



Diocese of Brentwood

Stewards of the Gospel

Parish Questionnaire



Stewards of the Gospel – Parish Questionnaire



This questionnaire provides a framework for each parish community in the Diocese to explore its vitality and future direction. The prayer, consultation and reflection that lead to your responses are of central importance to this whole process; the questionnaire is simply the document for systematically recording the outcomes of your deliberations.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire is presented in 3 parts.

Part A – *A Picture of Our Community* – provides the opportunity to gather, explore and present facts and figures about a wide range of facets of parish life.

Part B – *Reflective Questions* – key questions under 10 main headings for open discussion by your parish community, and the opportunity to highlight existing good practice.

Part C – *Our Community's Initial Thoughts and Ideas about the Future* – where your parish community is asked to provide its first thoughts about how it might move forward.

Ultimately, we would like all parishes to provide their final responses using an on-line questionnaire as this will allow us to collate and analyse responses efficiently – and we will be providing information later in the year about how to do this. However, while drafting and sharing your responses within the parish, you may find that the electronic version of the questionnaire proves to be the best way of recording and storing your responses. The e-version of this document is available to download under “resources” on the diocesan website, www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/departments/evangelisation.

Please get in touch if you have any questions or if you have any comments or suggestions to make.

The DSPG Steering Group: Fr Andrew Headon and Ms Adele Angel can be contacted at dspg@dioceseofbrentwood.org

Background Details

Name of parish:

Great Bardfield and Thaxted

Details of church(es) in the parish:

Church name	Church address
Church of The Holy Spirit	Braintree Road, Great Bardfield, CM7 4RN
Church of The English Martyrs	The Chase, Park Street, Thaxted, CM6 2NE

Key parish contacts:

Priest(s)	Permanent Deacon(s)	Steward of the Gospel
Fr Richard Rowe	N/A	c/o Damian Walsh
		Ginger Group

Details of main contact for this questionnaire:

Name:	Fiona Walsh	Address: The Russetts Bumpstead Road Hempstead CB10 2PW
Telephone No:	01799 599775	
Email Address:	fionajwalsh@yahoo.co.uk	

Part A – A Picture of Our Community

Part A of the questionnaire takes respondents through the 10 main headings and requests detailed responses to a number of factual questions under each.

1 The Christian Faithful

1.1 Please complete the grids below to indicate how the number of those worshipping in your parish community has changed since 1985.

Mass attendance

1985	1990	1995	2000	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
120	102	215	109	105	102	118	104	102	96	92	93	105	102

Baptisms

1985	1990	1995	2000	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
4	6	9	8	6	5	4	7	8	7	7	6	3	3

Confirmations

1985	1990	1995	2000	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
?	?	?	6	0	0	5	0	0	8	1	8	0	1

Marriages

1985	1990	1995	2000	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
1	0	1	2	4	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	2

Receptions

1985	1990	1995	2000	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
0	0	0	6	6	6	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3

1.2 Are you aware of any significant demographic changes (e.g. a large increase / decrease in the overall population, an increase in the number of immigrants etc.) in your local area in the last 10 years that have impacted / will impact on your parish?

- Yes
 No

1.3 If Yes, please give a brief description of the changes and their impact on your parish community.

Brief description of change	Impact or potential impact
Approximately 2,500 new houses built in our area	Extra people and families becoming members of our churches

1.4 Are you aware of other significant changes in the local area that are impacting / likely to impact upon your parish? (Examples could include: major housing developments, the closure of a large employer, the development of a new industrial estate, an increase in youth unemployment etc.)

- Yes
 No

1.5 If Yes, please provide a brief description of the changes and their impact / potential impact on your parish community as far as you are able.

Brief description of change	Impact or potential impact
Uttlesford are planning for up to 11,500 new houses to be built by 2033, some as 'new settlement sites'.	Extra people and families becoming members of our churches. An increase in population size would provide a need for a new school.
Plans for 1500 – 1700 new homes in the Little Dunmow and Takely area.	Extra people and families becoming members of our churches.
Great Bardfield – planning application passed for 40 new homes.	Extra people and families becoming members of our churches.
Planned closure of Carver Barracks 2031 (Wimbish).	The 'released' land is potential redevelopment for new houses.
Proposal for new 'Garden Village' in Great Saling of 10,000 houses	Extra people and families becoming members of our churches.

- 1.6 Based on the most recent reported average Mass attendance for your parish please give an **approximate** age breakdown using the categories below.

Note: We are seeking a 'best guess' here - unless you feel that taking a more systematic / survey approach would be helpful to you.

Age range	Approximate number
0-10	30/2*
11-18	10/3*
19-25	10/0*
26-49	65/2*
50-70	20/11*
Over 70	15/17*
TOTAL	150/35*

***Great Bardfield/Thaxted numbers (above)**

2 Leadership

- 2.1 Please provide details about the leadership roles in your parish community (e.g. Permanent Deacons, Lay Leaders, Chair of Parish Pastoral Council, SVP President, Chair of Finance Committee, Head Teacher, Chair of Governors, Music Group Leader etc.) Please provide approximate numbers where possible.

Role	Number
Parish Council Chair	1
Ginger Group (PPC)	1
Chair of Finance Committee	1
Music Group Leader	2/1

2.2 Please describe the situation in your community regarding a Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) or equivalent group

- No PPC or equivalent is in place (*Go to Question 2.11*)
- A PPC or equivalent is in place but is having little or no impact on the parish community
- A PPC or equivalent is in place and is having a significant impact on the parish community

2.3 Where a PPC or equivalent is in place, please indicate the year that it was established.

pre 1980

Parish Council as PPC version reply for Q. 2.4 to 2.10

2.4 Where a PPC or equivalent is in place, does it have a written constitution?

- Yes
- No

2.5 Where a PPC or equivalent is in place, how frequently does it meet?

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Monthly | Every
2 months | Every
4 months | Every
6 months | Annually | Other |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> |

If other, please specify

Quarterly

2.6 What is the process for setting the agenda for the PPC or equivalent?

- The agenda is agreed at the beginning of the meeting
- The chair seeks items in advance
- The chair determines the agenda
- There is a standard agenda for every meeting

2.7 Who chairs the PPC or equivalent?

- Priest
- Deacon
- Lay person
- Religious

2.8 How are people in the parish informed about the membership and work of the PPC or equivalent?

Minutes posted in both Churches. Annual General Parish Meeting. Occasional items in Parish Newsletter.

2.9 Which parish(es) is / are represented on the PPC or equivalent?

Great Bardfield and Thaxted: single Parish.

2.10 What is the number and approximate age profile of members?

Age range	Number
Under 40	1
40 -70	4
Over 70	8
TOTAL	13

2.3 Where a PPC or equivalent is in place, please indicate the year that it was established.

Ginger Group as PPC version reply for Q. 2.4 to 2.10

2015

2.4 Where a PPC or equivalent is in place, does it have a written constitution?

Yes No

2.5 Where a PPC or equivalent is in place, how frequently does it meet?

Monthly
 Every 2 months
 Every 4 months
 Every 6 months
 Annually
 Other

2.6 What is the process for setting the agenda for the PPC or equivalent?

- The agenda is set at the previous meeting
- The chair seeks items in advance
- The chair determines the agenda

2.7 Who chairs the PPC or equivalent?

- Lay person

2.8 How are people in the parish informed about the membership and work of the PPC or equivalent?

Known as 'The Ginger Group', the parish is informed by written minutes, circulated by email, and paper copies in church. There is also a board dedicated to updates including minutes, Diocesan missives and maps etc (SotG information). Also in church newsletter and occasional verbal notification at the end of Mass.

2.9 Which parish(es) is / are represented on the PPC or equivalent?

Great Bardfield and Thaxted. However, invitations have been offered to Stewards of the Gospel from other parishes in the Deanery and some have attended our meetings.

2.10 What is the number and approximate age profile of members?

Age range	Number
Under 40	8
40 -70	20
Over 70	5
TOTAL	33

2.11 Is there a Finance Committee in place in the parish?

- Yes No

2.12 If Yes, how frequently does it meet?

- Monthly Every 2 months Every 4 months Every 6 months Annually Other

If other, please specify

As required

2.13 What is the process for setting the agenda for the Finance Committee?

- The agenda is agreed at the beginning of the meeting
 The agenda is set at the previous meeting
 The chair seeks items in advance
 The chair determines the agenda
 There is a standard agenda for every meeting

2.14 Who chairs the Finance Committee?

- Priest Deacon Lay Person Religious

2.15 How are people in the parish informed about the membership and work of the Finance Committee?

At the Parish Council meetings and circulated P.C. minutes. If required, on newsletter.

2.16 What is the number and approximate age profile of members?

Age range	Number
Under 40	
40 -70	
Over 70	3
TOTAL	3

3 Active Involvement of People

3.1 How many people in your parish community are registered for ministries that were subject to DBS (formerly CRB) checks in 2015?

7

(several people are also in the process of undergoing DBS checks)

3.2 How does this compare with the position in 2010?

7

3.3 Are there any paid workers for your parish community?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide details below.

Role Title	Number	Total hours contracted per week
Gardener @ Gt Bardfield and cleaner @ Thaxted	2	NA

3.4 Please indicate approximately how many lay people in your parish, in the age categories shown, are involved with delivering parish / deanery programmes.

Role	Under 40	40 - 70	Over 70	Total
Baptism preparation			1	1
Holy Communion preparation		1		1
Confirmation preparation		2	2	4
Marriage preparation			1	1
RCIA programme delivery				
Other <i>(please list these below)</i>				
North Essex Deanery Pastoral Council (chairman)		1		1

3.5 Please list below other non-liturgical* lay voluntary roles that are present in your parish community along with numbers in the age categories shown. Please think widely here (e.g. PPC members, church cleaners, welcomers, Finance Committee members, musicians, flower arrangers, gardeners etc.)

*Note: Question 4.4 will ask for information about liturgical roles.

Role	Under 40	40 - 70	Over 70	Total
Parish Council	1	4	8	13
PPC (Ginger Group)	8	20	5	33
Finance Committee			3	3
Church Music	5/0*	7/3*		12/3*
Church Flowers		6/1*	0/5*	6/6*
Coffee mornings (Great Bardfield only)		9	5	14
Church Cleaning		6/1*		6/1*
Gardening		5/1*	2/2*	7/3*
Decorating		3/4*		3/4*
Building		2/0*		2/0*
Church Newsletter			1	1
NEDPC (chairman)		1		1
*Great Bardfield /Thaxted numbers				

3.6 Please identify the full range of social activities that take place in the parish community along with their frequency (where relevant).

Social Activity	Frequency
Sunday Coffee mornings in Great Bardfield	Monthly
Coffee Mornings after Children's Masses	4 per year
Quiz Nights	1 per year
Christmas Carol Service	Annual
Deanery Days eg Family Fun Days	Annual
Cathedral visit	Ad hoc

4 Worship and Spiritual Life

4.1 Please indicate the venues and times of Masses currently celebrated each weekend.

Venue	Day	Time
The Holy Spirit, Great Bardfield	Sunday	9.15am
English Martyrs, Thaxted	Sunday	11.00am

4.2 Please provide details of any planned changes to these arrangements.

None known

4.3 Please provide details of other regular services celebrated in the parish community along with an indication of their frequency and venue.

Service	Frequency	Venue
Weekday Mass	Monday and Friday 10am	Great Bardfield
Weekday Mass	Wednesday 10am	Thaxted

4.4 Approximately how many lay people have specific roles in the planning, preparation and celebration of Masses and other liturgies?

Contribution	Number
Readers	19/10*
Eucharistic Ministers	9/5*
Funeral Assistants	0
Children's Liturgy leaders	2/0*
Altar Servers	7/5*
Musicians & Choir	12/3*
Leaders of Morning / Evening Prayer	-
Sacristans	2/2*
Homily Preparation	Priest
Flowers	6/6*
Church Cleaning	6/1*
*Great Bardfield / Thaxted numbers	

- 4.5 Please identify the range of other activities that contribute to the spiritual life of your parish community. Please think widely about the full range. (e.g. Prayer groups, Rosary groups, Parish Pilgrimages, Retreat Days, Accompanied Prayer etc.)

Group / Activity	Frequency	Venue
Deanery Lenten Day of Recollection	Annual	St Theresa of Lisieux, Stansted
Women's Day of Prayer	Annual	Great Bardfield Parish Hall
Chickney NEDPC Mass	Annual	Chickney Church, Broxton
Women's Day of Prayer	Annual	Thaxted United Reform Church

5 Education and Continuing Formation

Adult Formation

- 5.1 Please identify the Adult Formation activities (offered by the parish, deanery or diocese) that people from your parish have participated in over the last 3 years. Where possible, please indicate the approximate number of people who have participated.

Adult Formation Activity	Yes / No		Approximate Number
	Yes	No	
Catechist Training Programmes	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Eucharistic Ministry Training	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	2+
Reader Training	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
CCRS Courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Lenten Study Groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Other Formation Activities (<i>please list below</i>)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
DCCS (but done within East Anglian diocese)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	1

- 5.2 Does your parish offer a Journey in Faith programme to support Catholics who wish to learn more about their faith?

Yes No

Young people in schools and their families

Catholic primary school(s) serving your parish

- 5.3 For each Catholic primary school serving your parish please complete the following information:

School Name: St Thomas More Catholic Primary School			
	2008	2012	2015
Total no. of Pupils	202	207	211
% of Catholic Pupils	85%	80.2%	77.7%
Total no. of Teachers	11	12	20
% of Catholic Teachers	50%	50%	40%

- 5.4 Please describe briefly how the primary school(s) and the parish work together to prepare children for the sacraments.

Children are prepared for First Holy Communion in the parish at Great Bardfield. The school uses the 'Come and See' programme.

5.5 How is / are the primary school(s) involved in the adult faith formation of the children’s parents?

N/A

5.6 Where a Parish Pastoral Council or equivalent exists is there representation from the Head Teacher(s) or other staff member?

Yes No

5.7 Where a Parish Pastoral Council or equivalent exists does the membership include school governors?

Yes No

5.8 Please describe how the primary school promotes links with the parish community and how the parish community promotes links with the school (e.g. Mini Vinnies, Fair Trade, joint social activities etc.)

Link	Brief description
<i>Example: Joint Social Events</i>	<i>Termly joint fund-raising social events held in school hall</i>
First Holy Communion	Teachers from St Thomas More Saffron Walden attend FHC and celebration afterwards
Children’s Liturgy Group	Many children from Children’s Liturgy Group at Great Bardfield attend St Thomas More School, Saffron Walden
Children’s Masses at Great Bardfield	Advertised in school newsletter inviting <i>all</i> children and their families
School Bazaars and Fetes	Parish members invited to these via church newsletter

5.9 Please give details of any joint parish / school celebrations of the Eucharist. Please include frequency and location.

**All parishioners are invited to all school Masses.
School attends a small number of Masses in local churches.**

Harvest Festival as we are a rural community (annual, in school).

5.10 Please give details of any joint school / parish non-Eucharistic celebrations. Please include frequency and location.

None

5.11 Please describe any ways in which the school and parish share their buildings and other resources. (e.g. Hall, meeting rooms, minibuses etc.)

**N/A.
Unfortunately, as a rural community, the distances between our churches and the primary school are too great to be able to make use of buildings etc.
The school does not have a minibus.**

Catholic Secondary (including Middle) school(s) serving your parish

5.12 For each Catholic secondary school serving your parish please provide the following information:

School Name: St Mary's, Bishop Stortford			
	2008	2012	2015
Total no. of Pupils	?*	?	?
% of Catholic Pupils	?	?	?
Total no. of Teachers	?	?	?
% of Catholic Teachers	?	?	?

***Requests made to school for pupil/teacher statistics (table above) but still awaiting response.**

5.13 Please describe briefly how the secondary school(s) and the parish work together to prepare young people for the sacraments.

Unfortunately, there is no link with the secondary school which is in Westminster Diocese and is approximately 18 miles from both churches in our parish.

5.14 How is / are the secondary school(s) involved in the adult faith formation of the children's parents? (Include any joint work with the parish).

N/A

5.15 Where a Parish Pastoral Council or equivalent exists is there any representation from the secondary school(s)?

- Yes No

5.16 Please describe how the secondary school(s) promote links with the parish community and how the parish community promotes links with the school(s) (e.g. Fair Trade, John Paul II Award, joint outreach activities etc.)

Link	Brief description
<i>Example: Lenten Fundraising initiatives</i>	<i>Joint fundraising effort between parish and school with a specific outreach cause identified each year.</i>
No links with secondary school, which is in Westminster Diocese.	

5.17 Please give details of any joint parish / secondary school celebrations of the Eucharist. Please include frequency and location.

None

5.18 Please give details of any joint parish / secondary school non-Eucharistic celebrations. Please include frequency and location.

None

5.19 Please describe any ways in which the school and parish share their buildings and other resources. (e.g. Hall, meeting rooms, minibuses etc.)

School is 18 miles from both churches in our parish so not possible.

6 Outreach

6.1 Does your parish / deanery offer a RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) programme?

- Yes No

6.2 If Yes, how often does this take place?

6.3 Please indicate any outreach activities that your parish is involved with *in the local area* (e.g. Food banks, Homeless projects, Asylum Seekers / Refugees, Prisoners / the families of prisoners, Drop-ins, Chaplaincy, Justice and Peace, Lourdes Youth etc.) Please indicate whether the parish makes a financial commitment.

Outreach activity	Brief description	Financial Commitment (Yes / No)	
<i>Example: Redbridge Sunday Drop-in</i>	<i>5 parishioners are involved on the weekly rota for this ecumenical project across the town. All parishioners are asked to contribute canned goods which are collected each week.</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food Bank	Parishioners donate food and this is delivered to a central point by a parishioner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Christian Aid	Parishioners involved in collecting money. Participating in 'Big Breakfast'	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Women's world Day of Prayer	Local churches of all denominations join together in prayer and action for peace and justice.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

6.4 Please describe any active involvement your parish has in the cultural and political life of the local neighbourhood / district (e.g. local governance, social action, ward meetings, community forums etc.)

N/A

6.5 Please describe any links that the parish community has *with other parts of the world*. (e.g. CAFOD, MISSIO – Red Boxes, our twin Diocese of Dundee, Aid to the Church in Need, parish overseas projects etc.) Please indicate whether the parish makes a financial commitment.

Outreach activity	Brief description	Financial Commitment (Yes / No)	
		Yes	No
Example: Kenya Project	A strong link has been in place for 10 years with Community in Kenya resulting in the development of various activities including a village-based water project and a chicken farming project.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CAFOD	Friday Fast and collections through year	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Missio	Red Boxes for individual collections.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Aid to Church in Need	Speaker visited Mass, collections.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Brentwood Children's Society	Christmas cards, sponsored walk	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
BCS, Mission Together, CAFOD, CAN, World Vision	Children's Liturgy Group has 'Sunny Day Collection Bags'. Money collected goes to children's charities and disaster appeals around the world.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Samaritan's Purse Shoe Box Appeal	Parishioners fill a shoe box to be sent off to children and elderly around the world, including UK.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6.6 During the past 12 months in what ways has the priest / deacon / religious engaged with other Christian faith leaders in the locality?

<p>Churches Together in Thaxted (lay and clergy involvement)</p>

6.7 During the past 12 months in what ways has the parish community engaged with other Christian communities in the locality? (Please include activities / services as part of Churches Together, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Joint acts of witness / shared worship, joint social activities and joint outreach activities.)

Activity	Brief description
<i>Example: Good Friday Walk of Witness</i>	<i>Around 70 people from all Christian denominations in the town walked behind a cross being carried between the churches concluding with prayer in the Town Centre.</i>
Stations of The Cross	During Lent, offered in Catholic/Anglican setting – open to all others.
Good Friday Walk of Witness	Churches Together in Thaxted, inspiration etc
Anglican, Baptist, Catholic and United Reformed Church (ABC&U)	Parish magazine in Thaxted
Women’s World Day of Prayer	Unity in prayer and devotion
Silent Prayer Days, Clare Priory	People gather together to spend the day in guided silent prayer to deepen their spirituality.
Harvest Supper	Thaxted, Ecumenical, organised by Anglican church

6.8 Over the past 12 months in what ways has the parish community engaged with Faith communities other than Christians in the locality? Please include visits, talks, joint activities etc.

Activity	Brief description
<i>Example: Talk about the Jewish Passover Festival</i>	<i>Well attended evening talk at St Michael’s Church with invitations to all Christian denominations in the area.</i>
None known	

6.9 In what ways does the parish publicise itself and its activities to the wider community locally? (e.g. local media, posters in public buildings, website, leaflets etc.)

Church notice boards, Ecumenical Parish Magazine, new parish website (just up and running)

7 Finances

7.1 Please complete the details below.

a) Income and Expenditure

£'s	2006	2010	2015
Income:			
Offertory	28,210	32,826	37,828
Gift Aid	6812	7618	6753
Donations	390	205	2000
Other income	6008	7582	4756
Total Income	41,420	48,231	51,337
Expenditure:			
Property	7003	5212	3575
Personnel	15,037	18,989	15,884
Other costs	21,958	28,392	19,960
Total Expenditure	43,998	52,593	39,419
Surplus / (Deficit)	(2578)	(4362)	11,918

b) Surplus / deficit ignoring any extraordinary income or expenditure

£'s	2006	2010	2015
Surplus / (Deficit)	(2578)	(4362)	11,918

NB. This represents income minus expenditure, ignoring any extraordinary income or expenditure, e.g. one-off legacy or significant property repairs, etc.

Please answer the following questions based on the information collected above.

7.2 Does the current annual income for the parish meet its annual expenditure?

- Yes
 No

7.3 How has the parish income changed since 2006?

Gross income increased by 24% between 2006 and 2015. This reduces to 19% if the £2000 donation is excluded.

7.4 What are the major factors that have impacted upon parish income since 2006?

An increase in offertories from £28,210 in 2006 to £37,828 in 2015. This includes an increase in weekly offertories from £5.17 in 2016 to £7.13 per head. Since the current Priest-in-Charge, Fr Richard Rowe, succeeded Fr John Timmins, who passed away a few years ago, the parish has moved from formerly needing to use parish income to support the Parish Priest (Fr John) to, albeit temporarily, currently not needing to do so with the current Priest-in-Charge (Fr Richard) situation.

7.5 Please provide the following information about parish balances:

£'s	Amount at March 2006	Amount at March 2010	Amount at March 2015
Parish Deposit (or loan)	-	3161	-
Parish Current Account	5575	3811	18,926

7.6 What is the percentage of people in the parish community who are signed up to Gift Aid?

55%

7.7 What is the average offertory per head each week?

£7.13

7.8 Please describe how parishioners are informed annually of the parish finances.

- By verbal statement
- By a displayed written statement
- By each person receiving a written statement (e.g. in bulletin)
- Through a general meeting
- Other – please describe

**Occasional verbal appeals for specific projects.
Occasional verbal appeals to increase offertories.**

7.9 Please describe any significant fundraising activities that are in place within the parish at present.

Purpose of fundraising	Method(s) used
<i>Example: To subsidise costs for young people going to Lourdes</i>	<i>Raffles and sponsored walk</i>
No significant fundraising at present	

7.10 Please identify any factors (e.g. population shift, changes in local employment etc.) that will have a significant impact on the *financial position* of the parish over the next 5 years.

Factor	Potential Impact
New developments (see Qs 1.3-1.5)	Higher plate revenue

7.11 Please describe any expenditure (excluding property costs) of more than £15K per individual project, anticipated within the next 5 years.

Nature of Expenditure	Anticipated Cost
Restoration of both flats (?for retired clergy or ? rental of one flat)	Unquantified
Refurbishment and extension by way of a ramp for disabled access and fire exit at Great Bardfield	Unquantified
Consideration of the gradual decay and decline of the 1950's military building at Thaxted ('nissan hut' church building)	Unquantified
If Fr Richard Rowe retired we would have the additional cost of c£16,000 if a new priest was approved, to cover salary, housekeeping and car	C£16,000
New windows at Great Bardfield	Unquantified

8 Facilities: Great Bardfield, then Thaxted

Note: Where there is more than one church within a parish, this section will need to be repeated for each church site. Additional copies of this section and the next (Section 9 – Geographic Distance) are available on the website. Please use as many of these as you require.

GREAT BARFIELD

8.1 Please provide information about the buildings associated with each church site within the parish.

Parish Name		Church Name		Capacity		
Great Bardfield and Thaxted		Church of the Holy Spirit, Great Bardfield		c. 150		
In your opinion			Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
8.2	What is the overall state of repair of the Church?		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.3	What is the overall state of repair of the Presbytery?		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.4	What is the overall state of repair of the Church Hall?		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
					Yes	No
8.5	Is there a car park?				<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8.6	If Yes, how many parking spaces are there?					
8.7	Is there a parish office?				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.8	Are there secure on-site storage facilities for confidential documentation?				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.9	Is there an appointed Health & Safety Officer?				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.10	Are the following regular check-ups up to date:					
	• Portable electrical appliances?				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	• Gas safety (Not applicable)				<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.11	Are the following facilities available for people with disabilities?					
	• Accessible toilets				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	• Level access				<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
	• Ramped access				<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
	• Loop system				<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8.12	If any of the above provision is lacking are there plans in place to improve the facilities?				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.13	If Yes, please elaborate: Parish Council are in active consideration about the buildings, their usage and improvement (See 7.11).					

8.14 Does the church have a cemetery?

- Yes No

8.15 If Yes, who has responsibility for its care?

N/A

8.16 Please identify any other land / property for which the parish is responsible. (e.g. Residential lettings etc.)

Property / Land	Description
N/A	

8.17 Please describe the meeting spaces that the church has and how many people they can accommodate.

Meeting Space	No. of people
Church Hall	50-60
Rooms in one of the flats downstairs (Priest's flat)	30

8.18 Is there a place for smaller weekday Masses?

- Yes No

If Yes, please provide details

The largest room in the former Priest's flat downstairs.

8.19 Does the community have property that is in excess of its requirements?

- Yes No

8.20 If Yes, please give details and any suggestions of ways to realise its potential.

Property / Land	Details / Suggestions
Two flats underneath church, one in need of extensive renovation	Possibility for retired clergy or to rent to people in need of accommodation.

8.21 Are your premises used by external groups / organisations?

- Yes No

8.22 If Yes, please provide details of the nature and frequency of the activity and whether the organisation pays a hire charge.

Group	Activity	Frequency	Hire charge (Y / N)	
			<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Example: Scouts</i>	<i>Pack Meeting</i>	<i>Weekly during term time</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8.23 Does the parish collaborate with other denominations locally regarding use of buildings?

- Yes No

8.24 If Yes, please elaborate.

--

8.25 Do you anticipate any instances of expenditure on property (£5k or more on a single item / project) in the next 5 years?

- Yes No

8.26 If Yes, please provide details.

Expenditure	Anticipated Cost
New windows for church building	Unquantified
Ramp to provide disabled access and fire exit	Unquantified
Refurbishment of downstairs flat to include new kitchens and bathrooms	Unquantified
Security system	Unquantified

8.27 Please indicate the distances from the nearest primary and secondary schools to the church.

Name of school	Distance
St Thomas More Catholic Primary School (Transport paid by parents £300 per child per term)	13 miles
St Mary's Catholic School (secondary)	17 miles

8 Facilities: Thaxted

THAXTED

8.1 Please provide information about the buildings associated with each church site within the parish.

Parish Name		Church Name		Capacity		
Great Bardfield and Thaxted		Church of the English Martyrs, Thaxted		c. 75		
In your opinion			Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
8.2	What is the overall state of repair of the Church?		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.3	What is the overall state of repair of the Presbytery? (Not applicable)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.4	What is the overall state of repair of the Church Hall? (Not applicable)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
					Yes	No
8.5	Is there a car park?				<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8.6	If Yes, how many parking spaces are there?					
8.7	Is there a parish office?				<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8.8	Are there secure on-site storage facilities for confidential documentation?				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.9	Is there an appointed Health & Safety Officer?				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.10	Are the following regular check-ups up to date:					
	• Portable electrical appliances?				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	• Gas safety (Not applicable)				<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.11	Are the following facilities available for people with disabilities?					
	• Accessible toilets				<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
	• Level access				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	• Ramped access				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	• Loop system				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.12	If any of the above provision is lacking are there plans in place to improve the facilities?				<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8.13	If Yes, please elaborate: Parish Council are in active consideration about the buildings, their usage and improvement (See 7.11					

8.14 Does the church have a cemetery?

- Yes No

8.15 If Yes, who has responsibility for its care?

N/A

8.16 Please identify any other land / property for which the parish is responsible. (e.g. Residential lettings etc.)

Property / Land	Description
N/A	

8.17 Please describe the meeting spaces that the church has and how many people they can accommodate.

Meeting Space	No. of people
N/A	

8.18 Is there a place for smaller weekday Masses?

- Yes No

If Yes, please provide details

8.19 Does the community have property that is in excess of its requirements?

- Yes No

8.20 If Yes, please give details and any suggestions of ways to realise its potential.

Property / Land	Details / Suggestions

8.21 Are your premises used by external groups / organisations?

- Yes No

8.22 If Yes, please provide details of the nature and frequency of the activity and whether the organisation pays a hire charge.

Group	Activity	Frequency	Hire charge (Y / N)	
<i>Example: Scouts</i>	<i>Pack Meeting</i>	<i>Weekly during term time</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8.23 Does the parish collaborate with other denominations locally regarding use of buildings?

- Yes No

8.24 If Yes, please elaborate.

--

8.25 Do you anticipate any instances of expenditure on property (£5k or more on a single item / project) in the next 5 years?

- Yes No

8.26 If Yes, please provide details.

Expenditure	Anticipated Cost

8.27 Please indicate the distances from the nearest primary and secondary schools to the church.

Name of school	Distance
St Thomas More Catholic Primary School (Transport paid by parents £300 per child per term)	13 miles
St Mary's Catholic School (secondary)	17 miles

9 Geographic Distance

*Note: Where there is more than one church within a parish, this section will need to be repeated for **each church site**. Additional copies of this section and the previous one (Section 8 – Facilities) are available on the website. Please use as many of these as you require.*

Parish Name	Church Name
Great Bardfield and Thaxted	Church of The Holy Spirit

GREAT BARDFIELD

9.1 How many miles is it by road to the nearest 3 Catholic churches from this church?

Church Name	Distance
English Martyrs, Thaxted	4.8 miles
Our Lady & St Anne Line, Great Dunmow	7.8 miles
Our Lady Queen of Peace, Braintree/ or Our Lady of Compassion, Saffron Walden	10 miles/ 12 miles

9.2 From which parish church was your parish originally founded?

Great Dunmow

9.3 With which local parish / church communities does your parish have the strongest relationship(s)?

**Children from our parish who attend a Catholic primary school all attend St Thomas More Catholic Primary School in Saffron Walden.
Deanery events e.g. Day of Recollection, quiz nights, year 6 retreat day, family fun day are held in Stansted, Great Bardfield, Great Dunmow, and Saffron Walden respectively.**

9.4 Please describe any significant geographical obstacles between this church and other Catholic church(es) in your locality.

There is little or no public transport (none on Sundays) and the roads between neighbouring churches are mainly rural lanes necessitating private transport for the long distances.

9.5 Based on the experience of your parishioners, how accessible is this church using public transport?

Easily Moderately With difficulty Not at all

9.6 Does the parish provide any regular transport to church services?

Yes No

THAXTED

Parish Name	Church Name
Great Bardfield and Thaxted	Church of The English Martyrs

9.1 How many miles is it by road to the nearest 3 Catholic churches from this church?

Church Name	Distance
Holy Spirit Great Bardfield	4.8 miles
Our Lady of Compassion, Saffron Walden	7.8 miles
Our Lady & St Anne Line, Great Dunmow	6.7 miles

9.2 From which parish church was your parish originally founded?

Great Dunmow

9.3 With which local parish / church communities does your parish have the strongest relationship(s)?

Children from our parish who attend a Catholic primary school all attend St Thomas More Catholic Primary School in Saffron Walden.
Deanery events e.g. Day of Recollection, quiz nights, year 6 retreat day, family fun day are held in Stansted, Great Bardfield, Great Dunmow, and Saffron Walden respectively.

9.4 Please describe any significant geographical obstacles between this church and other Catholic church(es) in your locality.

There is little or no public transport (none on Sundays) and the roads between neighbouring churches are mainly rural lanes necessitating private transport for the long distances.

9.5 Based on the experience of your parishioners, how accessible is this church using public transport?

Easily Moderately With difficulty Not at all

9.6 Does the parish provide any regular transport to church services?

Yes No

10 Young People

10.1 Please describe how work with young people is co-ordinated within your parish.

- Co-ordinated by a volunteer

10.2 What activities, opportunities or projects are currently in place specifically for young people in your parish?

Activity	Brief description
Children's Liturgy	Held every week during Mass at Great Bardfield (children attend from Great Bardfield and Thaxted as there is no space at Thaxted)
Altar Serving	Training for Altar Serving (Guild of St Stephen)

10.3 How are young people involved in the wider planning / decision-making within the parish?

We invite young members of the parish to join the parish council and the Ginger Group.

10.4 Please describe the level of involvement that your parish has with opportunities provided by our Diocesan Youth Service (BCYS) and other Diocesan opportunities for young people.

Activity	Not involved	Limited involvement	Quite involved	Very involved
Walsingham House Youth Retreats	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Monthly Youth Mass	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
St John Bosco Camp	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flame Events	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
World Youth Day	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School missions programmes (e.g., by the Sion Community)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National Youth Sunday	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lourdes Pilgrimage – Youth Section	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11 Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life

- 11.1 How many ordinations to the priesthood or diaconate have there been from your parish in the last 20 years?

None – but one in process.

- 11.2 How many men or women have entered religious life from your parish in the last 20 years?

None known

- 11.3 Are there any current seminarians or religious postulants from your parish?

Yes - one

- 11.4 Are there any initiatives which your parish is taking to promote and encourage vocations to the priesthood, diaconate or religious life?

Always! Encouragement but no initiatives!

12 Ethnic Chaplaincies and Eastern Catholic Churches

- 12.1 Are there any ethnic chaplaincies or Eastern Catholic Churches meeting in your parish?

Description	Frequency: Monthly/Weekly	Numbers
None		

- 12.2 Are any Catholics who are resident in your parish regularly attending an ethnic chaplaincy outside the parish, either as an alternative to the parish Sunday Mass, or in addition to attending the parish Sunday Mass?

Description	Location	Time	Freq.: Mthly/Wkly	Numbers
None				

- 12.3 Are any Catholics receiving pastoral care from an ethnic chaplaincy either within the parish or outside the parish?

Description	Location	Numbers
None		

Part B - Reflective Questions

When Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee and called his first disciples (Mt 4:18), they must not have had a clue what they were getting into. Four fishermen became 'apprentices' to an itinerant leader, teacher and healer, overnight. In Mark's Gospel (Mk 1:21) the first thing they did was to accompany Jesus into the Synagogue in Capernaum, where he proceeded to break the Jewish law by healing a possessed man on the Sabbath.

There is something exciting about being a disciple, an 'apprentice' of Jesus. There is so much to learn and discover. Jesus walked around the countryside with his followers, both women and men; they were a community, a community on the move. The disciples were formed and shaped within this community.

Once Jesus died and rose from the dead, the disciples were terrified. They ran away (to Emmaus) or hid in an upper room or reverted to their previous job – seven of them went back fishing. Time after time Jesus came among them and reassured them. They were totally taken over by the Holy Spirit and began their work as missionaries; they are instructed to go out into the world and proclaim the Gospel.

We live in a very different world today. But as a result of our Baptism, we are called, gifted and sent. We too are sent into the world. We are missionaries within our local population, disciples among all the residents in our neighbourhood.

The local priest looks after the flock. We are immersed in the world; and we engage with each other, with those hurt by the Church, those separated from the Church for whatever reason and those beyond the institution of the Church. Every one of us has a particular pathway of discipleship to follow, and many of us discover it through the communities within which we live.

It is only right that we pray for more men to respond to the call of God to become ordained priests. It is also true that we all need to explore how God is calling us to make a difference in the world we live in. This calling (or vocation) may be to marriage, parenthood, the single life, nursing, policing... . God has an infinite imagination; there is a unique calling for each one of us. We become disciples when we learn to look at our world through the eyes of Jesus.

This questionnaire will help us to look at our community and discover how it can help each and every one of us become an apprentice of Jesus.

We have heard the facts and figures, the prospect of having 50 priests in our Diocese in 2030, the need for a wider variety of leadership in the Church and the very basic need to become more open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit who is leading us into the future.

Pope Francis gives us clear guidance when he says in *Evangelii Gaudium* (para 20):



“Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the ‘peripheries’ in need of the light of the Gospel”.

With this call in mind, let us begin to explore the questions before us.

Note: Please use a maximum of 250 words in response to each of the questions.

1 The Christian Faithful

The Christian Faithful are the heart of every worshipping community. If it is to flourish, a community needs a core of members who are committed to the Gospel of Christ and are willing to make the community a priority, giving generously of their time, imagination, gifts and other resources. A viable parish needs a healthy number of active members.

a) How can your community look to sustain and increase the number of people worshipping with you towards 2030?

- With the aim of showing others by way of example in the way we live, that the Church's teaching is relevant to our everyday lives and concerns about others, we should be more welcoming to all (including single parents, divorced and disaffected people), presenting a more dynamic and outgoing image and specifically:
 - Advertise social events, prayer groups and parish news in local press* and in village booklets (a monthly regular column similar to the Anglican Church?), social media (Facebook), websites and ensure clear, bright, welcoming signage to indicate the location of the churches from the main road
 - Prepare an introductory booklet about the 2 churches including: contact details of the priest, parish council members and all regular volunteers and gift aid information as well as a history of the churches and services available, especially highlighting the family Mass in Great Bardfield on Sundays
 - Offer regular educational and or social events (summer BBQ or winter meal or quiz) for families as well as adults with an ecumenical Christian ethos to the local community: 'Messy Church' activities; coffee mornings for OAPs or young mums and babies, youth groups, book sales, art sales with refreshments, clubs, prayer, discussion and bible groups
- Hold more youth orientated Masses
- Strengthen each individual's Catholic roots by providing study groups for adults - better understanding of our faith would encourage more willingness
- Give the younger (parents rather than grandparents) generation a say
- Persuade each generation to respect the different opinions of each other
- Create a stronger network for young teenagers
- Increase the availability of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Confession
- Become more involved in feast and festival community events (eg S.W Carnival or similar to the Spirit of Christmas Concert)
- Engage with Brentwood Religious Education Service, flagging its success at bringing families into church
- Invite those who no longer attend Mass to attend with reassurances that they would be made welcome.

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How can your community look to sustain and increase the number of people worshipping with you towards 2030?

...Continued from previous page

- To put the above into action and to raise the profile of the church - form a social and other committees to implement each idea. One parishioner has suggested that in order to provide improved services within the framework of the existing church buildings, they should be re-equipped to be virtually connected through a website and have streaming for access to prayer resources online as well as better communication between all the parishioners.
- An alternative view from two parishioners was to close down the two churches and to build one new purpose-built building to support Thaxted, Bardfield and the surrounding villages. A new place of worship should be multifunctional with an area that could be used and hired out for functions, host youth groups, retreats whilst a part of the church could be sectioned off and kept sacred. If the church was more appealing and useable, it would be a lot easier to invite people to attend church and functions. (Funding costs to be raised from the sale of existing buildings although elsewhere, one parishioner has referred to ownership of the Thaxted building reverting to a family if the current use as a Catholic church was to end).
- A third idea from a parishioner was to create a "North Essex Super-Parish" made up of the parishes of Saffron Walden, Thaxted, Great Dunmow, Great Bardfield. The churches in those towns and villages could be sold together with St Thomas More School and a new out of town site, strategically located and equipped with all state of the art amenities, facilities and parking etc could be built including a new school. With a greater critical mass of parishioners, it would then be possible to run a wider variety of mainstream parish groups (sacramental preparation, prayer groups, youth groups, elderly visits) with a pooling of resources and efficient management of people to take on these volunteer roles. (Funding for this idea would also be from the sale of the existing buildings).

2 Leadership

It is certain that in the future even more communities will be sharing a priest with other worshipping communities. Priests and deacons will be working more collaboratively with people. The prospect of having around 50 active priests in our Diocese in 15 years' time (2030) certainly sharpens the mind. While we must continue to pray that men will respond to the call of discipleship as ordained priests and deacons, we also need to look carefully at the development of other forms of leadership in the Church.

a) What lay leadership is currently viable and effective in your community?

The current lay leadership is mostly organised by the "same dedicated band of parishioners" (special mention of the Parish Council needing new members and one person expressed sadness that there were no new volunteers) covering:

- Eucharistic Ministers
- First Communion Teachers (thorough teaching is highly commended)
- Children's Liturgy
- Altar servers (children and adults)
- Parish Council
- Stewards of the Gospel
- Diocesan Strategic Planning Group
- Ginger Group
- Some social activities (coffee mornings)
- Choir and music
- Flower and cleaning rotas
- Readers

b) For what other areas of your community life could trained lay men and women assume responsibility?

- Several parishioners mentioned that new volunteers should be encouraged to come forward and take on the existing and new roles and training could be provided for future Stewards of the Gospel and other lay leaders to take on roles that the shortage of priests will necessitate.
- It was noted that there are also some parishioners who contribute willingly when they asked.
- One parishioner feels that whilst there are a number of talented and willing parishioners covering a range of mixed skills and interests, the parish lacks vision and a plan and suffers in some cases from introspection.
- If a vision and a plan could be agreed by all, its implementation would be more than achievable given the resources available in the parish.

3 Active Involvement of People

In parishes where the same small, ageing group of parishioners has served the community extremely well over very many years, there may be some real anxiety about the future. As that small group retires and withdraws from active involvement, the community is at risk of floundering if younger parishioners are unable or unwilling to take their place.

a) How diverse and active are parishioners within the community?

- Parishioners reflect the parish's inhabitants in terms of diversity (many age ranges from 1+, one person from Philippines and one from Malaysia whilst in Thaxted, most are older parishioners and younger families go to Great Bardfield)
- A good proportion of parishioners are active (important not to "nag people to get involved" but "hidden resources" may not yet have been tapped!)
- Some parishioners are also active as volunteers in other charities helping the homeless, elderly and severely disabled, singing in choirs, attending Lenten courses and holding Lenten Suppers in parishioner's homes, mentoring young people and fund raising for various groups;

b) How can the parish community invite and prepare more people to support it?

- More parishioners could volunteer and different parishioners could be 'invited' to join in and take on new roles
- Practical expertise has been very willing and forthcoming (kitchen refurbishment and clearing of the flat and the 5- year maintenance review)
- Existing active parishioners could be more welcoming to new volunteers (although some parishioners who have recently joined the church in Great Bardfield feel they have been made very welcome)

4 Worship and Spiritual Life

A flourishing community has worship at the centre of its life. The ultimate goal is to make Jesus Christ known and loved. This is why Jesus Christ is at the heart of every worshipping community. The Eucharist is the principal means in which we celebrate this. The Holy Spirit may well be leading us to discover a variety of forms of worship and devotion in the future. For this very reason a living community makes every effort to encourage parishioners of all ages and backgrounds to participate fully in prayer, devotion, worship and study.

God loves us individually. We respond to God's love in our own ways. When we come together for worship we all need to have a sense that our relationship with God is strengthened and affirmed.

a) Are there aspects of your community's regular worship together at Mass that are working particularly well and deepen the spiritual life of those present?

- Music and enthusiastic singing adds joy to the shared celebration (one person wondered if psalms could be sung on special occasions only to reduce the length of the Mass described as 50% longer than the standard 45 mins!)
- Fr Richard's homilies and talks with children help to deepen spirituality
- Children's Liturgy and special children's Mass for Christ the King support parents "continuing the faith to the next generation" and the absence of the children during part of the Mass allows parents to have a period of quiet prayer
- Servers and readers at Mass
- Sunday and weekday Masses
- Fellowship at coffee mornings allows us to get to know each other better
- Food Bank helps to think of those without
- Mission Boxes and Christmas shoe boxes; and Communion to the sick
- A parishioner from Thaxted noted that the success of the children's liturgy in Great Bardfield drew young families away from Thaxted and as a result services at Thaxted were rather more low key

b) Is there anything your community can do to encourage a deeper prayer life and engagement with Scripture?

- Discussion (ie abortion, divorce, marriage, confession, racism, hypocrisy and homophobia from a biblical perspective) and prayer groups (in the homes of parishioners?)
- Penitential services
- Veneration of the Blessed Sacrament on a regular basis
- Healing Masses
- Silent prayer group and other prayer groups
- Attending Lenten courses and Lenten suppers in a parishioner's home
- Short retreats held in a location close to our churches
- Attend other biblical or scripture study sessions held in other parishes
- Saturday Mass
- Booklets with prayer and reflection (ie for Lenten preparation) for each family
- Alpha course
- 'Messy Church' / 'Godly Play' for children based on scriptures
- Bible study - Lectio Divina
- Justice and Peace group
- Rosary prayer groups (encouraging the rosary to be said at home as well as at church and providing rosaries at church with a donation box)
- An email or an insert on the website with a "thought for the week" could be sent to maintain thought during the week
- Invite speakers from other parishes and religious organisations to share their spiritual development
- One parishioner believes that larger parishioner numbers would be needed to plan, organise and arrange prayer events outside of Sunday Mass
- Another parishioner believes that a better well heated parish building would be more conducive to attending retreats or discussion groups!

5 Education and Continuing Formation

A flourishing community will be able to show that the Catholic faith is handed on to children, young people and adults by means of regular programmes of religious education and Christian Formation.

a) What good experiences has your community had in the past and what opportunities would you like to see for 'continuing formation' in the faith for members of your community?

- Healing Mass
- Discussion Groups (especially for new and 'cradle' Catholics as well as non-Catholics) to learn more about the faith as well as to understand the meaning of the Mass
- One parishioner would like "Better adult education and instruction (apologetics) to equip mature people with better understanding of Church teaching" and sermons which are not only reflections on scripture and liturgy but also on "exhorting moral behavioural change, holiness and evangelisation"
- Sacrament of Reconciliation and penitential services (although one person was inhibited by the lack of privacy for confession in the chapel)
- Annual parish picnic
- An event after the annual pilgrimage to encourage more people to attend
- Deanery retreat (with adequate advance notice of dates well publicised)
- Occasional (monthly?) Masses for disabled/elderly unable to use stairs
- Lenten preparation especially for children and families and links to websites or email communications so that participation could take place remotely
- Prayer groups
- Live feed or summary on a website? of Mass or sacraments
- Inviting speakers to give testimonies
- Benediction
- Continuing leadership from the parish priest
- Confirmation preparation for young people

b) How can closer relationships be developed between the worshipping community, the school(s) the young people attend, and the families that belong to both?

- Better communication of youth Masses to schools and school Masses at our church (new format of our newsletter to incorporate more information to advertise these) and links between the school and church's website to share diary of events
- Priests who say Mass at Catholic schools could be invited to our church and Fr Richard could offer to take assembly at schools
- Schools could invite families from our parish to join in the penitential services held during Advent for school children; Representatives from schools could be invited to speak about their work and for social functions and school children could be invited to prepare a special Mass at our church
- Our trained altar servers and readers could go to schools to teach the others in school and encourage other children to want to go to church
- Children in the parish who attend schools with Virtual Learning Environments could show classmates what they are doing in their churches
- In our website we could include a page dedicated to children and their achievements including a gallery of pictures
- Children's choir or competition between parishes and schools?
- Catholic participation in local cubs and brownie groups, mother & toddler groups & youth club
- "Twinning" with a church in inner London for instance or another church with a very different demographic, to increase horizons and engage more interest of children and adults
- Thaxted church loses their young children after First Holy Communion children move to Great Bardfield regrettably - could they be invited back to Thaxted for a monthly youth Mass?
- A 'travelling exhibition based on the children's RE topic at school to be circulated among the local parishes" perhaps following a dedicated week on a school project making links with the parish
- "Messy Church"
- Trips to Walsingham or the beach for both school and parish children and families in the catchment and in all the parishes within the catchment area
- Creation of a new (Super-Parish) school and church in a new location
- Family and school joint events in our church gardens
- Have the older children been asked to complete a questionnaire (a simplified version) as they are our future?

6 Outreach

A flourishing community extends a spirit of hospitality and invites people to become members. It also looks way beyond itself to discover how the spirit of Jesus can be brought to bear on everything that concerns us in the world: our relationship with other Christian Churches, women and men of other faiths and all men and women of good will in our world. Under this heading we include: hospitality; Ecumenism; Interfaith relationships; involvement in local social and political issues and much more. It explores the practical ways we have of becoming 'missionary disciples'.

a) What good experiences has your community had regarding our call to be involved with other Christians, other faiths, all men and women of good will?

- With the Anglican community (St Mary's C of E) : Christingle, Palm Sunday procession, St Luke Healing Service and Fr John Timmins' Golden Jubilee celebration in Thaxted
- In Thaxted, "Churches Together", Harvest Festival and Remembrance Sunday
- Carol services (Horham Hall)
- Easter services (Good Friday Walk of Witness, Stations of the Cross)
- Garage sale (noted as being particularly well attended and a good opportunity to welcome non-Catholics to our church and in future, join in the garage sale by providing refreshments even if there is nothing to sell)
- Tea and coffee mornings and refreshments maybe a cyber cafe?
- Lenten discussion groups involving C of E, Baptists and United Reform Church
- Parish quiz evenings
- First Communion course (reaches out to non-Catholic parents)
- Youth gatherings: FLAME @ Wembley, and World Youth Days (WYD)
- Holy Communion service at Clare and Ipswich
- Visits to Orthodox monastery at Tiptree and Stations of Cross at Clare
- Use of Anglican churches for funerals, weddings and baptisms.

b) How can your worshipping community become more immersed in the local community?

- Historically there have been good ecumenical experiences but in the last few years participation from our Catholic churches has dropped off.
- (One parishioner felt it was important to reach out to Muslims as well but was not sure how to do this and noted his/her discomfort over a guest speaker last year who may have come across as having a particular fear of Muslim persecution).
- Another parishioner noted that we have a number of mixed faith married couples, whose non-Catholic partners regularly attend Mass and support parish activities. In some cases, this has led to the non-Catholic being received in to the Church, and "this trend could be further pursued"!

7 Finances

A sustainable community must have an annual income that is sufficient to cover its expenses. There needs to be a reliable level of stewardship among the faithful who willingly give of their time, gifts and energy to sustain the work of the community.

a) How do you feel about the average weekly offertory donation in your community? Does this need to increase to enable your community to flourish in 2030?

- The level of offertories per head needed for 2030 will depend on the unknown of how many parishioners we have in 2030.
- If parishioner numbers are the same in 2030 as in 2015 then having taken into account the £16k cost to fund a priest and assuming no other significant changes to the parish we would need to increase offertories by £1 per parishioners per week plus inflation to £8.13 per week plus inflation.

b) If you are a finance-rich community, how do you feel about sharing some of your resources with very poor parts of the Diocese?

- It is unlikely that we will be cash rich for long given the list of major projects listed elsewhere on the questionnaire. Answer - Not applicable.

8 Facilities

A flourishing community needs good facilities which need to be well maintained. It cannot undertake any building projects, renovations or improvements unless it has the resources to pay for them. It may be that in some places, there is a need for a plan for the community and a plan for the buildings, and they may be separate plans. It is also true to say that our buildings can be a witness to the presence of the Church in our world, or a drain on resources and energy.

a) What sort of use can your community foresee for any unused or underused parish facilities in the future?

At Great Bardfield:-

Rooms in presbytery could be let (long or short term) and whilst respecting the Canon Law, be used for:

- Groups for arts and crafts, bridge/whist, book club, diverse music appreciation, computer literacy group, mums and toddler, knitting groups, 'Messy Church'
- Counselling/ marriage care/ bereavement/ youth counselling
- Conversion as a dwelling for visiting overseas priests, or retired, convalescing priests and religious, or a retreat centre or let at a reduced rent to key workers (nurses, teachers etc one parishioner shared her very positive experience of being offered similar accommodation in a presbytery when she took on her first teaching job,) or a dwelling for a refugee family or other shelter for families requiring emergency help
- Functions (birthday parties) and once cloak rooms upstairs are upgraded perhaps the upstairs reception area could be let for functions or as a concert hall or rehearsal room if priced competitively
- The upstairs reception could also be used as a breakfast club or day cafe with discussion or prayer groups
- Gardens could be used for a garden fete, hired out for garden parties or small events or a quiet place for reflection for parishioners and community or even a car park
- One parishioner felt that in light of the uncertainty and shortage of priests there would be no point in refurbishing Our Lady's House.

At Thaxted:-

- A summer picnic in the orchard and a scheduled harvesting of apples with sale or free apples to locals being offered.

b) How can the community develop the capacity to look after its facilities in the future?

- One parishioner felt that to achieve the Super-Parish, the parish facilities should be sold to fund the building of the new Super-Parish and school.

9 Geographic Distance

A flourishing community may be influenced by its location. The proximity of neighbouring parishes can have a real impact on the vibrancy of a community. If several communities are in close proximity with large, ageing buildings that are only half-full, this will need to be taken into account when considering the future.

Our basic question is about how we can enable communities to flourish in order for us to deepen our sense of discipleship and service. Our parish churches are not private chapels maintained simply because the community has enough money to cover the expense.

a) How does your community feel about the possibility that the only way to ensure flourishing in the future is to become part of a new parish community?

- Overwhelming majority were sad, but most parishioners accepted this was inevitable due to the shortage of priests, and would find a positive outlook (with 3 exceptions, one disagreeing strongly) although the majority preference would be to carry on as we are now preserving the 'family' feel of the church and allowing our parish to grow to its full potential
- The parish should emphasise the priority to God and the similarities that we share with each other
- Several parishioners hope that the existing churches would still continue to function socially and with as many sacramental services as possible during this period of building a new parish and join alternative parishes occasionally rather than be totally shut down
- When the Thaxted church was flooded, the temporary solution of having Mass in the Anglican Church was successful and could perhaps be a permanent arrangement if the Thaxted church were to close and the same could be arranged in Bardfield
- Hope that alternative parishes are not situated at a distance too great for travel for elderly parishioners
- Feel that it is important to have small 'pockets of Catholics worshipping'
- Ensure that Children's Liturgy continues in Great Bardfield as this draws numbers
- A parish priest with regular Masses in accessible venues would be crucial to our parish's ability to flourish
- Suggestion of being organised on a deanery basis with a deanery team providing sacraments and Eucharistic Ministers filling in any absences of priests from time to time
- Ensure that if we become part of a larger parish that all those with infirmities are able to access transport to reach churches by creating a transport rota and ensuring that full communication is maintained during any process of change
- In the event of a merging of parishes, the priests involved would need to meet the new parishioners to support each other in the changes
- Hope that married priests, male and female will be accepted in the future.

b) Are there ways in which your community can serve and support neighbouring communities?

- Appeals are always well supported although more second collections could be made
- Regular contributions to food banks (starting a collection in Thaxted? Although one person thought that food bank boxes were best in the local supermarket banks) Christmas shoe boxes to be brought in and packed by children after Mass on certain Sundays, and Missio Boxes already undertaken by individuals but they could be given a boost of publicity to increase their uptake
- Forming a Samaritans' branch
- Forming a Justice and Peace Group
- Sharing a church building and the costs of supporting it
- Trade craft stall to support the third world
- Holding a bring and buy sale
- Collecting and washing duvets for the homeless
- Running a charity shop in the village to support the homeless in Braintree and running the shop with the Anglican Church
- Regular visits to the elderly and the sick could be arranged or the parish rooms on the ground floor of the church in Bardfield could be used for the elderly, lonely and for care relief
- Providing shelter to those in need
- Sponsoring specific charities annually
- Providing education to equip individuals who are unable to cope with their own lives would be better than providing money and supplies creating a culture of dependency
- Inviting people (including non-Catholics) to join our Masses as a way of tackling loneliness in rural areas.

c) If applicable, what is the relationship between different churches or Mass centres within the parish or between linked parishes?

- On major feast days (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, Christmas midnight Mass etc) the location of Mass is alternated from year to year between the Great Bardfield and Thaxted churches
- Whilst many parishioners frequent both Great Bardfield &/or Thaxted churches, it is evident that some parishioners worship more or less exclusively at one church rather than at the other or at both, apparently even on days where there is only one Mass/service available at just one or other of the two churches. This suggests that although the parish is designated as 'one parish', there is not full logistical mobility of parishioners between the two churches, even though clearly there is expectation amongst those same parishioners that the Parish Priest should be mobile enough to preside at services in both locations
- So there are two possible attitudes prevalent: on the one hand some act as if (a) we are one parish with two churches and one priest; and on the other hand some act as if (b) we are as if two parishes, each with their own church and typical regular congregations, even though sharing a priest and other resources. This relationship dynamic needs to be explored further during strategic planning
- Newsletter is shared
- Horham Hall concert and quiz nights previously attended by both parishes
- Distance between churches prevent some parishioners from frequenting the other
- Priest is shared
- Thaxted church has mostly elderly regular worshippers and Bardfield with a reception room and cloakrooms is more welcoming for families with young children (Children's Liturgy and Masses) and there is definitely a feeling that the relationship whilst cordial, is also distant and could be improved.
- More joint social activities and greater understanding of the parishioners individual faith needs would help to encourage social links and improved relations between the two churches.
- One parishioner felt that it would be difficult to defend the retention of the two separate churches for the relatively small number of parishioners.
- One church building with one Mass on a Sunday would bring the two communities together potentially increasing the talents and gifts available to be shared: with different approaches to and varieties of Liturgy, Music, social gatherings, communications all of which would be potentially "enriching rather than impoverishing".
- If one church was retained (most likely the larger of the two, Bardfield) then in the future, visiting priests from the diocese could say the Masses at the weekend and provide other pastoral services.
- A new Super-Parish would have the beneficial effect of bringing even greater numbers together and much needed mixing of the two groups of parishioners from Thaxted and Bardfield could take place regularly.
- This parishioner was upset to hear that a parishioner from Thaxted felt that they would prefer to attend the Anglican church in Thaxted rather than to attend Mass in Bardfield despite the relatively short distance between Bardfield and Thaxted.

d) Is/are there neighbouring parishes which would lend themselves to being linked to your parish or to becoming part of a partnership or “cluster”?

- Taking turns to host or co-hosting and attending mutual parish or youth events, services with Dunmow and Saffron Walden
- Holding regular meetings with neighbouring parishes to create these links
- Sharing information on retreats, missions, lectures etc as well as sharing of initiatives, resources and Liturgy groups
- Joint classes for confirmation candidates (as used to be the case with Clare)
- Having Stewards of the Gospel from other parishes attend Ginger Group meetings strengthening connections and building friendships
- Sharing priests for Masses and supporting each other for cover during absences
- A 'super parish' could be formed with a link to Saffron Walden and a new school built to accommodate the over-subscribed Catholic primary school in Saffron Walden
- One parishioner did not want to form a partnership with another parish and another worried that attending meetings to form a partnership could hinder the parish from tackling its own problems.
- Another parishioner thought the idea was "horrendous"!
- One parishioner felt that if one of our neighbouring parishes (preferably Saffron Walden relocating with St Thomas More to an out of town site that was close to Thaxted and accessible by Bardfield) relocated to a new larger state of the art building, we would benefit from being linked to such a facility and could join them.

10 Young People

Young people are not just the 'future' of the Church; they are very much part of the present. We all need to look at how actively young people are encouraged and affirmed in their contribution to the community throughout the year. The enthusiasm and energy of young people can sometimes be daunting to those who are older, but they are also signs of the Holy Spirit within us and among us.

a) What good experiences regarding Church life do the young people have in your community?

- Previous attendance at World Youth Day and sharing of their experiences encourages the young (offer sponsorship to other younger members to attend future events)
- Certain young people have attended retreats (eg Youth 2000, Celebrate, New Dawn) but not through the Church
- Children's Liturgy and good interaction with Fr Richard
- Fundraising events (e.g. Challenge during confirmation preparation, 'Sunny Day Bags')
- Coffee Mornings (with children providing the baking after each Children's Mass)
- Children's Masses - Christ the King and Nativity Mass
- First Holy Communion Preparation (query whether the children and their parents continue to practise their faith after they have received their First Holy Communion)
- Families are made to feel welcome and are encouraged to read, serve and take part in Mass
- Altar servers
- Children's play area in the reception for parents to relax with their children

b) How can the presence and witness of young people be more encouraged and supported in the community?

- Holding youth services or discussion groups with other parishes in our Deanery (approach existing youth gospel groups in the diocese or St John Payne)
- Starting a Youth Ministry for young adults (20s and 30s)
- Guild of St Stephen for altar servers to show their commitment is appreciated
- Encouraging younger readers
- Inviting younger members of the congregation to collect hymn and Mass books
- Inviting children age 10+ to help with coffee mornings
- 'Messy Church' for 3 - 11 year olds, with parental supervision, focussing on the Gospel messages
- Prayer groups for 11+ and young adults
- Social gatherings for youth 13+? (perhaps in the homes of parishioners or holding an open air concert in our parish?)
- Youth page in our newsletter and display photos of relevant learning experiences in the back of their church as well as at their schools
- Visits from other young inspiring people
- Creating a 'COOL Club' - (Catechism of Our Lord) for young teens
- Providing a question box for anonymous faith questions that could be answered in a homily from Fr Richard
- Youth Mass (readers and Eucharistic ministry taken on by the youth) with more uplifting songs and provision of children's order of Mass and activity sheets for the very young
- Inviting parents with young families to join the parish council meetings or send them a specific questionnaire
- Demonstrating that the teachings and activities of the church are relevant to the young
- Encouraging young people to be informed of Catholic Youth activities and the Deanery Day for children and families and encouraging teenagers to express themselves so they have a desire to be confirmed
- If a church is geographically close to a school, there may be a better relationship between the teenager and the parish and minimises any embarrassment or fear of being mocked or bullied for going to church
- Ensuring transport is available (at parish cost) to take young people to events (young people's retreats) rather than relying on parents having to do this
- By "word of mouth" inviting new young people to come to our churches
- Setting up an area for young families in the back of Thaxted church with a sofa, toys and books was suggested
- One parishioner suggested that faced with young people having a "different attention span and need for stimulation" and the "speed and quality of their receptivity to media stimulus" far outpacing the Mass experience in its current form, there was a necessity to "re-invent the Mass experience". This could be fixed by specialists in media - storytelling, drama - without losing the plot, and without losing reverence, and without trivialising or making sensational the sacrament of the Mass." This parishioner fears disengagement by young people otherwise
- In addition, the role of the priest should be re-examined to establish to what extent ordination needs to be questioned and to ensure the life style of the priest becomes more dynamic, interesting, contemporary and engaging to attract more vocations

11 What Else?

a) **Given all the findings you have explored in Part A of this questionnaire, what would you see as the priorities to ensure a viable and flourishing community in 2030?**

- We should encourage everyone to read a new form of the newsletter (to be circulated to the housebound) which should contain information about all parish matters (including finances, future projects, liturgical events) and the Ginger Group, highlighting points of interests; Mass times, liturgical groups, contact numbers
- We should encourage more members of the Ginger Group and continue to make it known that it is an open group for all
- One parishioner felt that Stewardship could only be effective if the notion of gratitude, giving back and generosity underpinned who we are as a community and should therefore be manifest at every Sunday Mass and in all daily activities
- One parishioner felt very lucky to be able to attend Mass so near to home and to have such kind and helpful fellow parishioners
- Another parishioner felt that having a church close to her home with regular worship and contact with parishioners meant that her daughter's faith was strengthened and grew from the example of all those living their faith in close proximity
- It was noted by several that the Parish Council needs to advertise that they need new members and give details of AGMs well in advance
- We could offer more wider reaching services with a positive attitude to spirituality rather than repentance
- We could be more welcoming to newcomers and one parishioner feels that no-one feels interested in getting to know anyone else in the parish other than those they already know well
- We could be less afraid of making a suggestion lest we are expected to organise them but equally be more forthcoming in volunteering
- We could be more sociable before and after Mass and at the Coffee Mornings
- The sick list should be more than names on a list and there should be organised visits to the homes of the sick by all parishioners

b) Do you have any other observations – particularly about anything we have missed?

- We need clarification from Brentwood on the outcomes of the questionnaires to reassure those who may have become despondent and unsure about the future of our church
- How can we encourage our male youth to dedicate themselves to God and the priesthood? (Perhaps a question for Pope Francis!)
- Being involved in community events which are not specifically for celebration or worship but for fundraising helps to raise community morale and benefits everyone
- So many adults have such a reluctant and distorted perception of the sacrament of Confession, it is important that young people are helped to understand it right.
- The Church's greatest resources –the sacraments, pilgrimages, works of mercy, not to mention so many treasures of culture – are Her most human. The same spirit should inform the pastoral approach to young people, especially when so much confusion is set about us.
- And groups for young people should not be too pious – so I don't recommend prayer and scripture study; we must be human before we can really become Christian, and groups for the young should be directed towards the business of virtuous human living, 'life in abundance' in a way that is not choked by piety. That additionally will equip the young better for dealing with non-Christian peers.
- Could some of the teenagers become mentors for the children after they have made their first Holy Communion and indeed expanding on the idea of mentors, have youth and young adult mentors who would have senior mentors who themselves would be mentored by Fr Richard. These mentors would pray for you if you wanted them to
- Could the positive information provided in the previous survey be incorporated into this survey?
- The updated Alpha course might have a wide appeal as it encourages social interaction and includes a testimony from Bear Grylls
- Fr Richard is an excellent communicator and has the ability to relate to young and old and all the volunteers are very much appreciated and new and more volunteers should be encouraged to step forward and take part in the next stages of the parish's development
- One Thaxted parishioner would not support sharing the chapel in Thaxted with any other denomination and would rather worship in Saffron Walden if the church in Thaxted was to close down
- One parishioner felt that the questionnaire was totally irrelevant to us as the only problem facing our parishes both of which have a very close knit congregation, "is the fear of not having a parish priest when Fr Richard can no longer look after us."
- "Will we still have cake day?" Was the concern of Freddie!
- The lighting in Great Bardfield could be improved to make it less gloomy on darker days
- On improvements to Thaxted church, a suggestion that a box of blankets was available for elderly people to keep warm when the heating had failed and for more social events (wine tasting, pub quiz and supper fund raising).

12 Good Practice

There is no doubt that there are some really innovative things going on within our worshipping communities from Parish Fun Days which bring together the whole community to imaginative liturgies during Holy Week; from exciting Confirmation programmes to pilgrimages and vigils.

a) Is there something your community is involved in which will be of interest to others in the Diocese?

Please use as much space as you need.

It would be impossible to identify and select how and why 'the Spirit moves' in a special way in our parish, but we could imagine the following three selected aspects are representative of the many varied ways we feel our parish is indeed special, and where we could imagine these features of our parish life and organisation are in some way 'exceptional' in as far as they might be different from other parishes, and perhaps therefore of interest to other parishes:-

- **Ginger Group** is the parish response to leading and managing change, which was a kind of precursor to the Stewards of the Gospel initiative. This is an open group of people, convened by Fr Richard, chaired by a lay parish member, and meeting regularly. This group now comprises the parish response to SotG. It is well attended by a broad cross-section of the parish, voluntary and energised. It provides a collective approach to the change agenda, which no single person in our parish has felt able to commit to as a Steward.
- **The Children's Liturgy Group**: this serves both churches by providing liturgically oriented catechism from the opening hymn at Sunday 9.15am Great Bardfield Mass through to their offertory procession and presentation of work to the priest, who welcomes the children and responds with a small interactive teaching for them. This runs every week. It receives warm, enthusiastic and loyal support from parents, both in our parish, and also attracting families from neighbouring parishes, who say they are missing something equivalent in their own parish, and find themselves very welcome and engaged at our parish. The upper floor rear of Great Bardfield premises provides an outstandingly suitable location for the Children's Liturgy Group, and over the years this venue has been adapted, decorated, styled, livened up, to give the feel of a special dedicated space suiting these activities. The availability of the kitchen and toilets on hand make this a highly workable arrangement. The activities now extend to 'Children's Masses' four times a year (eg. Youth Sunday/Christ the King; Mother's Day/Laetare Sunday/ Annunciation; Corpus Christi; Harvest Sunday; plus a Christmas Nativity Tableau).
- **Monthly Coffee Mornings**: these are held after the 9.15am Sunday Mass at Great Bardfield, the first Sunday of each month – and sometimes additional Sundays, depending on feast days. Parishioners stay to mingle and enjoy the selection of home baking that inevitably supports the event. There are two teams of ladies who alternate the running of these events, and are always well attended. They provide a much-welcomed forum for parishioners to socialise, and get to know each other better. The upgrading of a super new kitchen at Great Bardfield makes this feature of parish life even more attractive for all!

Part C **Not to be completed until November 2016**

Our Parish Community's Initial Thoughts and Ideas about the Future

Based upon the wide consultation and reflection that has taken place in completing parts A and B of this questionnaire, please use this section to provide an indication of your parish community's initial thoughts about its future. You are also asked to provide information about the consultation process that has taken place to inform these views.

a) Our initial thoughts and ideas

Based on everything you have prayerfully and carefully considered so far please set out below the initial thoughts and ideas from your community about the way forward for your parish. You may also wish to provide a view about anything that is emerging regarding the ability of your parish to flourish into the future – either on its own or in conjunction with another community.

Ideas for the Future:

1. We feel that to raise the profile of our Church we should encourage the existing strong community to strengthen their faith by encouraging study and prayer groups for adults as well as social interaction for all, including the youth and to be even more welcoming to all Christians and non-Christians, of all ages in our community. There have been many practical proposals for specific events which have received a lot of support and could be implemented.
2. We believe that more volunteers can be trained to carry on some of the existing roles and for future Stewards of the Gospel and other lay leaders to take on roles that the shortage of priests will necessitate. Our parishioners have "hidden resources" and they will be encouraged to contribute more by existing volunteers.
3. While Confirmation Classes will start in October 2017, there is strong support in future for regular prayer groups, scripture study and discussion groups as well as "Godly Play" or "Messy Church" groups to encourage children in their faith. There is also interest in family retreats. We are improving our communication of youth Masses to schools and school Masses at our church and will have a new form of newsletter and an improved website to share information on events. We are also planning to hold an event open to all, called for by Brendan Cox, widower of the late Jo Cox MP, as part of the "Great Get Together" on 18 June 2017.
4. We currently have rooms in the presbytery which could be let as flats or as rooms for long or short term use to provide income to enable us to look after the fabric of the Church and use all facilities wisely to enhance and make welcoming our parish to the community in which we worship. The rooms could also be used by visiting overseas priests, or retired, convalescing priests and religious.
5. Looking towards 2030, there is enthusiasm for the creation of a "North Essex Super-Parish" uniting the parishes of Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Thaxted/Great Bardfield with a new church, school and community facilities to build and strengthen our future communities. We are concerned however that any alternative parishes are not situated at a distance too great for travel for the elderly and busy families and we would like to ensure that all those with infirmities are able to access transport to reach churches by creating a transport rota.
6. We are considering extending links with schools and giving them a voice on the parish website to extend youth participation in a variety of activities in parish life. We are also keen to ensure transport is available (at parish cost) to take young people from surrounding parishes to events such as young people's retreats. The role of the priest is crucial in making young people feel welcome and engaging with them. Maybe BRES could offer advice and training for priests who lack confidence talking to young people. How can we encourage our male youth to dedicate themselves to God and the priesthood? (Perhaps a question for Pope Francis!)
cont'd....

Our initial thoughts and ideas (continued)

7. We currently have a growing number of people who choose to come to our parish for various reasons as well as families coming regularly for the Children's Liturgy and First Holy Communion and Confirmation Preparation and we would be happy to welcome anyone from neighbouring parishes.

8. We have extended our contacts through the Ginger Group and Stewards of the Gospel from other parishes have attended our meetings, strengthening connections and building friendships. We continue to have Deanery meetings (NEDPC) through choice in order to maintain contacts and this works well.

9. Overall the majority of the parish are keen to keep our vibrant and active community; we would welcome other parishes to join us whether in our existing geographically centrally located churches, or a newly built parish centre.

10 We would also welcome clarification from Brentwood on the outcomes of questionnaires to reassure those who may have become despondent and unsure about the future of our Church.

b) The Consultation Process

Please describe the process used within your parish to consult widely with the community on your responses to this question. Please include the dates of meetings and other activities you have held, their purpose and the numbers attending. Thank you.

Date of meeting or other activity	Nature of activity (e.g. open parish meeting)	Purpose of meeting / activity	Numbers attending / participating
07/02/15	Ginger Group meeting	To discuss future strategy	12 average
28/03/15	Ginger Group meeting	To discuss future strategy	12 average
18/04/15	Ginger Group meeting	To discuss future strategy	12 average
16/05/15	Ginger Group meeting	To discuss future strategy	12 average
20/06/15	Ginger Group meeting	To discuss future strategy	12 average
25/07/15	Ginger Group meeting	To discuss future strategy	12 average
29/08/15	Ginger Group meeting	To discuss future strategy	12 average
26/09/15	Ginger Group meeting	To discuss future strategy	12 average
15/11/15	Ginger Group meeting	To discuss future strategy	12 average
28/11/15	GG with Fr Andrew Headon	To discuss future strategy	21
23/01/16	Ginger Group meeting	To discuss future strategy	12 average
27/02/16	Ginger Group meeting	To discuss future strategy	12 average
16/04/16	Ginger Group meeting	To discuss future strategy	12 average
14/05/16	Ginger Group meeting	To discuss future strategy	12 average
30/06/16	Ginger Group & PC AGM	To discuss future strategy	12 average
12/11/16	Ginger Group meeting	To discuss future strategy	12 average
12/01/17	PQ Sub Group	Completing Parish Q'aire	5
14/01/17	Ginger Grp plus visitor SotG's	To discuss future strategy	20
15/02/17	PQ Sub Group	Completing Parish Q'aire	4
18/02/17	Ginger Group meeting	To discuss future strategy	12 average
19/02/17	Ginger Group meeting	Bishop Alan visit and Q&A	c. 50
09/03/17	PQ Sub Group	Completing Parish Q'aire	5
18/03/17	Ginger Group meeting	To discuss future strategy	12 average

Thank you so much for all your work and observations.
We hope this whole exercise has been fruitful and enlightening.
Please continue to pray for all those involved in the next stage of Stewards of the Gospel.



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