

REPORT ON MEETING OF BENEFIELD AND
GLAPTHORN PCCS, ST PETER'S, 14TH OCTOBER

Present: Rev. Stephen Webster, Geraldine Barrow, Audrey Singlehurst, Tess Watts-Russell, Pauline Davidson, Sue Singlehurst, Ursula Wide, Penny Reading, Brigitte Hilton, Charles Wide, John Nicholson, Jane Berridge, Sid Charlton, Rosemary Weatherburn.

Apologies: from a number of members of both PCCs.

The meeting began with SW posing the questions, 'What is a church, and what is a church for?' taking his text from 2 Corinthians, Chapter 5. A church is a community of people who have been reconciled and forgiven of God. 'A community of grace'. He posed the question as to whether we, in Glapthorn and Benefield, are being ambassadors of that grace.

There followed a wide-ranging discussion about these issues and whether a Vision Day would be helpful for the two church communities to work out our mission and the way

forward and, in particular, how we can grow in faith and, therefore, then in numbers.

It was generally agreed that, although there were some things that only the clergy could do, there is much that they cannot and therefore it is up to the 'priesthood of all believers' to be the motor for change and development.

It was felt that certain areas of church life needed to be addressed in order to achieve that change. There was discussion for example, about patterns of worship, house groups as well as the value of much more co-operation and communication across the Benefice.

Representatives from Benefield were particularly concerned about a lack of 'critical mass' of worshippers on Sundays, but reported a recent successful Harvest Festival service and supper. It was agreed that the real challenge was to turn occasional worshipping at festivals into regular worship on 'ordinary' Sundays.

SW reported that there was a Vicar (called Marcus) of a number of rural parishes in Rutland, which were

experiencing growth, who was happy to come to a Vision Day and talk about what works and what does not. The pre-requisites for growth are fourfold: an intention to grow; an understanding of the community [we were directed to look at the ‘Spotlight’ page for our parish on the Diocesan website]; an intention to ‘own’ the growth; and concentration on ways to attract families.

It was agreed that SW would talk to Marcus and tell him what we’ve discussed, and think about a suitable venue for a meeting of interested people from both parishes, preferably a Saturday in early 2015.