designing the implementation of the strategy.

- Get out from the comfort of the Ely Ivory Tower, and the Cambridge area, and come and meet your congregations who are trying their hardest to make the church be something which will be vibrant and work well into the 22nd century.
- A grandparent club.
- Help with attracting young families.
- The Church needs to try to reach out to young families – maybe a toddler group or occasional pram service.
- More fund raising activity.
- Open Communion policy, regardless of age or baptismal status.
- Reshaping how we use our churches – is the Cumbria model of using different churches to perform different functions a viable option?
- Reconsideration of Licensed Lay Ministers taking Holy Communion by Extension when there is a severe shortage of clergy.
- Developing worship patterns designed to be more inclusive for unchurched people, without dumbing down the message.
- Using the skills and experience of the laity.
- Moving away from encouraging people to attend church and replacing the strategy with taking the love of God to the people where they are.
- We reflect God's light into our communities by providing and caring for those who need it most eg a lunch club for the over 60s – many who are lonely; clubs for youngsters and telling stories of Jesus.
- I do not understand why we are only planning ten years ahead – this is too short a timescale to make major changes of the type we require.
- This would include missional partnership in terms of inviting additional specialist mission agencies, financial partnership in terms of adding financial capacity and ecclesial partnership in terms of ecumenism.

- It seems such a shame that a building that stands empty for much of the time cannot be combined with a group of people who love the Lord and want to see his name glorified and proclaimed in that part of town. Please make sure that, at the very least, growing churches are invited to support these congregations before churches are closed.
- Having regular open days to explain the multitude of activities we undertake as part of the church family.
- Providing coaching in Christian confidence, including online training.
- Introducing a formal system to enable parishes to share good practice.

- Facilitating changes that make church space more flexible.
- Consideration should be given to the use of school buildings for worship and other church activities.
- Should we not be making primary school children, who will bring along their parents, our target group?
- Initially we should put on one service a month for a year on a Sunday afternoon.
- Although Christians can worship anywhere, we do actually appreciate our buildings. The history attached to our buildings is important and we need to make more of it. However, we are aware that they lack modern facilities – and need warmth, toilets, decent car parking areas. If they were adapted inside eg removal of pews, the community may be able to make more use of them.
- Most of our churches only have one toilet. One church does not have any toilet although it is working towards that. Although not recognised in the discussion, for the churches to fulfil the role of auditorium or concert hall they probably need more than one toilet in 21st century.
- People were willing to talk about what they enjoyed about coming to church. Most people who were part of the process were involved in some kind of leadership in worship – even if it was reading or leading intercessions.
- One very practical area of support was for training for treasurers before they begin their work. Some who had done this felt that they were expected to swim in the confusing waters of finance and charity law without any training at all.
- You do need the focus of an altar.
- At (name of village) it is important that we have a space where people can light a candle and be quiet. It needs to be kept in the sanctuary.
- (Name of village) remove some or all of the pews.
- It is used for quiz nights, and flower arranging.
- (Name of) Mothers' Union used to organise meals-on-wheels.
- Criteria need to be agreed to work out key area in your place. Recognised cannot continue to subsidise decline. Growth must be supported.
- It would be good for parishes to use an assessment tool to look at what they are doing. There are such tools in use. Liverpool has a self-inventory pack for Parochial Church Councils.
- Need to have a proactive help from the diocese.
- We need to think seriously when the church is the last place of faith in a community. Churches mark a community; it is the physical heart of our places and can be seen from many angles.
- We need to be proud of what Mothers' Union does in our local communities eg prison and Away From It All Holidays, and be more vociferous about it. We need to be different from the old image and accept that this generation does things differently.
- Marketing and publicizing events help needed.
- Be active in the media. Concerning international and UK issues.
- Subsidise small rural churches if no other churches nearby.

- We would like to mention the church grafts it has been our privilege to be involved with in recent years, three times, congregation members from our church have moved to an existing parish church with a curate who became the incumbent. This was aimed at spreading the gospel, and has brought fresh life and considerable growth. We would love to be involved in more such initiatives in the future.
- Close church buildings and meet in homes.
- Use buildings as counselling centres; meeting places use by social services.