

**Could you help some people in the community?
(Please)**

Rector's Letter: July 2019

I hope that you managed to set aside a little bit of time appreciating all the good things in your life, and all the people who make your life fruitful and worthwhile. Perhaps you managed to also think about how you use your time; whether that is all about work, or whether other things and other people get a look-in on your most precious gift - your time? If you did spend a bit of time thinking, mid-year, about a resolution, then could I ask you to have a think about helping some other people in the community please?

In Sandhurst, on 10 September, the St Nicholas Church family is launching 'Blend', an after-school café/club aimed at children in school years 7-10. It is going to be held in the Mission Church, every Tuesday from 4-6pm in term time: the start time to coincide with the drop-off time of the school buses in the village. The aim is to provide a safe space where teens can come to meet their friends once a week, and take part in games and activities (pool, table tennis, board games, crafts), and enjoy milkshakes, cakes and healthier snacks. Our hope is that Blend will create strong relationships with the young people and their families. This project has been running successfully at St Mary's Church in Goudhurst for over a year. We have met with the leaders there and they have kindly shared the model that they have evolved.

With the mental health and wellbeing of young people a primary concern in our communities, Blend offers not only an opportunity to build friendships between the church and the young people, but also a place for them to be able to talk to mature and caring adults in a safe environment, in confidence, and without judgement.

Benenden does have the Street Cruizer bus in the village once a week, but this is mobile and doesn't get here until 6pm. I don't wish to compete with this. I believe that both can coincide and support our children. The church building can offer space for larger games (eg pool and table tennis) and the timing means that youngsters can come straight from the school bus and meet with friends who have gone to other secondary schools. If this touches a chord with you, and you feel this is something you could make happen, would you contact me please? The church has the venue to make this happen; we can probably raise some helpers/leaders; and we can probably sort out some finances to bring this about. What I need are people to come forward who have a passion to bring this about and help the youngsters of the village with another support system. Can you please help us help them? Please contact me if you think Benenden should run a Blend café/club. Thank you.

Revd David Commander, Rector