OUR CHURCH PLAN

Smarden and Biddenden Benefice

Our Church

Our Church is first and foremost seeks to be a community of Christian Action.

Our Challenges.

Chaos. Busy lives, full of distraction, mean we all struggle to make time and space for reflection and nurture. When do we find time for worship – we need to make it as powerful and personal as possible.

Isolation. Rural living means that transport and communication can be hard to organise it can be tough for some people to make friends and find support.

Scarcity. As a benefice, we must support each other by sharing resources across two villages – especially our time and expertise - while respecting individual village identities. We have limited resources and limited money.

Our Continuing Vision

We will grow a Church that is **open** to all.

We will develop and display **confidence** as Christians.

We will seek to **serve** the community

Our Mission

To provide a warm **welcome (W)**

To support each other in our **spiritual** growth **(S)**

To be visible, capable and available as Christian helpers in our **community (C)**

To encourager the spiritual development of **young people**. **(Y)**

Biddenden's Church Plan Objectives for 2015

- *Develop Active Church and introduce Active Church in Biddenden*
- *Deal with the projected financial deficits.*

The Church Plan 2014

What needs to Happen?	**Alignment** What mission goals does it support?	**2014/2015 goal (Example only)** What needs to happen by when?	**Status** Red, Amber, Green? (Reviewed Quarterly)	**Owner** Who is responsible?	**Outcomes** Key Achievements to date - and impact?
1. To adapt our forms of worship to suit our Church's changing needs – including connecting outside the church buildings.					
Host a benefit retreat	S, C	Delegate a community member to organise and promote.			
Simplify service times	W, S	Work with PCCs to explore possibility of harmonisation of service times eg Smarden 9:15am, Biddenden 11am?			
Develop lay preaching in Smarden & Biddenden.	W, S				
Trial lay led services in Smarden.					
Extend Active Church to Biddenden	Y	Expand and test Active Church in Biddenden.			
Host outdoor services	W, C, S, Y	Approach partner			

		churches? Songs of Praise-style format?			
Encourage young people to participate through serving, choir, collection-carrying, reading and even leading services	Y, W	Encourage 6 new young people to take an additional role in 2014			
Provide Christian introduction courses	S, C	Trial Christian introduction course, possibilby with Active Church congregation.			
Develop / grow the existing House learning group.	S, C				
Experiment with non pulpit preaching	S, W	Preachers to experiment as they feel comfortable.			
2. To use our talents to make worship ever more accessible and engaging – acknowledging that we are a diverse community.					
Provide training to lay worship leaders including Active Church leaders	S, Y		**Partially completed**		
Review the libraries and display resources more	W, Y	Audit and refresh displays quarterly.			

effectively, including childrens' materials		Display childrens' resources more prominently.			
Review and revise Church welcome packs for village newcomers	W				
Create materials for 'Active Homes' [i.e. active church at home, for non Active Church weeks, or for missed weeks	Y	Use website. Launch learning materials for 'at home'			
Encourage personal spiritual growth	Y, S, W, C				
Promote Reflective material such as Bible Study notes and prayer material to congregations	S,	Display existing material more prominently and promote in pew sheets. Use website?			
Continue to develop the excellence of parish magazines	S, W, C, Y	Source 6 book reviews in 2014. Conduct six-monthly review of new editorial options including quarterly subsidy for Biddenden. Consider putting magazine online. Invite contributions from Bishop and Archdeacon?			
3. To make our churches ever more vibrant spaces in which					

people want to spend time – not just on Sundays.					
Ensure that fair trade coffee and foods are bought consistently featured strongly	W	Remind parishioners about Fair Trade Church status. Consider adopting LOAF principle, that we source either Local, or Organic or Animal Friendly, or Fairtraide.			
Sides people to encourage people to front.	W, S	Practise consistently in 2014			
Plan to install Glass inner doors in churches	W	Debate the merits, and practicalities.			
Trial nave-altar services	W, S	Review learnings from Smarden with PCC in March. Test by April 2014 in Biddenden			
Improve our prayer spaces	W, S	Remodel Smarden prayer space by June. Maintain quarterly review of Biddenden prayer space.			
Maintain physical infrastructure	W	PCCs to maintain a review of lighting, heating and sound.			
Review service booklets		Review in light of changes to offertory and use of Nave altar			

		in Smarden.			
4. To foster stronger connections to other community groups – including other churches.					
Review the ongoing need for food and care within the villages and determine the potential role of our church, and any role for shared worship within that care.	C	Conduct assessment together with PC.			
Assess the potential crisis role of specific church volunteers and teams and develop plans as needed.	C	Conduct assessment together with PC. Host community meeting.			
Develop an 'ecumenical' plan to share resources and learning with other churches, including faith insights and worship formats.	C, S	Investigate support of Food bank, Credit Union?			
Offer a summer youthcare facility in conjunction with other churches.	Y, C	Review the demand, resource options and funding implications of a youth festival or youthcamp with young people as volunteer leaders.			
Test new community social activities	C	Assess interest in the possibility of spiritual book club	Amber	Julie Lupton	Advert placed in parish magazine

		and launch if validated			
Ensure that church finances are on a stable and sustainable footing to allow for delivery of our plan.	W, C, S, Y	Deliver a 3 year plan for Church finances for each church.			
Ensure close relationship with Friends of Smarden Church. Consider launch of Friends of Biddenden Church.	W,C				