



Church Night
Thursday, 13 October 2005
Music
Prayer

Introduction

Welcome

This evening is about thanking God for what we have, opening our eyes and our hearts to the community in which we live and asking God to guide and direct our thoughts, prayers and deliberations with regard to the ongoing refurbishment and future development of the premises.

The Story so far

A steering group was formed. An architect was appointed. The steering group discussed our requirements with the Architect and he produced some options. The steering group then consulted widely throughout the church family. To date there appears to be consensus regarding the development of a new welcome area, refurbishment of the Sanctuary and the Primary room. However, when it comes to proposals for the Warehouse, it seems that the collective imagination has not been captured. It would seem that rather than create more areas for our own use, there is a mind to use the Warehouse to serve our community. Proposals for the Warehouse need to be considered as part of the overall plan. This evening is part of the process of everyone coming together before God and asking him to help and guide us over the use of the Warehouse.

Where we come in

Our part

As you know we employ David as our Creative/Community Co-ordinator and I manage the Stables, part of the Church premises which is specifically designed for community use. Our jobs coincide this evening as we seek to illustrate to you the community surrounding LRBC, all that we have at LRBC and what we can offer to this community and how we can thank God and pray in an informed and expectant way. We want to help you to think and pray creatively. We want you to be excited about the possibilities.

Your part

To be open minded and open hearted (if the format of the evening does not meet you usual Church Night expectations, stay with us), participate, and pray big expectant prayers. To coin a phrase 'Our God is a great big God'.

Format for the evening

We have divided the evening into three parts: -

- In the first part the scene will be set. We will be looking at the community of Leigh-on-Sea, where we live, where we work where we shop, where we play.
- The second part comprises of what we have at LRBC and what we can offer to the community in which the church is located.

- The final part of the evening will involve praying over what we have seen and heard. Asking our 'great big God' to read our hearts and guide our deliberations and prayers.

Part 1 – Setting the Scene: Leigh

This is the place where we live..... [POWERPOINT TOUR](#)

This is what people think about where we live..... [FILM vox-pox.](#)

Those were perceptions, here are some facts..... [statistics 2001 Census \(specific to the ward of Leigh, map required\)](#)

- Population of Southend on Sea: 160,257
Population of Leigh: 9,015, 47% male, 53% female
Leigh has a higher percentage of the population aged 25-44 (33.5% compared with 28.1% in Southend) and a lower percentage aged 60-74.
- Number of households in Southend-on-Sea: 70,978
Number of households in Leigh: 4460, of which 77% are owner occupied. 18% rent from private landlords of letting agencies, compared with 13% in the borough as a whole. In Leigh 2.2% rent from the Council or Housing Association.
- In Leigh the average household size is 2.01 and 43% of households in Leigh Ward are one person households, compared with 35% in Southend and 30% in England & Wales.
- There is a lower proportion of married couples in Leigh, 27% compared with 37% in England & Wales. Leigh also has a higher proportion of cohabiting couples than Southend (11% compared to 9%)
- The health of residents in Leigh is good in comparison to Southend as a whole. 71% of residents in Leigh described their health as 'good' and 16% have a limiting long term illness.
- A higher proportion of people in Leigh (21%) have a degree or equivalent than in Southend as a whole (14%) and England & Wales (20%).
- 72% of Leigh residents are economically active compared with 67% in Southend as a whole. The most significant employment sectors in which Leigh residents work are financial intermediation, real estate and renting and business activities. The most significant occupation sector is managers and senior officials.
- Car ownership is about average in Leigh ward with 73% of households owning at least one car. There is a relatively high proportion of residents that travel to work by train – 22%.

This is what Leigh-on-Sea Town Council discovered..... [Leigh Town Council conducted a survey in 2003. Among the responses, a number of themes emerged strongly:-](#)

- [Traffic and parking](#)
- [Retain heriatage and character of the town](#)
- [Retain local shops restaurants](#)
- [More should be done for young people](#)
- [More cars for senior citizens and the disabled](#)
- [Preserve the river heritage of the town, including the fishing businesses](#) extract from ' A Vision for Leigh'

This is what Southend Borough Council wants.....'A flourishing voluntary and community sector is part of a democratic and healthy society.'

'A healthy voluntary and community sector is part of a democratic society'.

Source: A Compact for Southend on Sea

This is what Tony Blair (speaking in 1995) said, 'We enjoy a thousand material advantages over any previous generation, and yet we suffer a depth of insecurity and spiritual doubt they never knew'.

Presented with all this information, what should our response be?

Part 2 – Setting the Scene: LRBC

As a church, what have we got to offer....let us go on a virtual tour of the premises and see what happens here in the course of a week

POWERPOINT TOUR

It's a busy place

Your turn. When you arrived you were handed a coloured piece of paper. There are six colours and therefore six groups. Very quickly, we are going to do a SWOT analysis. It is a simple method of obtaining an accurate picture of our attributes as a church.

SWOT equals **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats**.

If you can move to your colour station, the fun can begin.

You will find a flipchart and a pen - appoint a scribe. You will need to work quickly because there will only 5 minutes for each heading.

So Strengths

- What are LRBC's advantages? Eg. good central location
- What does LRBC do well? Eg. thriving Mums & Tots group
- In what areas is LRBC well resourced?
- What skills to key people (both leaders and members) possess?

Try to answer the questions from the perspective of both those inside the church and those outside it.

Weaknesses

- What are LRBC's disadvantages? E.g. Large old premises
- What does LRBC do badly? E.g. Welcoming new people into the life of the church
- What do you need to rethink? E.g. Expecting our community to come to us, rather than us to them.
- What needs improving?

This is not the time to air pet grievances but a time for honesty.

Opportunities

- What are the opportunities that are presenting themselves to LRBC?
- How is the community changing?

Threats

- What obstacles does LRBC face?
- How is the community changing?
- In what areas do we lack resources?
- Are there any legal obstacles to overcome?
- Are there any relational obstacles to overcome?

It is vital to take into consideration what is already been done in our community by other churches, faith-based organisations and secular organisations. We do not want to duplicate services which are already been successfully provided to full capacity by another agency.

There is not time now to have a thorough feedback session, but the results will be posted on our website or a paper copy can be sent to you. (Please leave your details with us).

Part 3 – Our Response

Your turn again...

In your colour groups we are going to ask God to lead us in prayer. Use the images, the data, the impressions, the conversations to inform our prayers.

Many of you will have noticed the 'BUILD' logo, it comes currently in three guises: - BUILD faith, BUILD relationships and BUILD facilities. Let us use those three headings to structure our prayers.

BUILD faith

- Faith is belief in action. Faith focuses on God, not on itself.
- Faith links us with the all knowing, all powerful, ever-present God.
'Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will direct your paths'.
Proverbs 3: 5 & 6
'What is faith? It is the confident assurance that what we hope for is going to happen. It is the evidence of things we cannot yet see.'
Heb 11:1

BUILD relationships

- Our own personal relationship with God on the basis of faith and grace. 'God saved you by his special favour when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God' Ephesians 2: 8 & 9
- Our relationships with one another in God's family 'No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love has been brought to full expression through us'. 1 John 4:12
- Our relationship with family and friends who have not received God's grace.
- Our relationships with those we have regular contact. 'He felt great pity for the crowds that came, because their problems were so great and they didn't know where to go for help. They were like sheep without a shepherd'.
Matthew 9:36

BUILD facilities

- Pray over the possibilities
- Allow God's Spirit to guide our ideas
- Pray for funding for the refurbishment and the potential Warehouse proposal
- Pray for God's timing
- Pray for sacrifice and faith.
'Unless the Lord builds a house, the work of the builders is useless'. Psalm 127:1

Conclusion

Thanks for your time.

This is a big project.....contact us, tell us what you think, pray fervently
Let God do his thing!

If this has captured your imagination.....POSTCARD

Get your homegroup to do a Prayerwalk around Leigh

Use 'prayer triggers' so that you pray regularly for BUILD.....IF YOU EAT
MARMITE EVERY DAY, USE THIS TO PROMPT YOU

ENDS – THANK YOU & GOOD NIGHT

Presenters Jane B & David E