

Festival Churches in the Diocese of Leicester

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A new area of work

- Enable PCCs to explore the Festival Church model
- Develop thinking on Festival Churches & a pathway to becoming a Festival Church
- Resource & support the process
- Signpost networks/events to support Festival Churches
- Build capacity in this emerging area!



Myths about Festival Churches

Misleading name!

- It is not simply about the number of services held in a church building
- Not about focusing services at Major Festivals
- Not a pathway to closure
- Not a permanent status
- Will not work for every church



What is a Festival Church?

A model of 'doing' church:

Festival Church is a church building which is not used for weekly worship, but is an open church, a local icon & a community asset

At least 6 planned services a year

An opportunity to use the building for other purposes



Our Pathway to becoming a Festival Church ...

- Enable parishes to '**stop & re-imagine**' their mission and worship
- **Doing less & doing it better/differently,**
- Engage positively with the local community
- Form '**A New Covenant**' with the community
- **Seasons** - Recognises that the role of churches change over time so it is not permanent



Our Pathway to becoming a Festival Church ...

.....is a positive and proactive decision

.....is NOT a step on the road to closure!



A proactive decision to...

- Keep church open for worship (at least 6 services a year)
- Re-imagine worship to respond to local needs
- Widen range of people who use & care about the building
- continue to care for the building
- consider adapting governance models so others can play an active role in managing the building



Important considerations

- Governance matters!
- Should buildings be open outside services?
- What is the impact on paying Parish Contribution?
- What opportunities are there for people to learn more about the Christian faith.... and how is this communicated?
- Is the status of Festival Churches to be reviewed? If so, how often?



Case study – St Mary’s Church Walton-le-Wolds



The route to becoming a Festival Church Matters

Why cant the PCC just write a letter to the Bishop?

The process really matters to the success of the model

Consultation is key - not just about individual PCC
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Pathway Step 1: Stop & Re-imagine

Consultation with The local Community...

What purpose does an open church building serve within the local community?

.... & within The Minster Community

- *E.g. How will adopting this model fit within the Parish/ Wider Benefice/Minster Community?*



Pathway Step 1: Stop & Re-imagine

Hold a community meeting, explain what the plans are – actively engage their support; ask them what they need from the church.

Enter into a new covenant with the community, explaining what the parish need from them to keep the church going

Commit to do less in the church, do it better /differently– but in partnership with the community.

Identify individuals who wish to help, and what they can offer



Step 2: Make a plan

Take a lead from the community's response:

Individuals who have come forward – can we build a team?

Needs and wishes expressed from the wider community which the church might fulfil – which services/festivals?

Identify the best route to bring people on board

New PCC members

A sub-committee of the PCC or a separate Friends Group



Step 3: Proposal & Permission

- Prepare a written proposal/plan
- Seek Bishop's/Archdeacons approval



Reality check - Is it the right way forwards?

Do the opportunities offered by becoming a Festival Church...

....meet the actual challenges that the PCC are facing?

....AND meet real local needs?

... AND be locally supported?

Only proceed if answer is yes to all the questions!

