

St Andrew with St Alban HeartEdge Snapshot Submission - 10 June 2017

Section 1: Name and Contact

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Section 2:

About You. *What cultural, community or commercial activity are you doing as a church? (This can be anything from using the church building to host weekly activities e.g. scouts, to leading a choir, running a food bank, hosting a night shelter, or running a community shop).*

The parish church, St Andrew, is situated in Court Road (A208) between Mottingham 'village' and Mottingham Station. The church buildings include two halls and a meeting room which, together with the church, are used for cultural and community events as well as meetings. Some of the events generate income. Each hall is equipped with a kitchen, serving hatch and toilets. The parish rectory is situated in separate grounds adjacent to the church. The rectory is sometimes used for meetings and some events are held in its garden.

St Alban, the 'daughter' church, is approximately a mile away on William Barefoot Drive in the heart of a large council estate. The small, modern church has a large attached hall, which can be opened up via a folding/sliding partition to allow easy access from/to the church. The hall is equipped with a kitchen, serving hatch and toilets. A parsonage is situated in the grounds.

Revd Ian Welch conducts most of the services held at St Andrew and Revd Anne Hoad conducts most of the services held at St Alban. The two priests swap location once a month for the Sunday morning Eucharistic service.

A range of community groups use the halls of both churches (more in St Andrew) on a weekly, monthly, occasional or annual basis. This includes Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Beavers and Cubs as well as Yoga, Weightwatchers, Pilates, Moslem Prayer Group, Dance Group, Flower Arranging, Mottingham Ladies and Alcoholics Anonymous. An Alpha course was held in St Alban's hall during the final quarter of 2016.

Members of the church organise a monthly cooked lunch and also a separate monthly coffee morning. Both usually attract 50 or more churchgoers and non-churchgoers. Income generated goes to church funds and charity.

The UK Hindu Cultural Association hires the halls several times a year and Intimate Opera hold a few operatic events each year. Occasional and annual events include the Christmas Fayre, Social Events, Mottingham Residents Association AGM, Mottingham Horticultural Society Annual Show, Polling Station, Greenwich Council meetings and Parties/Funeral Receptions.

Over the last couple of years some music and drama performances have been staged. Led by our Music Director, the church choir rehearses weekly with the support of our resident organist to rehearse for the Sunday Morning Sung Eucharist at St Andrew.

Some activities and events generate income for both churches and/or raise funds for charities. The extent of commercial activity currently is limited. Commercial Income for St Andrew in 2016 totalled almost 20% of a total income of £52.9k. In the same period, commercial income for St Alban was nearly 70% of the total income of £27k. Nearly half of St Alban's annual income comes from fees paid for an O2 mast sited on the church land.

The 2014 Mission Action Plan (MAP) is currently being reviewed with the aim of developing specific plans to achieve our agreed goals and this will necessarily include a commercial plan.

Experience. *Please describe your experience developing cultural, community or commercial activity - what is working well? What can improve? (This can refer to the work of the congregation and other volunteers, the governance or management of people and resources or other specific aspects of work. Refer to the challenges and your learning).*

A number of musical events have been organised and held recently, drawing on the talents of members of the congregation and choir. Events held in the last two years include Art Song concerts, ecumenical carol services, Advent concerts with readings, an Evening of Romantic Music and Blake's Poetry, musical afternoons and a parish, multi-ethnic, garden picnic with music and dancing by young people.

During the same period, the Rector arranged and staged plays by Ibsen and Shakespeare. These events were well attended and succeeded in raising useful income.

Building on previous Alpha courses, another 13 week course was held at St Alban at the end of 2016. Each of the sessions attracted 20-30 participants and two new 'home groups' have since been formed as a result.

Leading up to Easter, the Rector holds weekly Lent courses: these were well attended.

The UK Hindu Cultural Association events provide valuable income, but their events have revealed weaknesses in the lettings procedure so this is now under review.

The Rector is moderator of the Churches Together in Nottingham (CTIM) initiative which organises and holds a number of joint activities including; the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Annual Service, ecumenical Lent courses, Women's World Week Service, the annual Remembrance service at Nottingham war memorial, Walk of Witness and Good Friday service, Christian Aid collections, Sponsored Walk and Read-in, Carols for Crisis, ecumenical carol service and a coach outing to Broadstairs in 2016.

The congregation is warm, friendly and generally supportive. Although many volunteer for various activities, the increasing age profile of both congregations limits availability of volunteers and the more able people can often be overstretched. The current review of the MAP will focus on developing plans to address growth of the congregations, attract younger age groups and families and generate more income.

Assets. *Please summarise the assets you've identified in your church - building and the skills and resources, knowledge and experience in your congregation. (This could be people assets - please tell us about them - or the resources you're developing and using).*

Buildings

St Andrew's Church was built in 1879/80, consecrated for worship in 1880 and extended in 1912. The organ, choir stalls and pews are in good order, but some general maintenance and repair work to the church is needed. The grounds are well maintained by volunteers but the car park needs repairs that could cost up to £20k.

The larger hall is now in good repair. As well as kitchen and toilet facilities, the hall has a stage, lighting and a sound system, so it is used for plays and some music performances. The smaller hall (the Mumbray Hall) is also in a good state of repair and is often used in conjunction with the larger hall for the bigger events. The Mumbray Hall is currently managed by a separate group within the congregation, primarily for the benefit of the uniformed organisations.

Built in 1953, St Alban's is a modern, small and airy church, generally in good order, as is the attached hall, kitchen and toilets. The hall was recently used to hold a 13 session Alpha course and one of the three 'home groups' is held there. The associated parsonage has been empty for some time and has been the responsibility of the Diocese of Southwark for a number of years.

The combined facilities of both churches offer potential to generate more income than at present. The development of a commercial plan within the MAP will explore this and identify any additional equipment e.g. audio visual equipment, that might be needed.

People

Both churches benefit from loyal and supportive congregations, the majority of whose members are experienced and knowledgeable in the churches' activities. As both congregations are relatively small (especially St Alban) and the age distribution is on the higher side, the availability of volunteers with essential skills is limited. This is particularly the case when it comes to some of the technical skills now accepted as the norm. At present, few people in the congregation have these skills.

Plans to address growth will need to take account of this. It would be useful to carry out an audit to identify what skills are currently available. This could be done as part of the MAP review process.

Irrespective of this, we are fortunate to have a willing band of volunteers who visit sick or housebound church members, clean the churches, care for the grounds, provide refreshments and serve the young people's groups, including safeguarding responsibilities.

Music

St Andrew has a small, four part choir and a music director, who is a professional singer. He is supported by the church organist, an appointed position. The choir participates in the Sunday sung Eucharist and in other special events. Other musical talent in the congregation often supplements the choir. Opportunity exists to develop a programme of events, some of which could generate income for the church

Obstacles. *What are the obstacles and challenges you are facing as you develop the cultural, community or commercial activity? (Please list the bigger obstacles and challenges first. Describe how they block development).*

Like many churches around the country, St Andrew and St Alban struggle to increase regular attendance. Against the background of increased secularisation the competition for people's time has become more challenging. This trend has developed over the last few years, as can be seen from the parish statistics published on the Diocese of Southwark's website -

<http://southwark.anglican.org/information/resources/parish-statistics>

Data taken from the last two national censuses (2001 and 2011) show an increase in population (from 11,400 to 12,000) and a reduction in the proportion of those who are declared Christians (from 71% to 60%). The Annual Parochial Returns for our parish show that the average October weekly attendance of 120 in 2007 had fallen to below 50 in 2011. The current attendance figures for St Andrew are generally between 40 to 50. Attendance figures for St Alban rarely exceed 15 or thereabouts.

At the same time, the ethnicity profile in the area has changed, so there may have been growth in the number of people belonging to other faiths. These factors make ministry here harder now, so different approaches may be needed to engage with the challenging beliefs and practices of parishioners who are not in our congregation.

The absence of an effective website and communications strategy is a significant drawback. At the same time, it will be essential to review and clearly define the events booking and management procedures to include all facilities. Both items will be addressed within the current MAP review.

Needs. *What are the resources you need to develop the cultural, community or commercial activity? (Please list the resources you most need first. Small or large, relating to people, equipment or building).*

Above all, we need to build on our assets (see above) as well as maintain and strive to grow numbers in our congregations. In order to understand our position it is important to ask those who have come and become members of the congregation in recent years about the reasons why they came and why they decided to stay. We need to ask our congregations questions like:

- Recall a time when you felt most alive, most involved, spiritually touched, or most excited about involvement in St Andrew/St Alban. What made it exciting? Who was involved? How did you feel? What did you do as a result of this experience?
- What are the things you value deeply about yourself being a parishioner and St Andrew/St Alban? When do you feel best about being a parishioner and what do you value about yourself? What is it about St Andrew/St Alban that you value? What is the single most important thing that St Andrew/St Alban has contributed to your life? What is it about being a member of the Anglican denomination that you value? What is the single most important thing that being in the Anglican denomination has contributed to your life?
- What do you think is the core value of St Andrew/St Alban. What values give life to the congregations? If it does not exist, what would make your church totally different than it is?
- If you had three wishes for St Andrew/St Alban, what would they be?

The answers to these questions will help us understand our current situation, identify our strengths and weaknesses and therefore plan for success. They have yet to be asked.

Concerns. *What are the anxieties you have about your church and the cultural, community or commercial activity you're working to develop? (This kind of work can provoke all kinds of concerns - please list as many of these, starting with the bigger anxieties first).*

The need for change has been recognised by the PCC. As yet though, our agreed goals have not been achieved. Joining HeartEdge and acceptance by the PCC of the need to develop specific plans has been a good first step. However, we will need to know how best to build on the developments of the recent past in order to:

- Further develop the skills and ministries of our congregations
- Involve a wider range of people into ministry and leadership roles
- Communicate more fully with our local community
- Identify needs in our local community and minister to these needs
- Improve the provision for young people e.g. re-establish Sunday Club; set up Messy Church

The current MAP review process will have to address these concerns if progress is to be made. We hope that HeartEdge membership will help us to understand how to do this.