

Devon Churches Rural Forum Conference 2018

Reimagining Rural Ministry: moving towards new structures

Notes from Appreciative Enquiry Session

Think about one thing that has made you “proud” – where you really felt God was at work, something that felt right, was a good use of resources, where the outcome was great ...

3 Good news stories

One church set up a toddler group, and as the children became older, a family service was developed for them. The children carried on coming and eventually eight children were confirmed. Though another toddler group did not follow on, the family service is now well established.

One church reported a recent congregation of 25 at Evensong. This was a celebration of the 90th birthday of a long term congregation and village member with lots of local family connections (3 daughters all married in the church). The service was full of joy.

Another person spoke of establishing and belonging to a House group, which has a sustainable number, and was a safe space to say ‘I don’t know’ and learn, even for long term Christians.

How did structures and available resources contribute (or not) to your story? How does decision making and how the church works help or hinder your work? How did that relate to your values?

Structures

PCCs – hindrance/help

Key – building relationships with community

Values – welcoming, relational

Is it bureaucracy/red tape which holds us back, rather than the structures?

Problem solve by different person taking responsibility for a parish

Values – flexibility, relationships

Leadership critical within the structures

How to make it easier to work across whole benefice, not just within a parish? Challenge is to take that to co-operation between benefices. PCC at benefice level?

Problem finding churchwardens, so allocation of jobs amongst several lay people. One church doesn’t want a churchwarden. Better to share the jobs.

Positive steps

Undoing old ‘good ideas’ from Archdeacons! More ideas from bottom up needed.

Churches meeting for meals

+ Response to crises/local needs leading to new things – holiday club, breakfast club

Growth of Messy Church ecumenically

Need to help PCC see Messy Church as church!

Develop Bible study groups for parents