



HOLY  
TRINITY  
CHURCH



St John the Baptist  
COOKHAM DEAN

# **BENEFICE OF THE COOKHAMS**

## **Diocese of Oxford**



# 2011-2015

**Approved by PCCs**  
**March 2011**

This document is published jointly by the Parochial Church Councils of  
Holy Trinity, Cookham and St John the Baptist, Cookham Dean

The logo for 'LIVING FAITH' features the words in a bold, sans-serif font. 'LIVING' is in purple, 'FAITH' is in white with a black outline. The letters are set against a background of five vertical bars in red, yellow, purple, blue, and green. A paintbrush is positioned as if painting the bars.

# LIVING FAITH Introduction

Our aim in this document is to articulate the Vision for our Benefice over the next five years. This Vision will be realised in parallel with the continuing fulfilment of our core Benefice objectives, as a Christian community, of loving (worshipping) God and loving our neighbours.

Here we have a big Vision to which we will refer each year as we set specific goals for ourselves as a Benefice and as two individual church communities. This document begins by setting out our basic Vision as simply and clearly as possible followed by an explanation of the process of how we developed it. The third section sets out the context in which we live in our Benefice, and in the fourth we explain how our Vision has been shaped, in part, by the framework set by the Bishop of Oxford. To see what our Vision looks like and to learn about our specific aims over the next few years, turn to section five.

Thank you to everyone who has helped in the formation and production of this document.

“A dream you dream alone is only a dream.  
A dream you dream together is reality.”

*John Lennon*

Father Michael Smith  
Vicar of the Benefice of the Cookhams  
March 2011

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The logo for 'LIVING FAITH' features the word 'LIVING' in purple and 'FAITH' in white, with each letter of 'FAITH' inside a colored rectangular block (red, yellow, purple, blue, green).

# LIVING FAITH Our Vision

“And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory .... full of grace and truth.”

*John 1v14*

## Our Vision is

A community enriched by Christian faith, worship and values.

## This means that

- Through our **welcome** of all people in our community we will seek to embody Christ's inclusive and unconditional love.
- We will **involve** ourselves with society and the wider world and carry out the 'Christ-like' work of practical compassion and the pursuit of peace and justice for all people.
- We will **engage** with Christians from other traditions, people of other faiths and people of no faith to embody Christ's friendship, generosity and love.
- Through prayer, worship and service to the community we will **proclaim** the good news of God's love and constantly strive to be more faithful followers of Jesus.

***welcome, involve, engage, proclaim***

BE PART  
OF A BIGGER  
PICTURE



# Our Process

“Let anyone with ears listen!”

*Matthew 11v15*

## Background

Both parishes had their own respective Parish Plans which covered the period 2005 - 2010. When we started to formulate our ideas for what should replace these we were keen that:-

- There should be one plan across the Benefice that both PCCs could adopt, which gave the flexibility to both work together and maintain the identity of each parish.
- We should adopt a style of mission consistent with that being pursued by the diocese and, therefore, with that of other churches adopting a similar process.

## How we came to produce this plan

- The process began with a planning meeting led by Rev. Dame Sarah Mullally in April 2010. Her theme was how the church should address its tasks in the next few years, and how society has changed. Her main messages from this were “**Linking, Bridging and Bonding**”.
  - **Linking** by providing support/care/befriending/welcome and speaking out about what is wrong
  - **Bridging** by reaching out to the community and being in tune with them
  - **Bonding** by asking people to come to church. Work in teams, share skills, work together
  - **Evolution** not revolution but take risks and find out what does work
  - Be accessible and **Communicate**
- Separately, both PCCs then discussed the issues. Fr Michael introduced a discussion paper, previously circulated, quoting Bishop Stephen’s words: mission is “God’s mission, not the Church’s mission. Evangelism is bringing good news to people.”, and picking up Sarah Mullally’s headings, “Linking, Bridging, Bonding”. The PCCs also discussed the five headings under Bishop John’s “Living Faith” initiative, the framework that has been adopted for this plan. Lots of ideas, initiatives and concerns were raised by both PCCs, and it was agreed to hold a joint Vision Day later in the year.
- To this end, a meeting with Fr Michael Beasley, Oxford Diocesan Director of Mission, was held in June 2010. He suggested that we ought to conduct a simple survey; to be distributed widely within the parish; to seek peoples’ views about the church, its ways of doing things, the challenges that the church faces, and possibilities for positive change and progress.
- This was done but the number of responses was disappointingly low and suggested “we continue what we are already doing”. No firm conclusions could be drawn from it. The results are available on request.
- The Vision Day was held in November 2010 which both PCCs attended along with other key individuals such as representatives from the schools and church choirs. The day was facilitated by Michael Beasley, the Director of Mission for the Oxford Diocese, assisted by friends who were experienced in this type of exercise. The

output from the Vision Day were captured and circulated to all those who attended, and is available on request.

- A Steering Group of three members from each church was set up under Fr Michael's chairmanship to draft the actual plan.
- The plans were presented to the two PCCs in draft form for comment, and were approved in final form for adoption and presented at the APCM 2011.

### How we are going to use this plan

- Creating a plan is only the beginning - carrying out the plan is what matters and what gets results. We will be making the plan the standard reference for our PCCs, and the launching of actions and monitoring their progress will be a key activity at every PCC during the life of the plan.
- Progress will also be reported to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting each year.



BE PART OF A  
*be part of a bigger picture*  
BIGGER PICTURE

# LIVING FAITH Our Community

“... the kingdom of God is this creation made new not a parallel creation to which we will one day escape.”

*The Faith of Generation Y'*

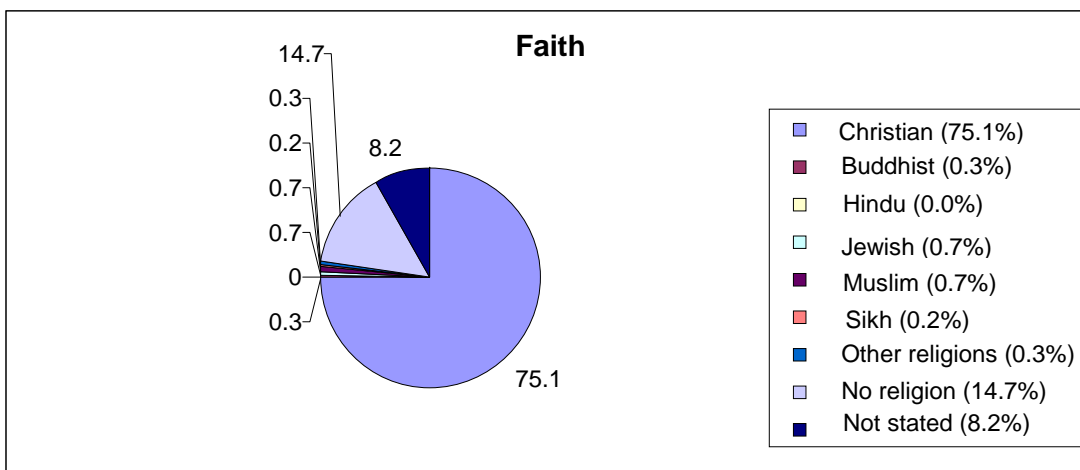
*by Collins-Mayo, Mayo, Nash & Cocksworth p. 132*



The benefice of the Cookhams consists of the Parishes of Holy Trinity (HTC) Cookham and Saint John the Baptist (SJB) Cookham Dean. Whilst each parish has its own Churchwardens and PCC, the Ministry team is shared between the two parishes and each regards the vision as a shared one.

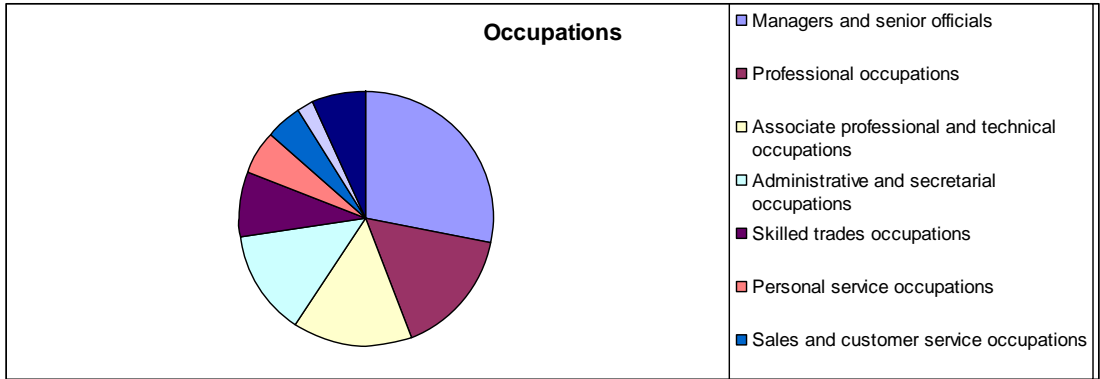
The benefice is a lively and numerous worshipping community with a total electoral roll of 400 made up of 275 at HTC and 125 at SJB. It includes the old villages of Cookham and Cookham Dean, the newer and larger area of Cookham Rise and parts of the riverside and northern outskirts of Maidenhead.

Understanding the demographic profile helps us to place our plan in the context. It is estimated that the Benefice contains over 3,000 households, with a population of about 8,000. Approximately 75% of the population describe themselves as Christians. The area's religious needs are provided for by St Elizabeth's RC Church, the Methodist Church and the two Church of England churches of the benefice.

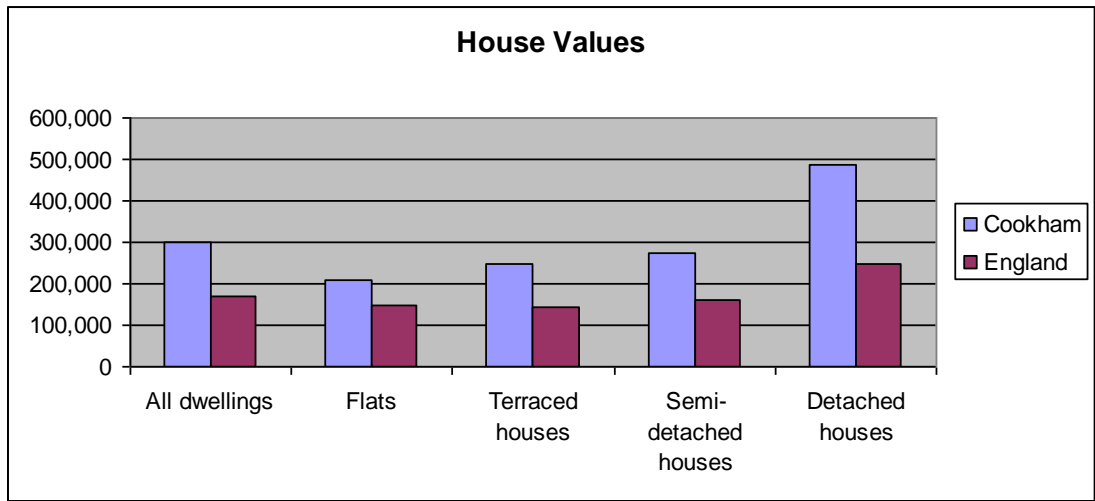


Within the Benefice there are several nurseries, three primary schools and one preparatory school with a combined total of around 710 children on roll. Secondary aged children receive their education in the neighbouring towns; as there are no secondary schools within the benefice.

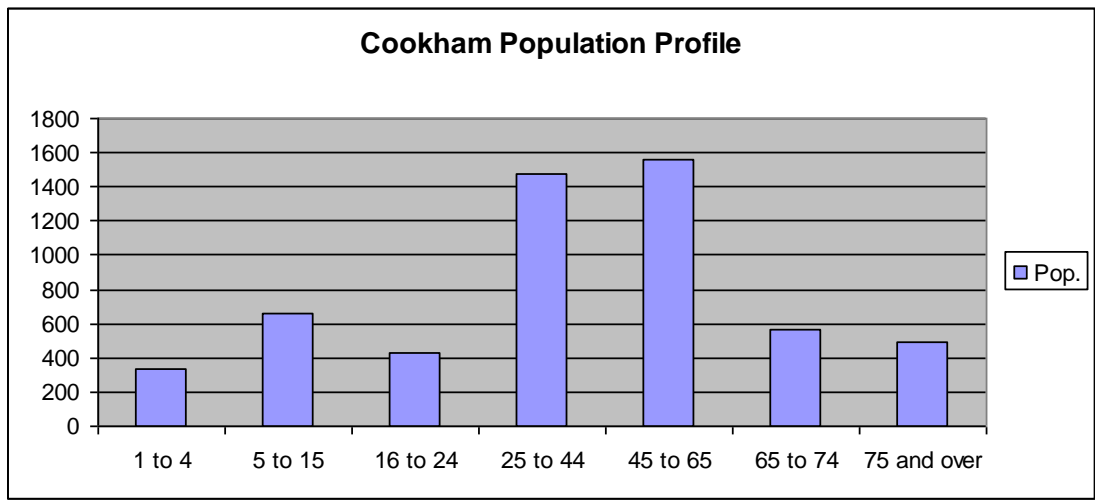
We are also fortunate to have a day centre for the elderly at Elizabeth House which provides a meeting place for the elderly as well as a drop in centre for Alzheimer’s sufferers and their carers. There are also several residential nursing homes in the area.



The profile of residents reflects mainly professional and managerial occupations (61%, 2001 census) which suggests a privileged population when compared with 40% average for the GB.



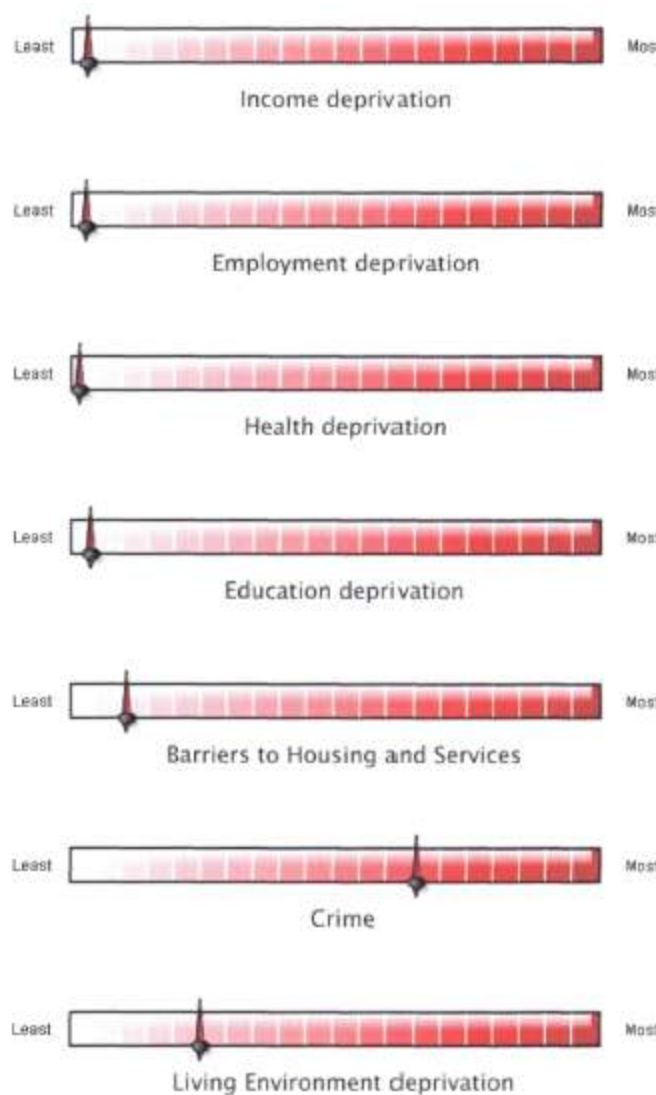
Over 82% of the population live in owner occupier dwellings. Of all households, 36% have two persons, 25% are people living alone, and the remainder are households of three or more people.



The average age of the population in Cookham is 42 years old compared with 39 for England over all.

In conclusion the benefice of the Cookham is a privileged community with a relatively high proportion of managerial and professional occupations and above average house values. The profile of age differs little from the national. There is a perception that we have a disproportionately older population but this is not supported from the census statistics.

## The Cookhams Community Barometers



Sources: Communities and Local Government; Office of National Statistics, Valuation Office Agency. Comparisons are with England as a whole.





# Our Framework for Christian Living

“I’ve always been clear in my own mind that the health of our diocese lies not at the centre, but in the vitality and imagination of the local parish or arena of ministry. What we have attempted to do with ‘Living Faith’ is to provide a vision, and a set of priorities, to help you frame your thinking as you live out your faith together.”

*Bishop John Pritchard, Bishop of Oxford*



The Living Faith vision provides a framework under five headings:-

- Sustaining the Sacred Centre
- Making a Difference in the World
- Creating a Vibrant Christian Community
- Shaping Confident Collaborative Leadership
- Making Disciples

Of course, in practice many of the things we do already and plan to do in the future fall into more than one category. For example, actions we take to primarily “make a difference in the world” we hope will also “make disciples”.

The Categories themselves can also be taken on many levels. For example Sustaining the Sacred Centre could be interpreted on many different levels:-

- Our planet earth - the centre upon which we are totally dependent
- Our culture, i.e. what enables us to co-exist with each other
- Our community
- Our churches as demonstrable signs of God's Kingdom
- Our churches as caring and active parts of the community
- Our worship - is it as sacred as it could be?
- Our hearts and minds are our own private centres - how can we sustain those?

For the purposes of this plan we have placed actions under what we regard to be the primary category, but always acknowledging that there will be other effects, reasons and outcomes and that the boundaries between categories are flexible and that this is a strength of the approach, not a weakness.





# Our Action Plan

## SUSTAINING THE SACRED CENTRE

This is about encouraging and enabling clergy and lay people to deepen their enjoyment of God, and to recognize God's presence in everyday life.

'Be still, and know that I am God.'

*Psalm 46 v.10*

### WEEK BY WEEK WORSHIP AND ACTIVITIES

1. We will continue to provide high quality services and activities on a sustainable and regular basis as the centre of our Christian worship. This will include our ministry to children and our existing congregations.

### STRENGTHEN THE CHRISTIAN ETHOS OF THE LOCAL SCHOOLS

#### 1. Regular School Assemblies

Clergy members already attend and participate in schools assemblies at Holy Trinity and Cookham Dean schools. This should continue and build a regular commitment between school and church. There is no reason why this activity should be confined to just clergy, and ways of involving other people will be explored e.g. Open The Book.

#### 2. Regular links with non-church schools

At the moment there is very little contact between the non-church schools, (Cookham Rise, Herries, and several nursery and pre-school establishments). We should seek to establish contact and a regular once a term assembly or other event by 2012, increasing to twice a term by 2015. We should liaise with the Methodist and Roman Catholic churches in Cookham Rise to ensure a co-ordinated approach and efficient use of resources.

#### 3. Encourage more school visits to church

Both our church schools visit the church for special occasions, and there are visits by the non-church schools, notably Herries to Cookham Dean at Christmas. These visits should be firmly established by 2012 and made landmark occasions for the schools, both church and non-church. We should then by 2015 seek to encourage other visits from schools perhaps primarily not for a service or festival occasion, but for broader and educational purposes, for example demonstrating aspects of church life or explaining the features of the churches from an historic and religious point of view.

#### 4. Hold a service once a term with parents and teachers

Beyond 2012 we should establish with the schools at Cookham and Cookham Dean a once a term service for children, teachers and parents. Whilst this should be orientated towards encouraging participation in regular church worship, especially leading to receiving Eucharist before Confirmation, it may be beneficial to hold this service in the schools.

## IMPROVED BUILDINGS FOR ENHANCED PURPOSES

### 1. Upkeep and Development of our Church Buildings

Both churches are faced with structural and building projects that are essential for the longer term (next 20 years) of the churches mission. At Holy Trinity, the fabric is in need of substantial renovation, and at St John the Baptist, a severe structural problem is in the course of being rectified, and the expansion of the Parish Room has been submitted for Planning Permission. These projects place a very heavy burden on resources, both monetary and manpower effort, but their completion as soon as possible should be given every priority under this plan.

### 2. Encourage prayer for casual visitors

Both churches are at present open to the public and this should continue, but with an emphasis on encouraging contemplation, meditation and prayer.

### 3. Improve the presentation of the churches to visitors

Attention should be made to improving the visitor experience, which could include improving the frequency and standard of cleaning, guide books, exhibitions and showcases of the life of the church.

### 4. Encourage the wider uses of the churches

Considerable use of both churches is already made for concerts, films, talks etc, but this should be encouraged, especially in association with the very rich artistic and musical heritage which is unique to the community we serve. Investment in staging, equipment and the resources to operate it will be key in achieving this.

### 5. Longer term building considerations

Both churches will continue to have demands in respect of their fabric into the future and plans should be laid to secure their continued service in our mission. At Holy Trinity, the restoration project will have longer term aspects to it and at St John the Baptist, the building will be approaching 200 years old, and major work ought to be anticipated. Much of the content of this longer term plan will come from the routine quinquennial inspection regime. Despite this, it is essential that the buildings do not become an impediment to what we want to do, and the purposes to which they need to be put.

## OTHER POINTS FOR ACTION

- Bible Reading Guidance, House Groups, Quiet Days and Pilgrimages
- Support music as an integral part of what we do, and look at other ways to use alternative forms of music in our worship.

“I see our major problem with modern liturgy as being the collapse of awe, wonder and the capacity for amazement. To stand in awe before God (Ecclesiastes . 3v.14) is basic to the human condition.”

*‘The Sky is Red’ by Ken Leech p.181*

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD

This is about recognising that in a holistic understanding of God's action in the world, there is no mission without social justice; that social justice and prophetic witness cannot be put in a box as a specialism or an extra, but is at the heart of the calling of every Christian community in its own context.

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the broken-hearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and release to the prisoners;

*Isaiah 61 v1 & Luke 4v18*

## FINDING OUT ABOUT OURSELVES

1. We need to draw up an inventory of existing activities within both churches and have an open "fair" of the different activities.
2. We need to identify the activities that we already do well and carry on doing them, always mindful of possible improvements.
3. We should create an attractive stand/display for use at community events to publicise our work.
4. Seek to establish a recognition in the community of the Pastoral Care available from and provided by the churches.

## SOCIAL ACTION GROUP

1. We should seek to establish the Social Action Group on a Benefice and Ecumenical basis. Projects that could be investigated are:-
  - Outreach Projects to Low income countries
  - Fund Raising partnerships for particular needs
  - Church-led action on Litter, Recycling etc.
  - Continue Whitechapel Project but on a Benefice-wide basis
2. We should monitor local issues, needs and initiatives to make sure that we have a view, can participate proportionately and, where necessary, show leadership.

## COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

1. The way in which we communicate to the community needs to be reviewed. The first task will be to formulate a Benefice-wide Communications Strategy with wide ranging appeal which can look into all aspects of how we communicate, Parish Magazine, Website, Press, Cookham Voice etc. Once that strategy has been agreed it will be possible to plan detailed actions.

"'Holy Communion' is not only the name of the central act of Christian worship; it also sums up the whole meaning of Christian life, which is the practise of the holy in the midst of the common life of mankind."

*'The Sky is Red' by Ken Leech p.141*

# CREATING VIBRANT CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

This is about shaping 'communities of grace' which exhibit the character of Jesus. Such attractive communities are genuinely hospitable, deeply engaged with their communities, and passionate about God.

And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

*Acts 2v43-47*

## ESTABLISH A PRACTICAL WORKING PASTORAL NETWORK

1. In the first instance we need to take stock of what we already have both as churches and the extent of other networks, such as CVS, Elizabeth House and Rendezvous. We need to identify what needs there are in our Community and any gaps or opportunities that we can fill.
2. To do this a group should be formed which will also observe best practice elsewhere for successful pastoral networks.
3. Based on this the aim will be to create and operate a "best in breed" pastoral care arrangement for the Benefice, which other parishes will want to come and see.
4. Whilst not being prescriptive, it is envisaged that Welcome Packs and other literature/communication channels should form part of the network provision.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. Cookham Dean already hosts a monthly "Friendship Lunch" for "those who would otherwise eat alone". This needs to be developed in terms of numbers.
2. We should develop and encourage Church social events to be outreach opportunities.
3. Other opportunities for similar events need to be considered in the light of other initiatives, such as Elizabeth House.

## OTHER ACTIONS

1. Our role as a natural leader for community initiatives in Cookham.
2. Our role in the 2012 Olympic Games.
3. Working with and complementing other churches and community organisations

"The normal condition of the church is that of a creative minority within society."

*'The Sky is Red' by Ken Leech p.40*

## SHAPING CONFIDENT COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

This is about developing leadership using all the resources available to the local church. It would involve consolidation in some parishes and new work in others to build up shared ministry in teams, with appropriate training and support.

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

*Matthew 4v18-22*

### UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITIES AND CONGREGATIONS

- 1. Demographic data**  
We should access and analyse the demographic data for our communities to be cognisant of its composition and likely needs.
- 2. Political Landscape**  
We should also liaise with the Parish Council and our Local Councillors to ensure our understanding and appreciation of the political landscape.
- 3. Community Events**  
We should consider holding community social events for particular groups of people in our communities.
- 4. Wedding couples, Baptism families and the Bereaved**  
We should invite these people back after an appropriate period of time This should be integrated as part of our Pastoral Network activity (see Creating Vibrant Christian Communities above).

### BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE FOR THE BENEFICE

- 1. Job Descriptions for Church Officers**  
The roles and duties of Churchwarden, Secretary and Treasurer should be documented. This is to enable clarity for their substitution or replacement, and to give guidance to office holders as to what is expected.
- 2. PCC Talent Sharing**  
The first PCC of each year should be devoted to talent sharing, training for new and re-elected members, and familiarisation with this Plan.

### 3. Job Succession

Guidelines should be drawn up for how long people should be expected to carry out roles, and succession options should be drawn up.

### 4. Vocations

Be constantly vigilant to discern and nurture vocations within the congregation.

### 5. Ministry Team and Joint Standing Committees

The composition of the Ministry Team and Joint Standing Committees should be reviewed to ensure the best use of time and the breadth of input needed to run a Benefice of two separate parishes efficiently.

### 6. In three years time we should:-

- Have developed deputy roles for the main officers.
- Be holding an annual joint PCC event.
- Have Job Descriptions for other roles e.g. Child Protection and Health and Safety Officers.
- Be talent sharing at congregation level through a Stewardship Campaign which should encompass the full spectrum of talent, time and monetary giving.
- Have an up to date Parish Handbook that documents the full range of activities that enable a parish to function.
- Get more people involved in leadership, and help people to realise their potential.

“Christian service connects people, connects hearts with minds, speech with living. It extends the world so that new discoveries can be made. We each have the ability to transfigure situations, in the name of our baptism, so that heaven is brought into the heartland of the ordinary.”

*‘The Collage of God’ by Mark Oakley p.81*



# MAKING DISCIPLES

This is about the core task left to us by Jesus. It usually takes the form of accompanying people on a journey to faith by the intentional use of nurture courses, mentoring, the catechumenate (an ancient approach to accompanied journeying), or simple friendship.

'Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28v16-20

## SCHOOL HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

### 1) Establish a Cookham Lighthouse Working Party

- a) A working party will be established in the first year which will encompass the churches of all denominations, and all the youth organisations in The Cookhams. This will involve appointing a liaison person for each local school and organisation.
- b) By 2012 Cookham Lighthouse will have become an established annual event

## ACTIVITIES FOR THOSE AGED 30s & 40s

1. In years 1 and 2 form a working group of 30s & 40s who are current worshippers to draw up a plan, and in years 3 - 5 implement the plan drawn up.

## THOSE AGED 45 to 60

1. People in this age group form a significant part of our community, but a relatively small part of our congregation. Emphasis will be placed on those who attend church when their children are smaller to encourage them to continue to be part of our congregations once their children get older and grow up .

## INCREASE THE VARIETY AND STRUCTURE OF WORSHIP

### 1. Continue our core services

It is generally felt that our current portfolio of services across the Benefice serves our existing congregations well and will continue to attract some new disciples. The exact extent of these services will depend on the resources available, and some flexibility will be needed.

### 2. Develop and enhance our core services

We should continue these services and develop and enhance them as appropriate, again mindful on the resources available. Particular attention should be paid to making the Eucharistic service more accessible and understandable to both newcomers and our regular congregation.

### 3. Develop Non-Eucharistic form of services

In the medium to long term we should develop non-Eucharistic forms of worship. Particular attention should be given to services at alternative times and specifically family orientated e.g. Sunday 4pm, or Saturday evening.

#### OTHER ACTIONS FOR MAKING DISCIPLES

1. Run Emmaus and nurture courses at least annually
2. Examine the possibilities to work with Teenagers either independently or with the current youth organisations, e.g. church parades or events on church premises.
3. Showcasing our activities (see also Making a Difference in the World).
4. Organise other types of event across the Benefice, e.g. Social Events /activities /cycling / jogging /activities for men.

'He (Jesus) didn't tell us to go and make churchgoers or even converts, but to go and make disciples'.

*Bishop John Pritchard, Bishop of Oxford*



***A Community enriched by  
Christian faith, worship and values***



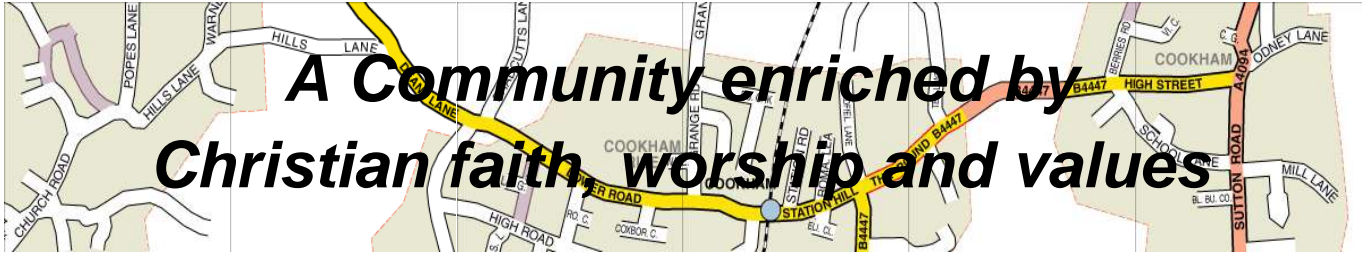
**LIVING FAITH** Our Priorities for 2011



**LIVING FAITH** Our Priorities for 2012

**LIVING FAITH** Our Priorities for 2013

**LIVING FAITH** Our Priorities for 2014



*welcome, involve, engage, proclaim*

# BE PART OF A BIGGER PICTURE

