

St. John the Baptist, Westbourne, West Sussex



STATEMENT OF NEEDS

April 2009

A SUMMARY:

ST. JOHN'S

Over the past decade, the Church has increased the size of its congregation, expanded its horizons and provided secure roots for worship and for prayer.

There is much though that remains to be done and which can be achieved by a combination of leadership, enthusiasm and focus. It is important that the journey forwards remains in 'the middle of the road'. We want to stay in the broad centre of the Church of England with an emphasis on the Eucharist but not to the exclusion of all else. Extremes will not work.

We think that the time has now come to thoroughly consider the issue of women priests. We want to do this having regard to the fact that there is a small but valued minority in the congregation who have strong reservations on the subject. We seek a priest who would be able to lead us in this exploration with sensitivity and compassion. The PCC, mindful of its duty to care for that minority, has passed Resolution B but specifically not A.

OUR PRIORITIES

1. To develop the Church in the local community
2. To grow our ministry with children and young people
3. To ensure that lay leadership in the Church is nurtured
4. To build on the strengths of existing worship traditions but to encourage development of different forms that will reach out to more people
5. To provide a physical environment in both the Church and the Hall which helps us to meet these priorities

OUR VISION

We want to:

- Love
- Commit
- Care
- Listen
- Learn

We will achieve this by:

- Prayer
- Fellowship
- Mission
- Bible study
- Service

We need someone who can:

- Provide energy
- Build on foundations
- Work with others
- Lead
- Encourage

STATEMENT OF NEEDS FOR ST JOHN THE BAPTIST WESTBOURNE

1. Context

Westbourne is an attractive village in the south western corner of West Sussex. It has about 800 dwellings and a population of around 2400. It lies almost immediately next to the Hampshire coastal town of Emsworth. Housing in the village is mixed. There is an old village centre (a conservation area) with shops providing a local service. Clustered around are old cottages and some larger houses. Because the centre is located on the County boundary village expansion has taken place to the east and to the north, in a sense forcing the newer parts away from the centre. There are two substantial "new" estates one dating from the late 1960's and the other from early 2000's. There is also a considerable number of what was local authority housing, some now privately owned but which when it was built was not linked very well to the remainder of the village and remains rather "out of sight". Some more new housing is currently being built on the east side of the village on the road to Chichester. This will be predominantly for older people, but with some "affordable" elements.



Village Square

There are two nearby hamlets, Aldsworth and Woodmancote within the parish. Between the village and Woodmancote there is a Travellers' site. The population is mixed in economic terms. The village is close to Portsmouth, which forms the area's main economic hub and has a substantial naval presence. Westbourne is attractive to those who need to commute as a peaceful village with

good transport links (stations at Southbourne and Emsworth (both within a mile) and in Havant (three miles) for the Waterloo service). The (private) housing cost is high with the obvious consequence that it is affordable only to those with incomes to match or who have been established on the property ladder for some years. There is a substantial number in the village over retirement age. Conversely affordable housing in the true sense is only generally available on the former local authority estate. Most of this is in quite large houses suitable for families. The village has not benefited from much in the way of new affordable housing although three small properties were built in 2005 in the village square, but some of the new units referred to above will be affordable.

There is a County Primary School. It is successful and well regarded and the present Rector is a Governor. Secondary schools are in Chichester, Southbourne and Havant. One of those in Chichester, Bishop Luffa is a Church of England Aided school, which is heavily oversubscribed. Westbourne is just inside the school's catchment area.

As a village Westbourne has the feel of a lively community with a real sense of purpose and potential. There are many within the village (both Church members and not) who commit time to village life and to their neighbours.

2. Buildings



The Chancel end of the Church viewed from Westbourne Road

St John's is largely mediæval. It is listed Grade 1. There are traces of an 11th century beginning to the present building. Much is thought to have been erected in the 12th and 13th centuries, then remodelled at the time of the Reformation and a spire added to the tower in the late 1700's. There were substantial changes in Victorian times with upper galleries removed and an organ being installed in the chancel. More recent alterations have been the stone floor, the vestries for choir and clergy, the internal WC and, in 2001, the new Tickell organ, positioned at the head of the south aisle. The church is relatively large seating over 200 in the nave even with some of the pews having been removed to make space for alterations at the west end.

The building sits in an attractive churchyard that has rural feel. It has been closed for burials for over 200 years. It is approached by an avenue of ancient yew trees, reputed to be one of the oldest in England (possibly planted in the early 1500's).



The Church is used principally for worship but there are also occasional organ, choral and chamber music recitals and concerts. It is kept open five days a week with a volunteer Church Watch rota.

Yew Avenue from Lych Gate

There is a mission church in the hamlet of Woodmancote. This tin chapel is now over a hundred years old and was built of corrugated iron. It has a small congregation who lovingly maintain it and it is much valued by them.

The Church Hall lies immediately to the south of St John's but is separated from it by the Emsworth Road. The hall was built in the 1950's and extended in the late 1960's. It has a car park at the front and backs on to water meadows. The Church uses it for meetings, youth group activities, Sunday School and social events. It also has a wide community use. The hall hosts a nursery school, mothers and toddlers group, keep fit, Tai-Kwando and a variety of other typical "village hall" uses. The Hall complements the small hall at the Baptist Church that is also used for community events and the Westbourne Club (a members' social club) that has facilities which can be made available for more public functions.

As this is written the Church has a major ongoing project to increase the space and flexibility of the Hall by adding an upper storey. It will also improve the old fashioned layout and fittings which are tired and in need of renewal.

The Rectory is a relatively modern four bedroom house built in 1989 in the grounds of the old Rectory (now a private house). It is quiet and comfortable with attractive views over farmland and a pond. It has its own private garden and also a large "rectory lawn" which is much used including annually for the Church Fête. There is a long drive, adequate parking and a single garage.

3. People

There are 284 currently on the Church electoral roll, of whom some 150 live outside the parish. This is in part because of the location of the Church on the County boundary and the closeness of north Emsworth. Indeed, much of North Emsworth is considerably closer to Westbourne than it is to its own church: in practical, though not of course legal, terms its inhabitants are Westbourne parishioners. It is also a reflection of a choice of worship style.

The church is well organised with an active and enthusiastic PCC whose members have a good breadth of experience. Finances are sound; and well managed by an experienced and dedicated treasurer. Income last year from all sources amounted to £225,000 (of which £120,000 was of Restricted Funds). Voluntary giving other than for the Church Hall project amounted to £82,000. 100% of quota is achieved. There is a commitment to giving (mission and charitable donations from the Church amounted to £17,600) and an active Home and Overseas Committee is responsible for this. Sufficient is retained in reserve to ensure that the Church buildings are properly maintained. There is also a Restoration Fund for the Church. This has separate charitable status and its own trustees (the Rector is one). It exists to raise funds and to provide capital for the long term upkeep of the Church building itself. There are other PCC sub committees responsible to the PCC for various areas of activity. These have usually a majority of non-PCC members on them, which is encouraged.

There are two regular house groups. These are small and usually confined to those who are older. Even though there is no present tradition of the whole congregation meeting together outside services in house groups the work of the Education sub committee in, for instance, promoting courses at Lent and Advent is important. There is a good demand for BRF and similar bible reading notes. There are also occasional retreats and quiet days. There is an active healing group which also involves members of the Baptist Church in

Westbourne. This has been developed over a period of time and has now been running very successfully for nearly 3 years. Two of the group are always present after the 9.30 Sunday service to offer help to those who may need it. There is an established Pastoral Visitors scheme involving members of the congregation who work closely with the Rector and the Healing group. The Social committee's activities are well supported.

There was a "Growing Healthy Churches" exercise in 2006. Amongst the conclusions were a wish for greater involvement with the wider village community and a commitment to improving the welcome in Church and to making it more open.

There is a real involvement with young people. There are currently 5 children in the crèche with 5 adults; 27 children and 10 adults involved in the Sunday school; 13 children meet for Q-West which caters for the 10 – 13yr olds, then 8 children in the Youth group for up to 16yr olds. Both Q-West and the Youth group have a male and a female leader and meet for study and discussion once a month. These two groups also meet together once a month for an afternoon activity such as cinema, bike rides, go-karting, followed by tea and evening praise led by the Rector. The choir children, as mentioned below, also join in with the activity afternoons and with the Youth group as they become old enough.

St. John's has a strong musical and choral tradition, with a respected and experienced director of music. Several other congregation members are proficient organists. The choir (men and women, boys and girls) is large with a total of 16 adults and 14 children. Several choir members come from Portsmouth, although the majority are local. The church also allows the music director to give private music lessons on the organ/keyboard. The choir is accomplished for a parish church and with the organ are fundamental parts of the main 9.30 Sunday worship and also of a monthly choral evensong. The choir has also sung occasionally in the Cathedral in Chichester.

There is also a long history of bell ringing. The tower has eight bells and there is an active band of ringers.



Congregation Spring 2008

4. Outreach

The parish sometimes struggles with outreach to the wider community. The Rector had set a powerful example by his own regular visiting and by forging strong links to the local Baptist Church. There are reciprocal annual preaching exchanges and some shared services. He was also instrumental in the setting up of "Westbourne Week" a biennial, weekend long, celebration of village life

which is now run by a group of local residents. This culminates with a Sunday morning marquee service.

A significant feature of the ministry in recent years has been the number of people, especially adults, taking early steps in the Christian faith or perhaps rediscovering a faith of earlier years.

There is a successful village magazine with a wide distribution produced and edited by Church members. A Parish website is also available with details of Church life, updated regularly. www.westbourneparish.org.uk/

5. Worship

Regular Sunday worship is usually an 8.00 communion (BCP), a 9.30 Eucharist (Common Worship), and Evensong at 6.00 (Choral once in each month). Matins was also held until recently, but due to a shortage of clergy and lay readers, this has now stopped. There is a non-Eucharist family service on the second Sunday of each month and where there is a fifth Sunday the service then is a Family Eucharist. There is a regular monthly Youth Praise service in the evening taking the place of Evensong and this is held in the Church Hall. There are weekday communion services on Tuesday evenings (CW) and Wednesday mornings (BCP). The New English Hymnal is used together with our own less traditional Westbourne hymn book.

There are all the usual Festival services. In addition St John's holds a World Aids Day service, occasional "Songs of Praise" and an annual service of commemoration for those who have died in that year.

In terms of numbers the 9.30 service attracts usually between 100 and 130 communicants, the earlier 8.00 in the region of 30 and evensong around a dozen or so. Matins has had a steady congregation of around 10. A copy of the attendance figures is attached.

Christmas and Easter services have much larger congregations as would be expected. There is also a tradition of an open air carol service in the village square on the Saturday evening before Christmas. This attracts between 300 and 400. It is perhaps the best outreach of the whole year in terms of numbers and cross section of the community. A Good Friday 'Walk to the Cross' has also been held for the last 4 years, walking as witness through the village together with members of the Baptist Church.

Holy Communion (Common Worship) is celebrated at Woodmancote on the second and fourth Sunday of each month at 11.15.

In 2008 there were:

25 baptisms (including 1 adult),
8 marriages, with one extra Blessing of Marriage
8 funerals and 2 memorial services
7 confirmation candidates, of whom 2 were adults.

Worship is essentially liturgical with the balance between Word and Sacrament being important. This contrasts with some neighbouring parishes whose styles are more charismatic. The congregation has benefited from high quality scripture based preaching and values this and the Eucharist in its regular worship. Traditional music plays an important role with the appointed psalm for the day being sung. Most importantly people of quite different churchmanship worship happily together.

6. Clergy and Lay Ministry

The Church has 3 retired Priests who help with the various services throughout the week. Two of these are committed to BCP services. The Revd. Frank Hillebrand recently retired from hospital chaplaincy (after long periods as vicar in busy and large parishes) and has regularly assisted both before and during the interregnum. There are two readers who contribute to our regular worship but for both their recent ability to help has been reduced by illness.

7. Needs

St. John's sees its strengths as those of welcome, fellowship and enthusiasm. Its traditions are valued, with biblical teaching and the Eucharist together forming the central core of worship, combined with a strong musical heritage.

The existing Church family is hugely committed and this appointment will be an opportunity for fresh inspiration and leadership. New ideas will build on traditions and will enhance our worship and witness. An ability to enthuse the whole congregation and beyond and to delegate to committed laity will be important.

We need someone who will be accessible and a good communicator: both to the congregation and to the wider village, who will be able to enhance the sense of community outside traditional areas of worship and who can involve our many young families as well as older members of the congregation.

A real willingness to minister to young people is essential, including them in our worship and providing activities and groups to encourage their own journeys of faith.

Our prayer is that our new Rector will be bold enough to seize the opportunity of ministry in and around our village of Westbourne and will lead with real passion, conviction and commitment.

ANNEXURES

- Mission Action Plan
- 2008 Annual Report
- 2008 Accounts
- APCM Reports
- Attendance figures