

More time for us to explore our vision together

WE'VE decided that we'll take more time to examine and explore our shared vision together this autumn.

Our Live | Pray | Serve vision was based on how we imagined a thriving diocese might look in five years time. It aims to help our diocese grow in the depth of our discipleship, our impact on society and in the number of worshippers. To do this, we'll need visionary leaders to see the big picture, teams focussed on mission, communities of kingdom-building disciples and structures that enable growth.

Our Bishop's Council looked at the original timetable for this process and agreed that we should spend longer in consultation and discussion about how to achieve this vision. So we're having some get-togethers during the autumn to help us to prayerfully consider the best way forward. We'll also be providing more information about the reasons why radical change is needed.

We'll start on September 8 with a Day of Prayer, when everyone across the diocese is invited to pray for our future and the ongoing vision and strategy. St Mary's Church in Fratton will start the day with Morning Prayer at 9am, which will

be livestreamed. You'll be able to pop in during the day to engage with prayer stations, and the day will end with a livestreamed Sung Eucharist at 7pm. Wherever you are, do join us in prayer that day – you can download resources from www.portsmouth.anglican.org/liveprayserve.

All our clergy will be invited to a Clergy Day, from 10am-4pm on September 23, also at St Mary's, Fratton, which will allow them to get together in person and hear from each other openly and honestly. And there will be Lay Conferences from 7pm-9pm that evening, both at St Mary's, Fratton, and Newport Minster, for our lay worshippers to have similar conversations.

And then there will be discussion and consultation in each of our seven deaneries in September and October. All church leaders, PCC members, and anyone interested is invited to come and continue to reimagine what church might look like in each local area, and how we might live out God's purpose within our communities.

This will all lead up to our Diocesan Synod meeting on November 5, when significant time will be

Families at heart of latest church plant



Ray Driscoll outside Christ Church, Gosport

DOZENS of families will be at the heart of the relaunch of a Gosport church this September.

Christ Church, on Stoke Road, will be launched in a refurbished building with a new team at the helm. And the week-long celebrations will include children from local schools watching a spectacular show, as well as a family fun day and a gig night.

It's part of a reorganisation of C of E churches in Gosport – Christ Church is now working together with Holy Trinity and St John's, Forton, in a new parish. While Christ Church will focus on families, St John's aims to develop as an alternative music venue, and Holy Trinity will host more traditional church services.

The 30-strong launch team includes some local residents who previously worshipped at Harbour Church, Portsmouth, as well as others who have moved into the town specifically to be part of this new project.

The refurbishments to the building include installing a barista-style coffee bar, new comfy chairs, a stage, and technical equipment to allow them to livestream worship and

project videos.

Up to 100 worshippers have already started meeting ahead of the launch, to pray and worship in the building. They've also led school assemblies and helped to feed hundreds of vulnerable people during lockdown, working alongside the local Trash Café.

Their launch week, from September 6-12, includes inviting pupils from seven local schools into the building to watch a spectacular show. There will be a civic reception for community leaders, a gig on the Friday night with beer provided by local breweries, and a family fun day on the Saturday.

Then on Sunday morning, a joint service that aims to include both traditional and contemporary worship will be followed by a hog roast.

The new team vicar, the Rev Ray Driscoll, said: "It's all about stripping away the barriers people feel about attending church – for instance, parents worry that their children will make too much noise, but that's no problem for us.

"It's also about building up relationships with local families. Doing school assemblies

regularly and supporting those who are hungry mean that some people know our team members already.

"We want to be a church that local people will find attractive and want to be part of. And we don't want to be a clone of anywhere else – we want to be a vibrant community that is exactly right for those who live in Gosport. That also means we want to hear more from Gosport people about what they want to see here."

Ray is part of a team of leaders who will help to run church activities in South Gosport. The new parish has now appointed the Rev Godfrey Chigumira to lead more traditional worship at Holy Trinity Church in Trinity Green.

They hope to continue the ongoing relationship between St John's Church, Forton, and the local alternative music scene which has already seen it host several gigs.

And they are also employing a community arts officer as part of their vision for that church to be the base for other creative arts to flourish.

For more details, see www.christchurchgosport.co.uk.

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allocated for members to agree the principles behind which we want to operate and approve a way forward for the diocese.

Our Synod members were given a chance to think theologically and prayerfully at their July meeting about the way forward, in the context of some of the strategic and financial reasons for major change. You're welcome to read this information for yourself as you prepare for discussion, by downloading the document from www.portsmouth.anglican.org/liveprayserve.

KEY DATES, Autumn 2021

Wednesday 8 September
PORTSMOUTH, St Mary's Church, Fratton Road (all day): Day of Prayer, including prayer stations and (9am): Morning Prayer and (7pm): Sung Eucharist

Thursday 23 September
PORTSMOUTH, St Mary's Church, Fratton Road (10am-4pm): Clergy Day; (7pm-9pm): Lay Conference.
NEWPORT, Newport Minster (7pm-9pm): Lay Conference.

Monday 27 September
LEE-ON-SOLENT, St Faith's Church, Victoria Square (7pm-9pm): Gosport Deanery Conference.

Tuesday 28 September
NEWPORT, Newport Minster, Sts Thomas Square (7pm-9pm): Isle of Wight Deanery Conference.

Wednesday 29 September
PETERSFIELD, St Peter's Church, the Square (7pm-9pm): Petersfield Deanery Conference.

Tuesday 5 October
PORTSMOUTH, St Mary's Church, Fratton Road, Fratton (7pm-9pm): Portsmouth Deanery Conference.

Wednesday 6 October
HAVANT, St Alban's Church,

Bartons Road, West Leigh (7pm-9pm): Havant Deanery Conference.

Tuesday 19 October
DURLEY, Holy Cross Church, Durley Road (7pm-9pm): Bishop's Waltham Deanery Conference.

Wednesday 20 October
WARSASH, St Mary's Church, Church Road (7pm-9pm): Fareham Deanery Conference.

Saturday 6 November
PORTSMOUTH, Becket Hall, Portsmouth Cathedral (9.30am): Diocesan Synod, to agree and approve a way forward.