

Communications Committee Report 2023-24

St Andrew's Annual Parochial Church Meeting, 28 April 2024

Background

Relaunched in January 2022, the Communications Committee has now completed two full years' activity and continues to meet its original remit:

- To maintain and improve the standards of communication within the church community;
- Utilise new platforms of communication to reach a broader audience;
- Retain people who are part of our community, and to reach new audiences.

Membership and meetings 2023-24

The membership of the committee has remained stable, with Forbes Mutch (chair), Lou Cobb (PCC representative and social media), Alex Nicholas (graphic designer), Kath Oates (outreach), Phil Probert (Secretary, website and social media) and Richard Taylor (magazine).

The committee has met five times during the 12 months to April 2023 (May 2023, July 23, Sep 23, Nov 23 and Feb 24). Meetings normally take place on Zoom, although a face-to-face meeting was held in November 2023, where the agenda included mulled wine and mince pies. Each meeting discusses an update from representatives on their respective specialist areas and upcoming events.

Activity 2023-24

Key activities during the year have included:

1) Consistent publicity for events and seasons, including:

- Easter 2023
- Beer Festival 2023
- Harvest Fest 2023
- Sele Farm Mindfulness
- Railway Day 2023
- Beer and Carols 2023
- Christmas 2023
- Easter 2024
- Away Day 2024
- All Coffee Mornings, including on-brand posters ready for the 'next' CM on display at the 'current' one

One development this year has been the inclusion of QR codes on posters, linking through to information on the church website.

2) Special projects

- Rebranding of **Blue Christmas**. Phil liaised with Alan and Rosemary, and the Committee looked at alternative names, putting forward the idea of 'A Mindful Christmas', which tied in nicely with the weekly Mindfulness sessions run by Rosemary and Alan.
- Publicity, including a poster, was produced for the **Forest Church** sessions, which were launched in September 2023.
- Specific publicity – posters and flyers – for **TMM**, for use in the church and schools.

3) Photo sessions

It was decided that our bank of useable photographs of the 'church in action' was outdated and Tim Pike was commissioned to take photographs at the September 2023 All-Age service and the Away Day in April 2024. These will be used in future publicity and on the website and for a proposed display of 'church life' in the entrance area (under discussion).

4) Photo permissions and safeguarding

Catherine Sleath, Safeguarding Officer, joined the May 2023 meeting to discuss the latest Safe Use of Images Guidelines and how best to plan taking/storing/publishing photos for St Andrew's services / events. We have not had written consent for using photos of adults in the past – we have had a verbal agreement or an email to approve use of someone's photo. In future, it was felt that we should have a formal agreement from any adult whose image is used in St Andrew's publicity (website, Facebook, posters). Phil and Catherine have devised a consent form for adults. Our Children and Young People's Contact Information Form includes a 'photo permission and release' section for parents to complete.

So that we can take photos at public events such as the Beer Festival, Beer & Carols or the Railway Day and publish them, we need to:

- a) inform attendees in advance that photos will be taken at the event (this can be included on publicity, ticket information and advance emails).
- b) display a clear notice at the event stating that photos are being taken and that if people do not wish to have their photo taken they should inform the official photographer. The official photographer should wear a badge so they can be identified.

Richard uses photos in the magazine. For baptism photos, Alan or Bill seek permission from the family (there's a question on the baptism form that families complete so that parents can give consent for a photo to be used in the magazine – photos are usually supplied by the family themselves).

5) Outreach

Kath Oates has led the outreach programme for the new Blakemore Manor estate, delivering a church welcome card and biscuits to each home. Stephane McCarthy from St Mary's assisted in this project. The response was encouraging, particularly from younger families. Kath continues to build links with the Sele Farm community.

6) Future projects

We are working on the development of a new **welcome pack** with background about the church and information about activities, services and our position in the community. This will be available at the back of the church and will be aimed at visitors and first-timers.

Summary

After two years, it is safe to say that the Communications Committee is fulfilling its function and is the go-to point of reference for most church-linked publicity, producing a consistently high standard of communications in both printed and digital formats.

Forbes Mutch (Chair)

April 2024