



Mission Action Plan – Review of progress and roll forward to 2014/15

Review of our Goals for 2013/14

We set ourselves five specific goals for 2013/14.

Goal 1 To establish a teaching course on prayer and/or offering a course on leadership of small groups

Five people attended training sessions for Home Group and Prayer Group Leaders run by Deborah. It is intended to re-run the Home Group and Prayer Group Leaders course later this year if sufficient interest can be generated. We intend to encourage more of the congregation to join House Groups which Deborah feels should meet twice monthly.

The Community and Outreach Committee are planning a "Home from Home" event to take the place of a parish retreat weekend. This will take place in September 2014. The aim is to allow a wider range of participation and cater for all age groups and interests. The expectation is that we will get to know each other better, have some fun and enrich our spiritual life.

Deborah is running a series of five sessions on Prayer during Lent.

This was a new goal for 2013/14. Work remains on this goal so the UCC agreed that it should be rolled forward to 2014/15

Goal 2. Review and seek to improve the welcome we offer to everyone.

The Everyone Welcome course was re-run in 2013. The actions taken following the first course held in 2012 have been consolidated.

Further improvements have been made to the notice boards both inside and outside the church but greater effort needs to be made to ensure that the notices are kept up to date and old notices removed. Signage within the church and church centre has been improved.

We continue to look for ways to encourage young families to our church and have recently been encouraging the use of the area at the base of the tower during services again.

Following an incident in the Church in spring the Church has been 'manned' by Church Watchers all day throughout the summer and in the afternoons since then. This greatly enhances the welcome we give to casual visitors.

The Rickmansworth Decorative and Fine Arts Association prepared a Church Trail for 8-12 year olds which was launched at the Start of Year Service for St Mary's School on September 19th 2013.

We adopted 'The Big Welcome' as opposed to 'Back to Church Sunday' on 29th September.

Early in 2014 we plan to set up and train a welcoming team who will operate alongside the sidespeople.

Plans have been drawn up by the Church Architect to improve the North Porch entrance to the Church so that it is accessible for all users. It is also proposed to incorporate glass within the inner door to make the Church more open and welcoming.

We still grapple with ideas to encourage get more people through to coffee after services and the idea of coffee at the back of the Church still gets much discussion.

Good progress continues to be made however 'reviewing and improving the welcome we offer' is an ongoing goal and the UCC agreed that it should be carried forward and that in 2014/15 we would specifically focus on:

- a) establishing the welcoming team;
- b) progressing the plans for the North Porch and
- c) reviewing the arrangements for coffee after Church.

Goal 3 Form a new Events Committee to plan an active programme of events throughout the year

The Events Committee has been established but as present has no Chair and is led by Deborah.

As last year the usual social events such as the Ricky Week Quiz, the Gramble, the patronal visit and the patronal/harvest supper, which this year took the form of a barn dance, took place largely due to the efforts of a few people.

The Motley Crew were intending to put on 'A Old Time Music Hall' event in February but this was postponed due to the organist no longer being available.

A number of musical events have been held in the Church some of which the Church itself has hosted including a concert for Music Sunday in June and a Harp Recital in September.

A programme of events for 2014 was published and distributed to the congregation in January.

Although excellent progress has been made the UCC agreed that this goal should be carried forward to 2014/15

Goal 4 Compile a comprehensive database of our personal skills, and our links with the local community

A working group was established by the Stewardship and Finance Committee to consider how this goal might be taken forward. Some members of this group questioned the thinking behind the goal and what it was hoped would be achieved by it as well as how in practice it might be implemented.

After consideration of the work undertaken by the working group the Stewardship and Finance Committee agreed to recommend the UCC not to pursue this goal further.

The suggestion of a regular article in Link to celebrate the work St Mary's people do in the wider community and to promote the organisations they support was supported. It was also agreed that it would be a good idea to recognise volunteering done by members of the Church community by celebrating it during Volunteering Week, which is the first week in June.

The UCC agreed to delete this goal and to take forward the suggestions arising from the working group relating to articles in Link and Volunteering Week as actions which relate to Goal 5.

Goal 5 Continue and, where possible, increase the Church's involvement and visibility in the community including St Mary's School

This Goal was amended for 2013/14 to refer to the community as well as St Mary's School. The Church has done even more this year than the year before to increase its visibility in the community.

We continued to produce and deliver newsletters to every home in the parish. We continue to run the Credit Union collection point for Rickmansworth and are planning to introduce a collection point for food that will be distributed by the recently established food bank.

We had a presence at both the Bury Fete in Ricky Week and on both days of the Rickmansworth Festival the following weekend, at the Rickmansworth Society Autumn Market and at the Rickmansworth Christmas Evening. We once again held a community

picnic this year with the additional feature of teddy bear parachuting from the tower. This was followed later in the month by the 1st Ricky Scouts abseiling down the tower.

The service to commemorate Remembrance Sunday was moved to the afternoon to make it more inclusive and enable a greater range of people to be involved in the service.

At Christmas we sang Carols outside Waitrose and Marks and Spencer and at the rose and Crown Pub. Deborah led the Boaters Christian Fellowship service at Batchworth Lock.

Girls from the Royal Masonic School have joined our main Sunday Service on a number of occasions during the year and their choir has sung for us.

We have introduced pin badges to wear as a sign to show we are part of St Mary's and raise our visibility in the community.

We regularly advertise community activities in Link; Watersmeet Film Club, Rickmansworth Decorative and Fine Arts Society lectures and Rickmansworth Horticultural Society meetings.

In relation to St Mary's School, Meera Chauhan continues to update us on their activities in Link; Deborah and others continue to run J Club at the school; and some members of the congregation help in other ways at the school.

The School has been more visible in the Church this year with St. Mary's School Choir singing at Harvest, on Remembrance Sunday, and at the Carol and Christingle Services. The School has also improved publicity of its activities, such as their fete and fireworks, to St Mary's congregation.

The launch of the NADFAS Church Trail took place at the Start of Year Service for St Mary's School and after the service classes 3 and 4 stayed behind to do the Trail. The service was attended by the Chairman of the Council as well as local Councillors and NADFAS representatives.

As a way of strengthening our links with our school we are planning to appoint a School Link Co-ordinator, who would be St Mary's focal point for communication with the school, collecting and taking information from the Church (e.g. Link and newsletters) and bringing back displays etc. from the school to the Church. We are also considering arranging monthly or bi-weekly tea afternoons in the Nursery at the school to get to know more of the parents. We need to see if there would be take-up for this initiative and will be putting an item in the pew sheet and in Link for volunteers.

It is considered that this goal should be carried forward to 2014/15 and specifically to:

a) to celebrate the work of St Mary's people in the community during Volunteering Week and

b) to introduce a regular article in Link featuring the work St Mary's people undertake in the community.

Gill Gowing

22 January 2014