How Village Churches Thrive

Being the Heartbeat of the Community
St Mary the Virgin Church, Mursley

• North Bucks
• Population 722 (2021) up from 611 (2011)
• Households approx. 280
• Significant changes in character due to Milton Keynes
• Becoming commuter dominated
• More affluence
• Less volunteers
• The role of the Church?
The Heartbeat of the Community

• Not a club for committed members
• More than happens on Sunday
• Community Focused Mission
  Action Plan
  • Building fit for 21st century
  • Raise awareness in the community of opportunities and challenges in church life
  • Be visible as a worshipping community in activities outside the church

<Image of baptism party removed>
A Building fit for 21\textsuperscript{st} Century.......the enabler

- A toilet
- A kitchenette
- An open space, removed some pews
- Purchased tables and chairs
- An audio visual system
- Radiator heating already installed
- Community support for grants over 200 signatures of support, a few objectors
- Work done in 2020-21
- Aspiration since 1995!!!
- ........then our big opportunity........
Our Pub Closed......The Church Arms Opened

• The PCC offered to run a meeting place serving alcohol and soft drinks in church
• Twice a month with an activity/speaker
• 40-60 attend, 150+ over the year
• A handful of objections

• Toilet objectors now see the value!!
Other Community Activities in Church

- Soup Lunch
- Art Exhibitions
- Concerts
- Village Choir
- School Services
- Just Jackets
- In future, Film Night, Afternoon Tea
Community Collaboration not Competition

- Joint fundraising events with Sports Association and Village Hall
- Jointly lobbied Parish Council to increase the Parish Precept to support our organisations
- Neighbourhood Plan input
- School history project
- Church Arms Friday, Sportsmans Arms Saturday
Use of Rectory Room

- Post Office
- Coffee morning
- Parish Council Community library
- Registered Warm Space
Other examples, benefits and comments

• Food Bank collection point
• Two church members are nursing trained, often called
• Christmas lunch for senior members of the community
• The church is kept warm and feels ‘lived in’
• Evidence of community use attracts grants
• Extra income from events

I’ve never been inside before, it’s a magnificent building

We feel at home in the church now

This doesn’t feel like a church

A long time since the church saw so many people
Learning

• Look for opportunities to meet a need
• Do what works in your community
• Collaborate with other organisations
• Have a set of 3 or 4 goals and actions MAP

• The role of the church?
  • Be relevant in the community
  • Have Fun!!
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Thank you for listening

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