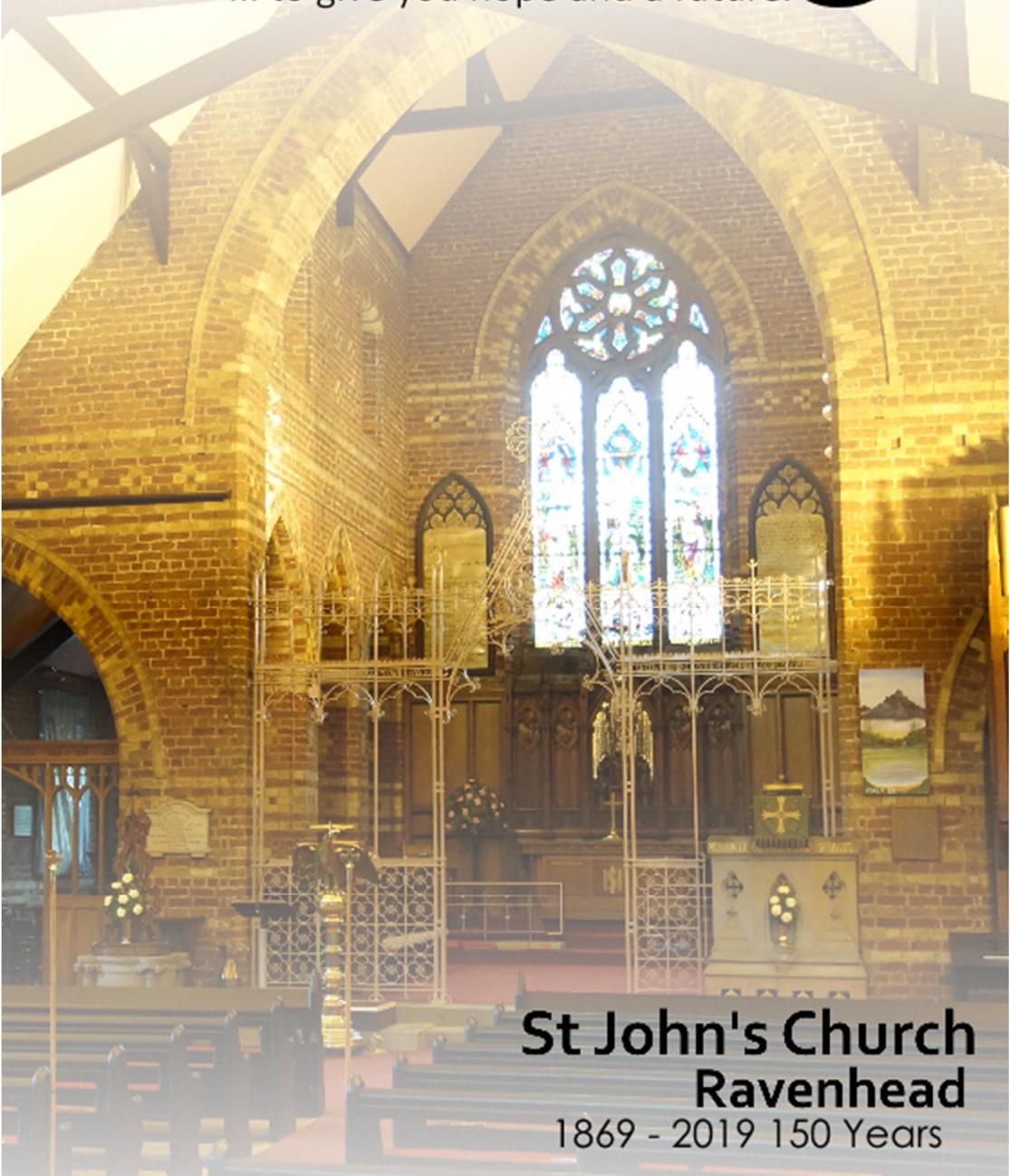


Project 2019

'... to give you hope and a future.'



**St John's Church
Ravenhead**

1869 - 2019 150 Years

Aims

Project2019

'... to give you hope and a future.'

That by the 150th anniversary of the consecration of St John's Church, Ravenhead, on St John the Evangelist's Day, Friday 27 December 2019, we will have...

- guaranteed the provision of Christian worship in Ravenhead by securing the future of St John's Church for future generations of worshippers – '...to give you hope and a future.'
by having...
- increased regular worshippers as measured by our electoral roll to at least 150 – one for every year the church has been open, representing an increase target of at least 12 per year from 2015.
- achieved 'Child Friendly Church' certification from the Diocese of Liverpool
- formed an effective and outward looking children and youth ministry
- encouraged a fellowship with a love of Bible study and prayer
- resumed our full contribution to Parish Share, with no, or substantially reduced, arrears
- maximised the uptake of Gift Aid donations
- taken a decision regarding the future of Emmanuel, and have developed and implemented a new vision for the building and land if it is retained
- encouraged a new generation of volunteers in our fellowship
- developed a coherent and standardised recruitment policy and a management and support structure for staff and volunteers
- reclaimed the church's position as a community body
- developed a consolidated communications strategy
- enjoyed a series of events throughout 2019 to celebrate, and have commissioned a permanent installation marking our 150th anniversary

Structure

Project2019

'... to give you hope and a future.'

This is a 'whole-church' project and an opportunity to grow together as a fellowship. It is a programme focussed on realistic, achievable targets in which all parishioners, past, present and future are invited to give of their best to the glory of God, in a unified effort to celebrate the 150th anniversary of our church's consecration by securing its future spiritually, financially, practically and physically.

The aim is that small groups of people with an interest or a specialism take on the component parts of the scheme, each contributing to the stated overall aim which will be co-ordinated by the PCC. Not everything need start immediately, targets may be altered over the 4 year timescale, items may be added or removed as appropriate, but the aim will remain the same: to guarantee the provision of Christian worship in Ravenhead by securing the future of St John's Church for future generations of worshippers.

Launch Date & Targets

Project2019

'... to give you hope and a future.'

The launch date for Project 2019 is the Saint Day of John, Apostle and Evangelist, in 2015. In 2015, this day falls on Sunday 27 December, which gives us the opportunity to gather for a Dedication Festival on St John the Evangelist's Day. The target is to have achieved, or be as close to achieving as possible, as many of the stated aims of Project 2019 in the four years that follow until our 150th anniversary on 27 December 2019.

Aims

Project2019

'... to give you hope and a future.'

Secure the future of St John's Church for future generations of worshippers

In keeping with many churches across the Church of England, St John's, when measured by average age has an aging congregation. Though this is not yet a desperate issue, we have only to look 10, 15, 20 years down the line to see that, without encouraging children, young adults and families into our church, that our attendance and electoral roll may start to dwindle, and with it, the viability of St John's Church.

The overarching aim of Project 2019 is this: **to secure the future of St John's Church for future generations of worshippers**. Many of the other aims will naturally feed into this target, they are in many ways the steps on the way to this destination.

Many of the other aims also naturally enhance each other. Achievement in one aim will promote or compliment achievement in another.

Aims

Project2019

'... to give you hope and a future.'

Increase regular worshippers as measured by our electoral roll to at least 150 – one for every year the church has been open, representing an increase target of at least 12 per year from 2015.

To increase the numbers of regular worshippers as measured by our electoral roll to a symbolic figure of 150 is an interesting target. In reality, 150 people on the electoral roll likely means a figure nearer or over 200 who would consider themselves members of our church. Under 16s are not eligible to join Church of England electoral rolls, but are no less a member of our fellowship than their parents, guardians or siblings who are.

Other component parts of Project 2019 will help to achieve this target, and there are a number of ready-made initiatives that we could investigate, as well as home-grown ideas. Some such activities are already in place.

Examples include...

- Back to Church Sunday & other invitation-based events
- Special events, services and concerts
- Café Church (oldoakresources.com – Liverpool Cathedral)
- Heritage Open Days

Achieve 'Child Friendly Church' certification from the Diocese of Liverpool

The Child Friendly Church Award is an initiative coordinated locally by the Diocese of Liverpool which encourages best practice in our work with children and young people, though many of the principles can be applied to other areas of church life.

'By applying for, and achieving Child Friendly status your church displays to your community that ministry for children and their families is taken seriously.'

The vision:

Journeying together for the growth of God's family through resourcing, supporting and empowering churches.

In Practice:

The Child Friendly Church Award team works towards this vision by:

- Providing a self assessment tool to allow churches to reflect on their existing ministry to children and families under three core components of Church, Children & Community.
- Encouraging churches to then create or develop their vision for ministry with children and families and think to the future.
- Allocating each church a Child Friendly Church Award Advisor who will support them through the process and beyond, providing encouragement and acting as a mentor to help them achieve your goals.

The award is valid for a period of 3 years.

Form an effective and outward looking children and youth ministry

Building on the foundations already in place, and complimenting the participation in the Child Friendly Church Award, we recognise the importance of nurturing the 'next generation' of church elders and leaders through our ministry to children and young people.

Though integral members of the 'church of today', these people are the gifted individuals and friends who will assist and lead our ministry in the years to come. Through strong spiritual guidance in these early years, it is here where the Kingdom can be increased today and in years to come.

The recognition of and encouragement given to our leaders is also important. They should be invested in through training and support, meaning this target is complimented through the aim to 'develop a coherent and standardised recruitment policy for staff and volunteers'. This may seem like cumbersome paperwork and red tape, but it helps create a dialogue at all stages before and after recruitment, meaning our leaders are involved and supported.

Examples include...

- Messy Church
- Children & Communion
- Open the Box
- Godly Play
- Long Service Award

Encourage a fellowship with a love of Bible study and prayer

A church focussed on study, prayer, worship and fellowship builds on a solid foundation of faith and creates an effective channel for the work of the Spirit in individuals, the church and the community.

The Bible is clear that it is the Spirit of God who brings people to faith, but our actions and faith are channels through which the Spirit can work. A solid faithful fellowship in which the Spirit can work without obstruction is one in which Christians, new and old, can flourish, supporting each other in the faith.

Resume our full contribution to Parish Share, with no, or substantially reduced, arrears

Whatever the rights and wrongs of the intricacies of the Parish Share system, it is one we cannot ignore and a system without which many communities would already be left without a 'local' church.

Just as we through Parish Share support our own church, we support those parishes less able pay, and those more able to pay support us. As a 'one for all and all for one' approach, its basic approach is thoroughly Christian.

Parish Share supports the provision of a member of clergy for churches across the Diocese of Liverpool, including our own clergy in Ravenhead and across the Eccleston Team. Long standing factors mean it is increasingly difficult to maintain the status-quo of 'one vicar per parish', but our access to this provision continues, partly through the Parish Share system.

Our ability to pay must always be based upon common sense, but we must also appreciate the difficulty non-payment can cause. Other churches must pick up the tab for missed payments so that clergy can continue to receive their stipend and pension costs be met. We have benefited and continue to benefit from the ministry of clergy in our deanery and Diocese, and it is proper that we make our fair contribution.

It is reasonable that we make the congregation aware of the parish share debt without making an enemy of the parish share system or the Diocese of Liverpool.

Maximise the uptake of Gift Aid donations

One of the easiest ways of increasing our ability to continue to exist from a financial standpoint is to increase the number of Gift Aid donations.

Like all the targets of Project 2019, it is directly impacted by the aims of other parts of the programme.

The more people we have in church, the more donations we may receive. It then follows that more of these donations may be subject to Gift Aid, and the church can therefore feel the benefits of this scheme.

We must make it clear within the congregation how Gift Aid works and the benefits to the church without any extra cost to them. Those concerned about privacy must be reassured about the safeguards intrinsically built into the system, and we as a PCC must accept our responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of personal information with which we are entrusted.

Those who are unable to Gift Aid must be reassured that their donation is no less valued by the church, and those who cannot give of their money made to know that we will appreciate just as much their gifts of time and talent.

An informed congregation will be better equipped to make decisions regarding their giving and the impact of their donations. This can be as simple as a 'in 2014, this church cost £xx per month' campaign.

We can also take up the offer of Rev. Steve Pearce to address the congregation, and implement as many initiatives suggested by the diocese to raise income as we feel comfortable with and are helpful.

Aims

Project2019

'... to give you hope and a future.'

Take a decision regarding the future of Emmanuel, and develop and implement a new vision for the building and land if it is retained

Emmanuel has proved its worth as a nurturing facility for those coming to the faith throughout its association with the church. It is well placed within the parish boundary and centrally positioned to many homes. Today, it is a shadow of its former self.

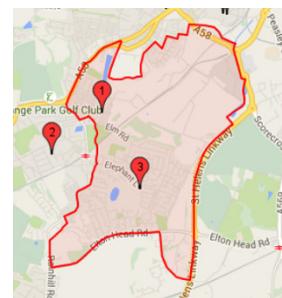
Through the recent association with Thatto Heath Crusaders Rugby League Club, much of the disrepair in which the building found itself has been to some extent rectified. Now, as the rugby club prepare to relinquish the building back into our sole care, we have a decision to make regarding its future.

Should we retain the building, it is imperative that it not be allowed to return to its previous state.

However, Emmanuel is a place of potential and a place where our ministries can thrive:

Examples of activities for Emmanuel include (see 'Emmanuel: The Future' booklet)...

- TRYchurch
- EMMANUELunplugged
- Café Church
- Messey Church
- Godly Play
- Award Night
- Uniformed organisations



Encourage a new generation of volunteers in our fellowship

'... the workers are few'. A familiar feeling?

Like many churches, St John's is teeming with untapped gifts, abilities, talents and resources. However, those who do the work can often feel as though it is the same people who are involved in everything. It can be, though, that people in the congregation feel the same, would like to help, but think there is nothing to do, or no place for them – especially if, after all, everything is being done!

We must make the congregation fully aware of the problems with volunteers and seek those who would wish to assist. If work is being done by someone, even on an ad-hoc basis, people will presume someone has responsibility for it.

Can we also make better use of those who have already volunteered? We have a number of sidespersons – but do they have a defined role, or are they on a rota for responsibilities? These people have offered their help, so let them give it.

This is another area that will tie in with the target of a coherent and standardised recruitment and staff/volunteer management policy.

Develop a coherent and standardised recruitment policy and a management and support structure for staff and volunteers

In taking on paid staff and volunteers, we are asking people to respect us as a serious employer. The welfare, health and safety of people engaged upon church business becomes both our moral and legal responsibility. Part of the increasing commitment to safeguarding being made by the Church of England, other mainstream denominations and wider society following the revelations of historical abuse in recent years means that we are expected to have certain structures in place when recruiting and managing both staff and volunteers.

The Diocese of Liverpool have a template procedure in place for the safe recruitment and management of staff. It is worth remembering that such procedures are designed to benefit the protection of both the church and its staff and volunteers.

<http://www.liverpool.anglican.org/recruitment-and-DBS-info>

It is also appropriate that our staff and volunteers are encouraged, supported and invested in. Can we send them on training courses, or host the courses at St John's? Can we put in place a structure whereby staff and volunteers are trained 'on the job' by colleagues?

Reclaim the church's position as a community body

The church has been allowed to be increasingly considered broadly to be apart from the community, rather than a part of it. The language of the clash between the 'secular' and the 'sacred', opinions that it is inappropriate to have a State Church, or prayers in Parliament, or church schools need to be challenged.

The church is very much part of the community, and it is possible that 'the community' at large do not realise how this is so. It is incredible to think of the wide range of services offered by the church across the country. The provision of religious services is not separate from this, as there is clearly still a demand in the community for such occasions.

However, even here in Ravenhead, the closure of this church today would mean the loss of local religious services, a venue for baptisms, weddings and funerals. The area would lose voluntary visiting for the sick and support for the bereaved, and a free church-run parent and toddler group.

Local organisations would lose a base, meaning the loss of provision for children's karate, community cake decoration classes, an aerobics class, children's dance classes and more.

Churches provide their communities with youth clubs, sports teams, summer fun days, Christmas events, concert venues, food banks, community lunches and more – quietly, voluntarily, and often at little or no cost to service users.

The church has much to offer – we must make sure the community realises what, while maintaining our pledge to boast only in the death and resurrection of Christ, to whom goes the glory.

Develop a consolidated communications strategy

Communication is more valuable and easier to produce than ever. It is also more present and readily available than ever. To stand out in such a crowded arena, we must make sure our advertising, informational materials and other methods of communication are co-ordinated.

There is already some progress being made towards this – our website and Sunday notice sheet have recently had a redesign, making their appearance clearer and crucially, more familiar by using single design elements in both media. Some of those same elements are also present in this book – the 'St John's Church, Ravenhead' banner on the front page, for example. Using this across our publications, adverts, letterheads, Sunday PowerPoint presentations etc. helps to give the church a 'brand', something which people can easily recognise.

Other simple examples include church officers making use of email addresses provided through the church website -

@stjohnsravenhead.org.uk – using these addresses give those who communicate with us electronically a reassurance that they really are communicating with a representative of the church. It protects individuals' private email addresses and also means that when someone moves from a position, documentation is there ready for them to pick up in the same email address.

How we communicate and promote ourselves could be crucial to the success of Project 2019 – it is inherent within the Christian life that the church should 'let the people hear'.

Aims

Project2019

'... to give you hope and a future.'

Enjoy a series of events throughout 2019 to celebrate, and commission a permanent installation marking our 150th anniversary

Each generation has left its mark on the church building. Our stained glass windows, tablets, rood screen, reredos, eagle lectern, font cover and more are all memorials of events and or people. As the church reaches its 150th anniversary – do we want to mark the occasion with a permanent memorial in the church?

Possible examples include:

- a new stained glass window
 - a new wall mounted tablet
-

It is natural that, as we approach the 150th anniversary of St John's Church on Friday 27 December 2019, there will be events and celebrations to mark the occasion. To reach that date with the fellowship able to look back upon the achievements of Project 2019 with joy and rejoicing would be a blessing from the Lord. The real achievements, however, should be felt in the furtherance of the Kingdom, and the strength of the fellowship for what it has achieved, under God, together.

So, put the date in your diaries, because, on the evening of Friday 27 December 2019, in the presence of a large congregation, a bishop, friends some of whom we are yet even to meet – we meet to celebrate what God has done in our parish over 150 years. To God be the glory. Amen.

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Ravenhead**

1869 - 2019 150 Years

Project2019
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