

St. Paul's Church

Future Focus Session 1 (4/5/2017) Facilitator's Report

Introduction

A total of 26 people attended the session, which was held in the Church hall, with five groups seated around tables.

The evening began with Robbie Morrison introducing the evening and opening in corporate prayer.

Timeline Exercise

The evening consisted of two main parts with a short tea break in between. The first part provided an opportunity to look back into the church's recent past (50 years) and discover more of how the current congregation came to be.

Each group was invited to draw a timeline on lining paper dating from 2017 back to 1967. Key events were to be recorded for both the church and the parish/community over this period. Events considered to be positive ("celebrations") were noted above the line, whilst the opposite ("struggles") were to be noted below the line. The right hand end of the lining paper was sectioned off and left blank. This is because it will deal with the future and will be completed in the final daytime session.

Although this document does not record the actual drawings, the main events have been collected from all the small groups and recorded below. As one would expect, there were a number of duplications, but the "happenings" need only to be mentioned once.

Celebrations

1967 – 1977

- BMC started
- Youth club
- Forth and Wilsontown unite
- Mr Lacey
- Disco
- Jumble sales
- Large group of BB's
- Young mothers' group
- Sunday School trips
- Billy Graham crusade
- Mr Hill minister
- Braehead House

1978 - 1987

- Main hall dedication
- Guides
- Brownies
- Boys Brigade

- Guild
- Badminton club
- Mr Heggie
- Gala day
- Concert/welfare
- Bank hall/shelter houses
- Won colour award for gardens at flower festival
- Church painted
- Wedding dress show
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1988 - 1997

- Socials and family nights
- Church shop
- Guild entertainment
- Alison Jaffrey – Choir
- Young women's group
- Rainbow Guides
- Fiddlers rally
- 100 members

1998 - 2007

- Breakfast club
- New Haven
- Sports centre
- Jim Bain
- Alexander brothers
- Alister McDonald
- New swing park
- New church window
- £750k raised for village
- New mini bus
- Village of the year in 2004
- Stewardship campaign
- Lunch club
- Braehead village day
- Alpha Course

2008 to present

- Story makers
- Christmas lights
- Polytunnel
- Jigsaw
- New school
- Easter code
- Christmas Glow
- Gala Day
- Planet Earth
- Youth work

- Gentle Giant
- Breakfast club
- Reflection service
- Elspeth MacLean
- Mr Easton
- Susan Cowell
- Sarah Ross
- New outdoor gym
- New running track
- Website set up
- Church worker
- House Groups
- Midweek worship

Struggles

1967 - 1977

- Forth and Wilsontown unite
- Pits closed – unemployment

1978 - 1987

- Braehead church closes
- Vacancies between ministers
- Miners' strike
- Union with St. Paul's
- Mr. Scott left Forth
- Money problems

1988 - 1997

- Not enough money!
- Shops closing
- Closing of play parks, tennis, mini golf, etc.
- Guides and Brownies stopped

1998 - 2007

- Problems with halls
- Sports centre opened – youth organisations suffered
- School burned down
- Tenant transport relocates
- Heating problems
- Failure of uptake of building review

2008 to present

- 3 year vacancy
- Post Office and bank closes
- Closure of Carnwath church
- Need grants

Trends for celebration

- Guild
- Gala days
- Church shop
- Working together
- High regard for ministers
- Christmas lights
- Forth and Wilsontown Joined (Celebration as well as a Struggle)
- Jumble sale and fundraising

Trends amongst the struggles

- Closure of shops
- Finance
- Building Maintenance
- Younger people in church
- To be noticed as a community
- Failure to uptake building review

Everyone then had the opportunity to browse amongst the other tables and see each group's timeline, noting any commonalities. In a short plenary session, comments were invited as to what common themes participants noted.

Mapping Exercise

The second exercise of the evening was the mapping exercises. Each group was given a different task to complete, in order to gather in as much information about the parish as possible. Group's one and two were asked to draw a map of the parish, noting any schools, housing estates, shops, etc. and then highlighting where they lived.

In addition to a number of housing estates within the parish, it was also noted that there are:

- Several shops
- Pubs
- The sports centre
- School
- Sheltered housing
- The Gospel Hall
- Haven
- Bowling Green
- Factory
- Farming
- Doctors
- Park

Groups Three and Four were asked to complete an “Appreciative Map”, where they divided the paper into two sections, one with a ☺ and the other with a ☹. Below each section, they were then asked to write down what they were happy about within the parish, as well as the things that concerned them. The results for this task are as follows:

Positive

- Vibrant and friendly church
- New primary school
- Library
- Sports centre
- Chinese Restaurant/Take Away
- Local shops
- Car dealership
- Rural location, but also central in between Glasgow and Edinburgh
- Close to Livingston
- Doctors surgery
- Good walks
- Windmills
- Bus passes
- With a car it is easy to reach main cities
- Flowers and gardens
- School and church close by
- Haven
- Sheltered housing
- Community Poly tunnel

Concerns

- Littler on verges
- Dumped tyres
- Windmills everywhere – eyesore
- Fly tipping
- Potholes
- Lack of public transport
- Lack of public toilets
- Lot of cars
- Dog fouling
- Dangerous pavements
- No police station
- No banks/post office
- Lack of play parks

As you can see, the positive comments outnumber the negative. However, some of the concerns people had are serious ones and have a could big influence on a number of people living within the parish.

Lastly, the fifth group were asked to complete a “Power Map”, which highlights the various influences, both positive and negative, within the church and parish. Please see the picture below, followed by an explanation of the findings.

