**Potting Shed Church leader commissioned**



**A new resource church is being established in the Deanery of Newark and Southwell as part of the diocesan vision for Growing Disciples Wider Younger Deeper.**

**The Revd Alison Jones is leading the initiative, and she and her team are already on the ground, exploring possibilities and building relationships. The new church – called The Potting Shed Church – will work with other rural parishes as they continue to develop their own plans for reaching people outside of the church.**

**Alison was commissioned into her new role by Bishop Paul during a Potting Shed gathering at her home. Here she describes what happened:**

“We were delighted to welcome around 90 supporting friends, family, neighbours and those intrigued to find out more about The Potting Shed Church when we gathered in a marquee in the garden at Willow Cottage, Norwell Woodhouse.

“The event was an opportunity to hear a little more about plans for The Potting Shed and to hear from Bishop Paul something of the context in the Diocese within which The Potting Shed will operate as we seek to build community with those not perhaps connected with church, and explore faith in a God who loves each one of us.

“People arrived at 4pm, we gathered in the garden and they were encouraged to find their home on our Ordinance survey map! Even those ‘off the map’ marked their spot, one couple had travelled 200 miles from Manchester to join us!

“We began our service by encouraging everyone that The Potting Shed hoped to be a safe place in which we might grow and build community, but from which we might be ‘planted out’ from into our families, and wider community. We then encouraged everyone to have a go at one or two activities together:

Planting a sweet chestnut tree – to mark this significant moment in our shared adventure, or to plant spring bulbs around its base

Song Workshop – learning some new songs together, and some twists on a few old ones

Prayer Bunting – getting creative with fabric and pens to capture things we’re thankful for and things we long or hope for.

“Then we re-gathered in the tent for a bible reading which we read together and Rev Ant Dixon our curate helped us to think about trusting God, not keeping our dreams potted up, but daring to plant them out. And to do that in the knowledge that God is for us, and wants us to flourish and grow in relationship with him.

“We were then led in song by our newly formed Potting Shed band, all of us trying out the songs we’d learnt.

“Bishop Paul then commissioned Ant and me, and the growing team. He then prayed for all who had come along. Finally we enjoyed a hog roast with all the trimmings, local cider, chocolate brownies and flapjack. What’s not to like!”





