

New website will add digital clout

OUR new diocesan website is now live – and you can use it to promote your parish activities more effectively.

The website, which has been completely revamped in terms of both its design and content, now gives us a great opportunity to be part of the current revolution in digital communication.

The site is fully responsive – in other words, the text and photos change automatically to look their best on whichever device is being used. This is important given that 87 per cent of web pages are now accessed by mobile phones and tablets.

It also has a higher-profile events section. Each diocesan, deanery or parish event can have its own page, including a photo, the ability to share it on social media, and a chance to book online. Individuals can therefore press a button for those events to appear on their personal or parish Facebook or Twitter feeds.

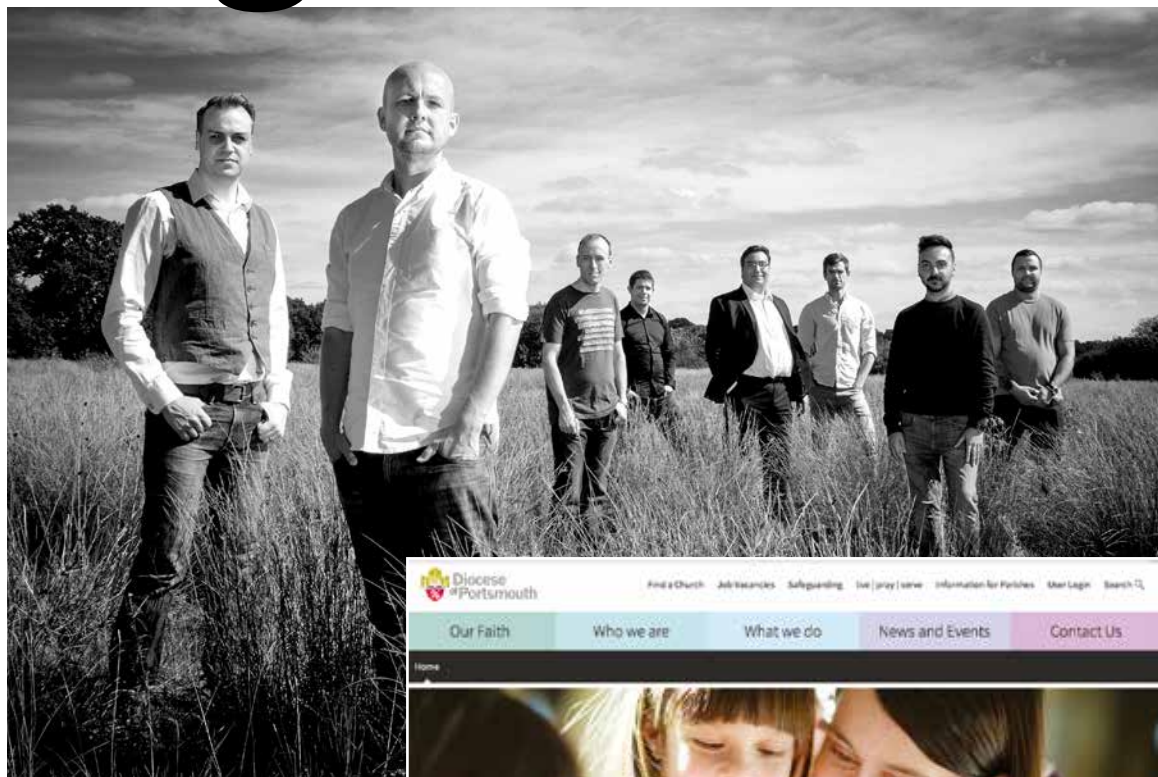
And details of church locations, regular services and other parish information are being fed into the site from the national A Church Near You website. This provides the user with maps showing the location of every church in our diocese.

It also means parishes only need to update one website – www.achurchnearyou.com – and their details will then also appear on our website.

We joined forces with four other Church of England dioceses 18 months ago to work with web developers Blanc and create a structure that could be used by any diocese. Because we were working with other dioceses, we could share the cost.

Communications adviser Neil Pugmire said: “Our previous website was developed in 2004 and redesigned in 2009, but was showing its age. It had also become unwieldy – there was so much information on it that it was hard for parishes to find what they wanted.

“We worked alongside other dioceses and with Blanc to create this common platform that could be used by any diocese. These dioceses will continue to work in a digital community together to



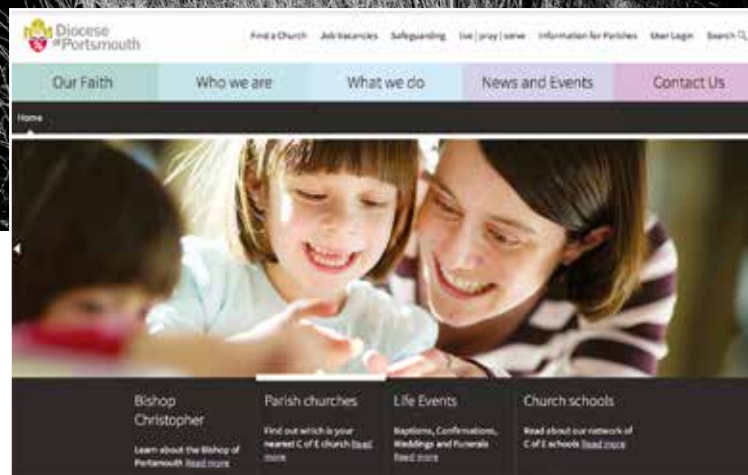
Above: The Blanc team, including (left) Steve Hawkes and (front) Paul Evans; right: our new website

develop these websites further.

“And since our new webmaster Lewis Jones started work last October, we’ve rewritten all the content and re-structured the entire site. Hopefully it will now be easier to use as well as better designed.

“We’re grateful to Blanc for making this possible, and for their continuing expertise as we develop the site further.

“Of course, it isn’t perfect yet, and we are still adding pages and



content, but we certainly hope it is an improvement on the old site.”

The story of Blanc Ltd, which is based in Birmingham, started back in 2007. Paul Evans ran a design consultancy, and Steve Hawkes ran a development company.

The first project they collaborated on was to design and

build a website for Chichester diocese’s youth and children department.

Their companies merged to form Blanc in 2010, and now support several national Church of England websites, as well as almost a quarter of diocesan ones.

To see the new website, click on www.portsmouth.anglican.org.

YOUR GUIDE TO OTHER C OF E WEBSITES

OUR new diocesan website isn’t the only one you need to know about. Here’s your cut-out-and-keep guide to the other essential online C of E resources:

THE PORTAL: Several years ago, our diocesan website also included a database of contact details for clergy, Readers, PCC officers, churchwardens and any others with a diocesan, deanery or parish responsibility.

That was hived off into a separate website some years ago, and last year it became part of a new, national initiative called ‘the Portal’. This is designed to be a one-stop-shop for a range of items – a database of diocesan contact details; the way to fill in Parish Returns and Statistics for Mission;

and a link to the online faculties system. Most dioceses have now signed up to using this.

The contact details for all those in our diocese are now within the Portal. If you hold an office at diocesan, deanery or parish level, you will be listed in it, and you will therefore be entitled to use it. Go to <https://cofeportal.org> to request your login.

A CHURCH NEAR YOU: This started as a project in Oxford diocese, and quickly spread across the Church of England. It aims to list every C of E church, with a map showing its location and parish boundary, and the ability to search for your nearest church by entering your postcode.

Parishes were also invited to

add details of their Sunday services and regular activities, so that those searching for their nearest church might know what to expect.

We’re now using all the data from this website on our diocesan site. So if those details aren’t correct, they need to be altered on www.achurchnearyou.org.

Find the details of your own church and click on ‘update this church’. You can then become your parish’s rep for A Church Near You.

PARISH WEBSITES: Our diocese also runs a scheme to offer parishes web space, a domain name, design template and some training, so they can easily manage their own parish websites.

For details, see: www.portsmouth.anglican.org/parishwebsites

Discover how to welcome migrants

WE can discover how to welcome those from migrant communities into our parishes more effectively this month.

Guest speakers at our Diocesan Synod meeting on March 5 will talk about the difficulties that migrant communities face, and how we might help.

Non-synod members are welcome to join us for that part of the meeting, which will start at around 11.15am.

The speakers will include Sergeant Tony Jeacock, from Hampshire Constabulary; Michael Woolley, from Friends Without Borders; and the Rev Alice Wood, from the Rural Refugee Network.

The charity Friends Without Borders already welcomes asylum seekers and refugees to their twice-weekly drop-in at All Saints Church, at the top of Commercial Road. They offer food, clothing and legal advice.

And the Rural Refugee Network is offering families the chance to live in private rented accommodation as part of the government’s resettlement programme for Syrian refugees.

Bishop to take his sabbatical

BISHOP Christopher is to take a sabbatical in the autumn for about six weeks.

He will be taking the extended study leave, which is offered to all long-serving clergy within our diocese, from the end of September.

That means he’ll be unable to accept invitations to attend parish events and services from Sunday 24 September until Saturday 11 November.

He said: “The Archdeacons will assume, with my confidence and trust, day by day responsibility and authority for leadership in the diocese.

“Episcopal ministry will be sustained by our honorary assistant bishops and I shall give further details later in the year.

“Meanwhile I thank you for your continuing prayers and support for me and my ministry as I serve with and among you.”