

Over the past 15 years I have been asked to advise on many church and cathedral notice boards: from rural to UPA, from the corporate looking to the radical, with all sorts of budgets and needs. The advice offered here is not policy, it is advice, based on that experience and the science behind signage and layout, fonts, colours, visual acuity, value for money, and best practice.

### The Challenge-Who are we speaking to?

Communications professionals sometimes say that there are three types of people in the world: *browsers*, *readers* and *non-readers*. Each group has different communications needs. *Readers* (5-15% of the population) have no problems with text only communications, *browsers* (70-80% of the population) want a balance between pictures, and text, and *non-readers* (15% of the population) are more concept driven (see Types of people Box A).

In order to grow, make our communications more effective, and appeal to more people, we need to target the *browser* group. If we do this our notice boards may look different and be more effective.

## Content of your notice boards-an approach

### Identify-Detail-More Detail

We can learn a lot from how professional signage planners communicate information. They use a process I call, *Identify, Detail, More Detail*.

Have a look at the road signs (*fig1*). The destination is the roundabout, from left to right, the first sign identifies the roundabout is ahead, as you get nearer you get a bit more detail then, when on the roundabout, you get more detail.

Just imagine if there was only one sign and the first road sign had all the information on it. Drivers would be overwhelmed, feel confused and annoyed.

The same is true for church boundary notice boards. Too much information and the passer-by, especially *browsers*, will be overwhelmed and put off.

### How much detail is appropriate?

Have a look at the Sainsbury's signs (*fig2*). The destination is the supermarket. The first thing you see, at the boundary, is a sign that says welcome with their logo. As you get nearer, so the signs give more detailed information, such as the services on offer. The sign, near the door, offers details of opening times, while a further board inside identifies the manager with other staff names and photos.

The same is true for Marks and Spencer, see their *Identify, Detail, More Detail* signs (*fig3*).

### A welcome from kerb to pew

In the church we often do the opposite of the *Identify, Detail, More Detail* approach, cramming our boundary notice boards with as many words as we can fit in. Our content is sometimes unfriendly-How many church notice boards have the word *welcome* on them, despite this being part of our mission?

The *Identify, Detail, More Detail* approach is great news for the Church. As it offers us a simple template for successfully shifting preconceptions of the church as aloof and wordy. We can, at low cost, say welcome and make people feel they belong-from kerb to pew. The rest of this section shows how to adopt these ideas.

# Church notice boards

By David Marshall, Director of Communications, Manchester

## Box A

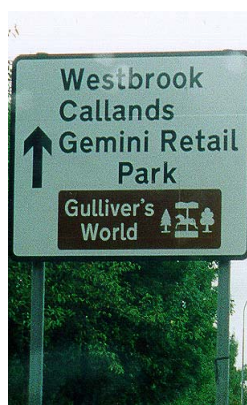
### Types of people and their communications needs

- **Browsers** 70-80% of the population, design led, wants less text. The use of the right fonts, headline styles and pictures will get them to read more. Interested in events/news. Media-Mail, Telegraph, Times, Guardian, finds internet informative. Likely to say-I didn't read it because there was too much information and I don't have time..have you heard?
- **Readers** 5-15% of the population, main form of communication is word in print, makes time to read, wants detail, design secondary. Media-Financial Times, Church Times, academic journals, reports, finds the internet superficial. Because of information overload readers are starting to behave like browsers; scanning information and deciding what to read by using clues such as headlines and pictures. Likely to say-everything is dumbing down.
- **Non-readers** 15% of the population, prefer short amounts of text, are picture led. Media- prefer broadcast, News of the World, Sun, fine internet very engaging. Likely to say-I didn't read it because it looked boring.

Fig 1 Road signs



Identify-boundary



More detail-as you get nearer



Even more detail-at destination

Fig 2 Sainsbury's



Identify-boundary



Interior-welcome and staff



More detail-as you get nearer



Even more detail-near door

Fig 3 M & S



Identify-boundary



Even more detail-near door



Interior-welcome and staff

See good boards, share tips at [www.manchester.anglican.org](http://www.manchester.anglican.org)

# Planning your notice boards

Using the *Identify, Detail, More Detail* method, a church would end up with three notice boards; a main boundary, one near the church door, and one inside. Use the content descriptions below to help you draw up your own list of contents for each board.

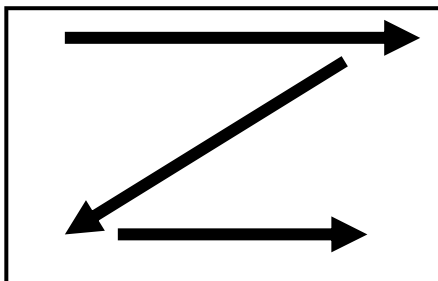
## Boundary (*identify*)



**Content:** Big 'welcome', church name, space for events, invitation to see service times on board near church door, web address, logos, benefice, parish title and province in small print bottom right.

## Layout

A simple layout trick, used by many designers, is to layout material using a 'Z' layout. It works for leaflets, posters and notice boards and is based on the way *browsers* process information. Here is what it looks like...



Once you decide to use a 'Z' layout then you know where to put things. Below shows where headings, logos and pictures go.



Your design should follow the 'Z' layout for maximum effect.



Posters in an opening section of a notice board

## Content musts

On every board, always include your website, a phone number, the word welcome, and the Church of England-diocese logo.

## Near door (*detail*)



**Content:** Big 'welcome', church name, service times, space for events, web address, logos, parish title and province in small print bottom right.

## Inside (*more detail*)



**Content:** welcome, logo, web address, photos of wardens etc, phone number of clergy etc.

## See page 4 for the technical details of these boards

## Logo

Your church may already have a logo if so, this would normally go on your notice board. It is also good practice to use the Church of England-Manchester logo so people know your denomination. Your logo may look fine on your website or stationery but if its resolution is too low, when it is blown up for your boards, it will look terrible. Your designer will need all logos in a form called an EPS file-so that when it is enlarged, it stays looking sharp. Ask your designer, s/he may be able to redraw your logo and provide you with the EPS files.

### Developing your own church logo and identity

If you want to discuss development of a church visual identity call the Director of Communications on 0161 828 1421.

## Help

You can download the Church of England Manchester version in PDF form from the diocese website. Details of available designers can also be found here. [www.manchester.anglican.org](http://www.manchester.anglican.org)

## Events

In the same way that websites and magazines can be used to promote events, notice boards allow us to advertise 24 hours a day with pictures and colour. It's a good idea to have a space for events with an opening plastic door allowing you to insert posters. A2 is great on boundary boards and A3 for those near doors. When you don't have events to promote use 'filler posters'. See website for downloadable 'filler posters' or send us some to share. I use Bury Council to print large colour posters. You can get an A2 poster printed and laminated for about £20. You need to send the files as a hi-res PDF or, if in publisher or Photoshop, save your document as a 300dpi jpeg at full size and email that. See website.

## Colours

Avoid black backgrounds with gold lettering in Times New Roman. This is the least friendly of colour combinations. If you want a dark colour use deep blue (the official CofE blue is called Pantone 2747 and the purple is Pantone 2557).

You could have a white background or a light (40% tint) warm grey. Keep it toned down and let your posters add colour.

White (or a 40% grey tint) with blue lettering

**Great, may be hard to keep clean, try tints like the warm grey behind this text**

CofE blue with white/purple lettering

**Works well needs good lighting and will be less effective at night**

Black with white lettering

**Can be very family averse avoid Times New Roman. Use Franklin Gothic Heavy**

## Fonts

Everyone has their favourite font, or a font they 'know' is the best one to use for disability access. There is a long science behind the best fonts for signage, however, the scope of this section only allows me to give you a summary of the best ones to use, the best size, and warn you what not to use.

### Which fonts?

Road signs are set in sans serif fonts such as Arial. This is because sans serif fonts can be read at a distance. Most fonts come in families; thin to thick bold versions. It is better to use short fat bold fonts as they have more ink on the board and can be read at a greater distance by most people, even those with eyesight issues.

### Use any of the following fonts

**Arial bold** (*classic windows font*)

**Franklin Gothic Heavy** (*great heavy font*)

**Gil Sans bold** (*used in common worship*)

**Century Gothic bold** (*great heavy font*)

### Do not use Times, Comic Sans or Old English

The text you are reading is set in a serif font called Times New Roman, which is great for large amounts of text in magazines and books. Harry Potter books are all set in a serif font called Adobe Garamond, a typeface based on the 16th century designs of Claude Garamond. Times New Roman and other serif fonts should not be used on notice boards - *browsers* generally find that these fonts give the impression that we are over formal or dull.

**Never use Comic Sans.** Remember the Harry Potter books mentioned above? They have sold over 360 million copies; and do not use Comic Sans, but Garamond. No professional reports, books, signs, stationery, disability documents, use Comic Sans. If you want accessible fonts, then use those listed above.

Beware designers who use Old English fonts making you look twee.

### Never use these fonts on boards

**Comic Sans** (*makes you look silly and superficial*)

**Old English** (*makes you look irrelevant/out of date*)

**Times Roman** (*makes you look formal/boring*)

### Designer Tips

#### NEVER USE ALL CAPITALS

If you really want to make all your publications (and I mean all) instantly accessible, at no extra cost, never ever use all capitals in headings in notice boards, posters, flyers, magazines, worship books, stationery etc. Upper and lower case headings mean that everyone can read the information. Road sign designers know this and for nearly all signage, use upper and lower case lettering.

## Construction & Cost

Re-facing an old notice board is the cheapest option. Go for a sturdy metal laminate for your main board with an opening section for posters, and a laminate re-face for the one near the church door. Keep your boards maintained. The interior board could be put together very cheaply for under £30. See the website for printers who understand what you are trying to do.

## Permission

All notice boards plans need to be seen by the DAC. Call Christine Hart on 0161 828 1419 or visit the website for guidance sheets.

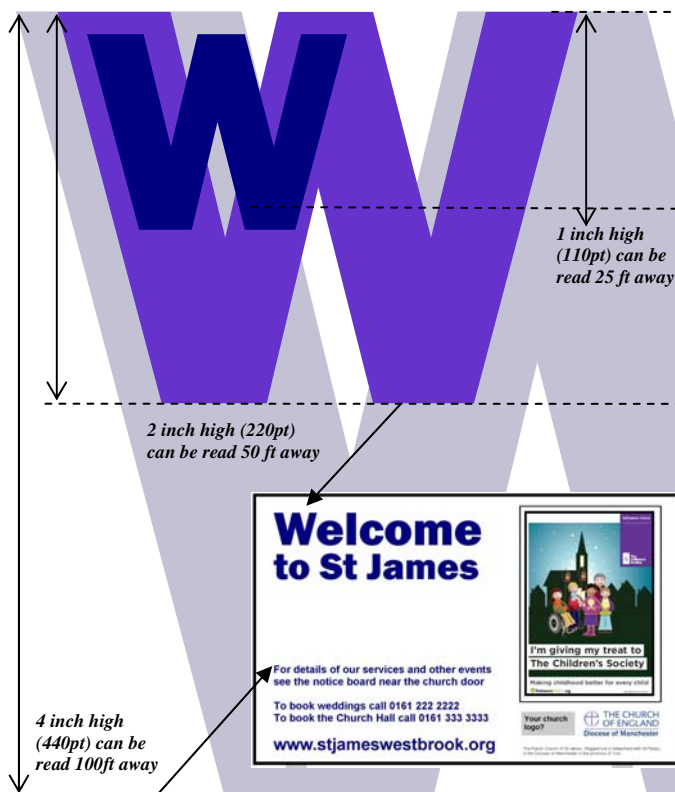
### What size should fonts be?

The size of fonts on notice boards is very easy to calculate and is based on the mathematical formula used in the opticians eye test.

### Main Headings

For main headings, one inch (or 2.5cm) high lettering can be read by a person, with average eyesight, at a distance of 25ft. So if the main text on your notice board needs to be read from 100ft away then you need 4 inch (10cm) headlines (see below).

Below are examples of Franklin Gothic Heavy at the correct sizes for main headings read at distances of 25ft, 50ft and 100ft.



**Smaller print on notice boards**  
Once people approach your notice board the minimum height of the lowercase font, that can be read by those aged from 7-80 yrs from a distance of 10 ft away, is 10mm. Add a further 10mm in height for every additional 10ft reading distance. The above font sizes conform to disability/visual acuity good practice.

**Designer tips**  
Always ask your designer to provide a proof section of your board at full size so you can put it on your current notice board and see if the fonts and colours work at a distance. Include in your DAC application.

## Suppliers

The website has a list of designers who have agreed to offer a good deal and a clear design. [www.manchester.anglican.org](http://www.manchester.anglican.org)

## Downloads

The following are available from the diocesan website:  
Copies of this help sheet  
Church of England Logo EPS and Jpeg  
Poster templates at A2 and A3 (publisher, Photoshop)  
Main, door and Inside board template - (publisher, Photoshop, EPS)  
DAC application forms and guidance notes

# Putting it all together...

## 1. Boundary notice boards

The colours chosen here offer maximum legibility from a distance. White background or a tint with dark blue text. Either way, Keep it toned down and let your posters for events add colour.

A space for your events makes sense and shows you church is alive. Make this at least A2 (double A3) opening cover and you have the best space. Never leave this empty-have posters that reflects the seasons to put in when you have no events to promote. See the diocesan website for free posters.

The font for the main heading is Franklin Gothic Heavy, other text is Arial. Upper & lowercase, never ALL CAPITALS.

Welcome is the biggest word. There is no need to include the full parish title-see small print at the bottom of the board. See font sizes on pg 3

Here is space with no text-browsers need this-it sends out a signal that this church gives people time to grow and think.

Invite people to come to your church door for details of services, they are more likely to come back.

Keep names off the boundary board-it will have a longer shelf life.



Include your website, when writing the address use capitals and lower case-to help break the name up.

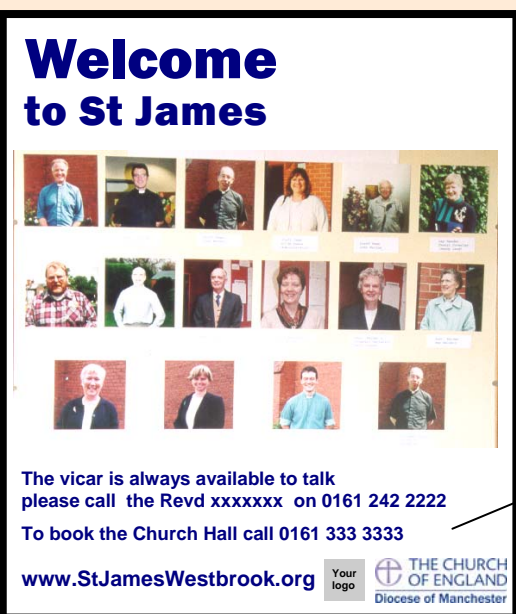
If you must put full parish, benefice, province details, charity number on the board, put them as small print, they will still be very visible, but will not put browsers off.

Include your logo if you have one, always include the Church of England Diocesan logo (free from the diocesan website), so people know who you are.

## 2. Near door notice boards

Much smaller, this board is designed to be read up close, with the viewer standing in front of it. It should still have similar elements, but more detail (such as service times). Keep names off and have an interior who's who board (see below).

Get this printed at AO (84cm by119cm)



There is still room for an A3 events holder.

## 3. Interior who's who notice board

Interior who's who boards are a great and cheap way to let everyone know who's who. Get them printed at AO (84cm by119cm) by a local printer or buy card and make your own and place inside near the door. Put photos on, Christian names and titles (if appropriate). Notice how the word welcome is repeated again and the fonts are the same as the other boards. This gives a sense of 'belonging' to the viewer.