

Meon Bridge Benefice ~ Kairos open meeting

24th February 2011

Summary of the meeting

Approximately 75 persons gathered in the Droxford Village Hall to hear the presentations from the Kairos team and to discuss the points arising. The following agenda was presented:

- Introduction to the Kairos mission
by Rev Stuart Holt
- The Process: Consultation and Action
by Colin Whishaw
- Our 2020 Vision: The Kairos Report
by John Symes
- Considerations: What is Sacred?
by Rev Stuart Holt
- The Four Churches
by Mark Mathew, Anne Wilkinson, & John Symes

Colin described the meeting as part of a process whereby we can all become involved to decide on improvements to our churches. The next step would be for each PCC to organise a session **in each church** when individual members of our community, whether regular worshippers or not, might discuss the suggestions put forward, so that all would have a clear understanding of the implications of the ideas for changes that had been put forward. Out of those discussions may come further suggestions as to how we can best place our church buildings to serve our community up to 2020 and beyond. As a group, we would certainly not wish to claim that we have thought of every possible idea.

Once those sessions had taken place in each church, the PCCs would consider the report, together with the views expressed at these meetings or by email to the Kairos team (kairos@bridgechurches.org.uk). Then the individual PCCs would consider taking steps to achieve such improvements as were generally agreed for the achievement of the 2020 vision.

John focused on the Report's Vision, Strategy, and Execution statement, which had been endorsed by the benefice PCC's. John spoke of the group's vision of the role our churches would be playing in our community by the year 2020, and illustrated his talk by reference to enhancements

already completed at other Meon Valley Churches. He also reminded the meeting of the four recommendations of the Kairos Report (see the Downloads page at www.bridgechurches.org.uk). His presentation was also available on the same site.

Stuart discussed what is sacred and what is temporal in our church buildings and particularly focused on the meaning of fellowship and hospitality in our communities.

Mark, Anne, and John presented the highlights of the team's ideas for each of the four churches (5 minutes each). After a coffee break, this was followed by a questions and answers session with the Kairos Team

Time allowed only questions of a general nature. Interventions were generally favourable, and thanks were expressed to the report's authors, but concerns were also expressed about priorities and whether there is a need for some of the ideas for development. The importance of providing a welcoming environment was stressed, as also the importance of defining the role we want the church to play, and the worship plans in each building. Concerns were expressed that raising funds for church improvements could detract, particularly in Meonstoke, from the Valley Pre-School which is also in need of development, but it was also remarked that it was potentially an opportunity for converged action. Other concerns were the potential overlap with the village halls, and the need to coordinate fund-raising so that individual churches did not compete. It was requested that future meetings should avoid school holidays. It was pointed out that the report did not cover bell-ringing and the contribution of bells to the church and worship. A clergyman, recently retired and now living in Meonstoke, offered his support and encouragement based on his experience in parishes that have successfully gone through similar development processes.

By request, Mr Norman Chapman, who helped organise the development fund and parish room recently completed in Soberton, addressed the meeting. Mr Chapman confirmed that the Soberton Room had been fully funded and over £300,000 was raised over ten years. There was currently no outstanding debt and the room is being regularly used for the benefit of the community.

John Symes, Coordinator, Kairos Group