



# The Way Ahead

ST WILFRID'S CHURCH  
BOGNOR REGIS

## Report from the Think Tank 2007



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## *Foreword by Father Andrew Wadsworth*

My dear friends,

I commend this Think Tank Report for your prayers, for reflection, for discussion and for action, in that order.

The Think Tank was set up to reflect on the future of St Wilfrid's Church. It would have been easy to have my ideas and those of a few people put to the PCC but this would have meant that the future plans were the preserve of a few. If St Wilfrid's Church is to survive, its worship, prayer, mission and service in the Gospel Of our Lord, Jesus Christ, must be owned and acted upon by the whole Church Community.



To do this, it was important to have fresh thinking and new ideas from a group that was not involved in the normal structures of the Church. Hence the Think Tank was set up and has operated independently of the Vicar, the Churchwardens and the PCC. It has been encouraged to think the unthinkable.

I had no idea what they would come up with and, like you, I was interviewed for my thoughts. Peter, Alison, Kirsty and Chris have done a magnificent job over the last nine months since the inception of the Think Tank. They are to be thanked for their hard work.

My prayer is that this report will be the springboard for a new chapter in the life of St Wilfrid's. May the Holy Spirit lead us for the glory of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the growth of the Church and the extension of the Kingdom.

Every Blessing,

*Father Andrew*



# *The Church*

Ideas and suggestions for what could be done to the Church Building itself ranged from major reconstruction, to minor changes that would hardly be noticed. Each one has been listed separately, with a brief explanation.

## **EXTEND**

Carry out the original plans for St Wilfrids and demolish the Hall, in order to extend the Building to its original proposed size. Complete the spire and install bells.



## **INSTALL**

Install retractable panels in the archways of the Church to allow areas to be separated.

## **QUIET AREA**

Install glass paneling to create a 'quiet' area for children within the Church for children so they can see what is going on but can also escape when restless.

## **CARPET**

Install carpet either throughout the main body of the Church or, should this adversely affect the acoustics, along the thoroughfares within the Church.

## **CHAIRS**

Remove the existing chairs and replace with more modern, stackable, movable chairs like those within Chichester Cathedral.

## **REMOVAL**

Remove the stone walls, known as the 'Screen' to widen the main area of the Church.

## **CHOIR STALLS**

Remove the existing Choirstalls and replace with specialist Musicians Chairs that can be moved as and when required.

## **NORTH PORCH**

Convert the North Porch into a Visitor Centre that can be accessed at all times, giving views inside the Church and providing a haven for contemplation and prayer without compromising the security of the Church.



## *The Services*

Changes to the current Service pattern have been suggested, again each suggestion has been listed separately, with a brief explanation. Ideas which match these suggestions are already being put into operation, so only time will tell.....a common comment was that the Services are getting longer!

### **FAMILY**

A Family Service, held monthly, with a shorter Eucharist, some modern hymns, possibly involving youth musicians and singers and including the L'Arche Community.

### **SPECIAL SERVICES**

Hold special anniversary services for families who have had children baptised or confirmed in or through St Wilfrids.

### **RENEWAL**

Renewal of Marriage Vows for couples celebrating special anniversaries or who have been married in the Church that year.

### **FLOWERS**

Invite people or local businesses to sponsor flower arrangements, leading to a Flower Festival or similar occasion, thus inviting more people to 'try their hand' at Flower Arranging.



### **YOUTH**

Hold a Youth Service, involving the local Senior Schools and allowing them to take the major roles throughout the Service—Reading, Preaching , Intercessions.

### **UNIVERSITY**

Forge links with the University and invite the Students Christian Union to become more involved within the Church.

### **SCHOOLS**

Increase and maintain our links with Nyewood Junior and Infant Schools and also with BRCC, offer the use of the Church for Concerts, Carol Services. When children are involved in worship, have adequate microphones to allow everybody to hear them!



## *Our link with the Schools*

We are fortunate to have close links with both Nyewood Infant and Junior Schools, but several suggestions and ideas were made to enhance these links and extend them to other Schools in the area.

### **PRODUCE**

A Booklet for new parents, welcoming them to the family of St Wilfrid's and introducing them to our services and groups for parents and children.

### **KEEP IN TOUCH**

Maintain a communication network between all Schools, letting them have copies of the Parish Magazine and asking for input!

### **INVOLVE**

School Choirs and Drama Groups in our

Worship. Advertise and promote these joint activities. Offer the use Of the Church to other Schools For Carol Services, Leavers Services, Concerts or Drama Productions.



### **ASSEMBLIES**

Offer to take part in School Assemblies, forging more links with members of the congregation.

### **ADVERTISE**

Provide information leaflets to all Schools giving details of Special Services and Events such as Easter, Mothering Sunday and Church Fetes and Coffee Mornings.

### **WEB LINK**

Introduce a website link from the Schools to the Church Websites.

### **DISPLAY**

Display work from school children in the Church or Hall, encouraging children and parents to 'view' their artwork and maybe stay for the service?



## *Youth Activities*

The Youth Activities within the Church are dwindling rapidly, and we need to address this situation urgently, after all, to quote the song: “We believe the children are our future”.

### **ENCOURAGE**

Invite Youth Organisations to utilise our excellent Hall facilities, welcome back the Scout and Guide Associations, and also St Johns Ambulance, Red Cross or the Girls or Boys Brigade. Encourage them to attend Church Parades and welcome them into the St Wilfrid’s family. Employ a part-time Youth Worker.



### **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Change the name—maybe ‘Little Wilfs’ for the youngsters and ‘Big Wilf’s’ for the older children. Formulate a rota of helpers with a Co-Ordinator. Publish a programme of Events and ask the congregation for input. Give the children a badge or book to show they belong.

### **AFTER SCHOOL CLUB**

Offer the facilities for an ‘After-School Club’ to the Local Authority. This will provide assistance to families within the Parish and an opportunity to introduce them to the Church and what we have to offer.

### **MOTHER AND TODDLER GROUPS**

Invite people to create a Mother & Toddler Group, using the Hall facilities to provide a meeting place. This could be held in the mornings.

### **MOTHER AND CHILD GROUPS**

This is for older children, maybe held in the afternoon.

### **MAGAZINE**

Introduce Children’s pages including puzzles, stories and quizzes.

### **WEBSITE**

Have a Children’s page on the website.



## *The Church Community*

The family of the Church is of vital importance, without one where are we? These are ideas to enhance the family, and bring more people to us to share in our lives.

### **VISITORS**

Have a welcome leaflet for all visitors/newcomers. Provide information about St Wilfrid's, Bognor Regis Town and the surrounding areas in the Foyer for easy access. Have tourist maps and accommodation lists available. Provide a gift (a bookmark, postcard or pen) for visitors. Advertise in the local paper and ask for the Council to put up signs showing where St Wilfrid's is! Provide a guided tour of the building.



### **ASK**

Ask every single person to complete a form indicating if and how they can help, hold this information in a Talent Register which is accessible to all.

### **ORGANISATIONS**

Organisations must work together. Is catering the sole prerogative of the Wives' Group—maybe they would like to be catered for once in a while!  
Allow other people to help.

### **BE AWARE**

Of regular attendees who are absent—organise a telephone or visiting service to check people are well.

### **ARRANGE**

A Car Rota for people who may have difficulty in attending Church, especially during the winter months. Advertise this in the Parish Magazine.



# *The Church Community*

## **GIVING**

The congregation should be presented annually, the true state of our finances, and encourage more people to commit to Standing Orders with Gift Aid, rather than envelopes.

## **ENVELOPES**

Have Gift Donation envelopes in every seat, and encourage all to use them.

## **COLLECTIONS**

Hold regular Parish Lunches or similar events.

## **COLLECTION BOXES**

Ask the children to design a collecting box and give these out to the congregation to collect change.

## **SMARTIE TUBES**

Give each child a tube of Smarties and ask them to return the tube filled with coins.

## **FRIENDS OF ST WILFRID'S**

Set up a 'Friends of St Wilfrid's' Registered Charity and ask people to join. Use this as a means of giving out information and details of the historical and architectural beauty within St Wilfrid's.

## **FINANCES**

Present the finances in a simple and easy to follow format in advance of the APCM so people can study them beforehand.

## **ST WILFRIDS COOKBOOK**

Ask for family recipes and suggestions and incorporate them in a cookbook to be on sale in the Foyer.

## **GIFTS**

Produce a range of gifts such as tea towels, post-cards, bookmarks for sale in the Foyer.





## *The Church IN the Community*

As the parish Church in Bognor Regis, St Wilfrid's needs to advertise it's presence. When asked 'Where is the parish Church of Bognor?' Not a lot of people could answer. Here are some suggestions we received to try and improve local knowledge of who we are!

### **WELCOME**

The ever-increasing migrant community, provide details of services in other languages. Hold a welcome coffee morning.



### **PUBLICITY**

Appoint a PR person for the Church who has links with the local newspapers. Ensure that copies of the Parish Magazine are supplied to the local papers. Celebrate our successes in print.

### **REVAMP**

After Church coffee, introduce some other activities to welcome people and encourage them to stay and come back again.

### **FUNCTIONS**

Ensure we have a wide range of Childrens and Youth competitions which are advertised on local noticeboards and shops.

### **COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Provide for the community, use the Church for local Concerts involving local Amateur Dramatic Societies and Concert Bands, we have excellent acoustics and a fantastic lighting system so let's use them!

### **NOTICEBOARD**

Make the noticeboard in the Foyer more welcoming. Let the children design posters and signs and make sure information is up to date.

### **FOYER**

Don't call it a Narthex—people don't know what or where it is and it puts people off!



## *The Church Hall*

It was generally stated that we are blessed with a lovely, big Hall but that it is under-used. Several suggestions were put forward on how to remedy this situation.

### **MOVE**

The Church Office into the Small Committee room, freeing the larger room for rental. Knock an entranceway from the Large Committee room through to the Kitchen making access easier.

### **RENEW**

The Kitchen facilities bring the Hall into the 21st Century, allowing people to use it for Wedding Receptions and Parties.

### **PAINT**

The Main Hall in Magnolia, erasing the half-finished mural on the back wall, making it more suitable for hiring.

### **INSTALL**

A Mezzanine floor which will allow more storage facilities for groups wishing to use the Hall and potentially a 'den' room for the Youth Groups.

### **IMPROVE**

The Hall booking and advertising systems. We have a fantastic facility but are under-selling it.

### **STOP**

One-off monthly activities from preventing extra bookings being made. Encourage the congregation to use the Hall.

### **OBTAIN**

An Entertainment Licence to allow the sale of alcohol which will make the Hall more attractive to rent.

### **CREATE**

A Car Park at the front and side of the Hall, giving better access for disabled and for parking in general.





## *Miscellaneous!*

These are the ideas that could not really be put into specific categories, so they have been listed here, equally as important, as they reflect the views of the Congregation.

### **READING**

Create a reading rota, then people get a chance to practice readings and can easily arrange substitutes when necessary, preventing one person from having to do all the work.



### **CREATE**

An additional car parking facility by using half of the Vicarage garden. This will allow more people to park closer to the Church given the increasing problems with parking in both Ellasdale And Victoria Drive.

### **INTRODUCE**

Opportunities to play a bigger role in the Church, reading, serving, have 'taster sessions' to allow people to have a go before making a firm commitment.

### **WELCOMERS**

Have a team of people who will be appointed to welcome visitors and potential new members of the congregation, have name badges to help visitors recognise them.

### **REORGANISE**

Coffee after Church. Stop people forming 'cliques' and not mingling and talking to people. Involve the children in perhaps serving coffees or even putting on a small demonstration of what they have been doing in Sunday School that day.

### **REGENERATE**

The Parish Magazine into a more interesting read for everybody, source more advertising and feature articles on members of the congregation, as well as having puzzles, pictures and articles of interest to the wider community as well.



## *Miscellaneous (cont.)*

### **ENCOURAGE**

The creation of small groups to provide facilities for Bible Study, meeting either in the Hall or at peoples houses. Groups for Prayer, and also for support to other members of the congregation or family and friends. A friendly face and a sympathetic ear .

### **PRESERVE**

The integrity of the Church but use different areas for different purposes. The Church needs a degree of flexibility. Maintain ‘prayerful’ areas such as the Lady Chapel, but allow the main body of the Church to be used for varying purposes.

### **CREATE**

A Heritage Centre, maybe using the North Porch which would provide a secure store for Church records, a visitor information centre and an area to display the history of the Church.

### **FORMULATE**

Working parties to carry out roles within the Church, bring back the Cleaning Rota, many hands make light work!!

### **ASSESS**

The needs of the wider community, include Immigrant Population, Elderly, Mentally Ill, Holiday Makers and Schools. Make the Church a welcoming place to all.

### **REMEMBER**

People once said the horseless carriage would never catch on—who would have thought we would all have mobile phones—change is not necessarily a bad thing, we must embrace changes and not reject them if we are to survive.





## *Miscellaneous (contd)*

### **ADVERTISE**

The presence of the Church in as many areas as possible. Create leaflets and information sheets to place in Hotels, Guest Houses and Information Centres throughout the town.

### **LIVEN**

Up the Church Community. Never forget however that we are a worshipping Community.



### **STIR**

People up—Christianity it not just going to Church on Sunday mornings.

### **FAN THE FLAME**

Take part in a 'Fan the Flame' initiative. This can be run at the Church and lasts for a week. It provides a mission to the people already in the Church Community and will 'set the congregation on fire' again!

### **WISE WORDS**

The Church will grow by gathering in congregations that grow together as Faith Communities that others long to join. Communities consisting of prayer, learning and openness, care for one another and for those in need; Communities where people flourish in all that it is to be fully human, to be fully alive. Word gets out. People bring People. They say 'Come and See!'

**CH \_ \_ CH**

**What's missing? YOU ARE!**



## *In Conclusion....*

In compiling this information, we have experienced varying reactions to our questions. The majority of people have grasped the concept with bags of enthusiasm, but some have treated us with suspicion bordering on hostility!

Our main aim, which should be everybody's, is to preserve and maintain our Church in our Community—for the present and for the future. The Think Tank exercise has shown the wealth of ideas and suggestions that are present within our own ranks, which has been refreshing and invigorating, and it has been exciting to see the enthusiasm starting to break forth in people when they have understood that we are not here to change the world they are comfortable in, but to enhance it and make it even better.

As we have stated on numerous occasions, these suggestions are exactly what it says—suggestions—no firm decisions have been made but this document and the presentation provides the seeds for thought, from which will grow and flourish the future of our Church.

May we take this opportunity of thanking Father Andrew and all the members of the congregation we have spoken to for their input. We have enjoyed the experience and as we commend our findings to you, we hope that this is only the start of the blossoming future of St Wilfrids.

### *THE THINK TANK*



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