**Parish Digital Communications Plan Template**



***This plan should accompany your parish/mission community Mission Action Plan and the Stepping Stones for Growth programme.***

**Questionnaire**

*Answer the following questions and use your answers to form your Parish Digital Communications Plan.*

Parish / Church name:

Vision or Values statement:

Mission Action Plan Goals:

**Parish location**

Describe the local area:

What other buildings/businesses are nearby

What are the social demographics of the area?

Why do people pass by your building?

**Current activity**

What church services occur throughout the week?

What church groups do you have (Mothers’ Union, uniformed organisations, Bible studies, etc.)?

What social outreach does the church perform (Foodbank, debt counselling, etc.)?

What are the church’s spaces hired out for? (list all common uses)

Any other enterprises (cafe, church shop, etc.)?

**Current Digital status**

Website:

* What platform is it built on?
* How many people manage it?
* Is it fit for purpose or out of date?
* Is it mobile friendly?
* Does the site fairly reflect the church activity and goals?
* What from our church life is missing from the website?
* How much traffic does the site get?
* Where does it come from?
* Is your ACNY page up to date?

Social Media:

* What platforms are the church on?
* How many followers do you have on each platform?
* What is the demographic breakdown of your followers? Does it reflect your local demographics?
* What type of posts perform best on each platform? Find your top three posts from the past 3 months.

1)

2)

3)

* What type of content do you normally share (text/photos/graphics/video, etc.)?
* Does your social media reflect the church activity and goals?

**Internal and external communication**

How do you currently communicate with your church members (noticeboard, emailed newsletter, pew sheet, etc.)?

How do you communicate with your local community?

What gatherings do you offer for church members (retreats, training, groups, etc.)?

What gatherings do you offer for church newcomers (Alpha course, etc.)?

What gatherings do you offer to anyone (church services, coffee mornings, etc.)?

**Audiences**

What is the demographic break down, by age and location, of your social media platforms?

What is the circulation of your parish magazine/pew sheet?

How many weekly hits does your website/ACNY page receive?

What opportunities do you have to communicate with the families who attend your local schools?

Do you have any communications aimed specifically at families and young people? What medium do you use?

Do you have a clear way for newcomers to church to make enquiries, both on and offline?

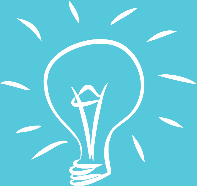
What does your church noticeboard say about your mission and goals to passersby?

Do people who hire your space know that they are welcome to come into church at other times (welcoming posters/leaflets/church members attending non church groups)?

*Looking back at your answers to the above questions, you should be able to get quite a clear picture of what your church does and how it currently communicates that.*

Can you already see any missed opportunities?

Where are your communications bearing fruit?



**TOP TIP** *Consider the Contacts section of Stepping Stones for Growth - are you making the most of the contacts your church already has and communicating with them?*

**Mission Goals and Actions**

Next you need to consider what we want to see happen, as the result of your communications. Revisit your Mission Goals at the top of the questions.

Mission Goal: We want to see X happen…

Action: In order to achieve X, we need to do Y…

Break down each area of your church’s ministry, from Sunday services, to social outreach, to small groups, even if they are already well communicated.

For each area, consider: what is its purpose, who it serves, how does it link into the vision of the church and finally how can you communicate that?

**Example:**

*Ministry: Singing for Tots*

Purpose: To provide a welcome and place to gather for local families

Serves: Open to all families in the local community

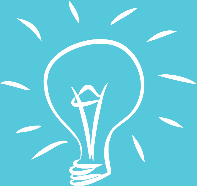
How it supports our mission: Building relationships and trust with isolated parents in the community. Has led to Baptism requests and church attendance.

Mission Goal: To extend the welcome to every family with small children living in the parish

Action:

* Create a Facebook group for local parents who attend the group to socialise in, share news and build community
* Print leaflets for local nurseries and childcare facilities to display on their noticeboards and put on your church’s noticeboard.
* Ask congregation to actively invite people they know to attend the group.
* Ask parents and children for permission to record footage of group sessions and testimonials to share on your website and social media.
* Invite other local churches, without a toddler group, to come along and bring their families with them.

Look at the list above - there is a wide variety in how a single goal can be approached and communicated. Just doing one of these things, be it word of mouth, posters, social media, will have a small impact, but to employ them all would have a much bigger one. Now consider doing this for every area of your ministry - the opportunities to grow, nurture and serve our communities are endless!



**TOP TIP** *Not every Goal needs to be approached from all sides, think about your audience, who are they? How are they likely to come across the information? What is the most effective way of targeting them?*

**Example**

|  | Action | Action | Action |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mission Goal |  |  |  |
| Mission Goal |  |  |  |
| Mission Goal |  |  |  |
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**Planning**

You should now have a long list of Mission Goals and Actions that you can take in order to see those goal met. But how to fit it all in?

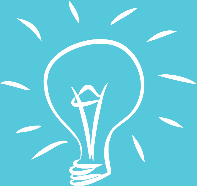
From the Questionnaire, you should already have an idea of the resources and people you have to help you with this work. The fact is communications and digital are a team sport - you cannot go it alone. You will need to identify a team of people who are able to take on this work. Perhaps your first mission goal can be recruiting new volunteers from the congregation to join the team!

**Example planner**

| Action / Day | **Sunday** | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Families Facebook group** |  | Invitation to Singing for tots post | Video of a song from last week | Join us today!’ With picture post |
| **Invite new families** | Notices in church - remind congregation to invite someone they know to Singing for tots |  | Church Facebook group - share invitation graphic and encourage members to share with other families | Ask Singing for Tots attendees to bring a friend next week. Provide them with a leaflet to share. |

Things to consider when embarking on a Digital communications plan:

* Quality - have you set a particular quality standard that your communications output must meet?
* Branding - do you have an agreed look and feel for all of your imagery, logos and fonts?
* Consistency - do you have an agreed tone of voice for you communications?



**TOP TIP** *Plan ahead, we have a regular calendar of church festivals to fit in to our communications, capitalise on the communications of these by planning for them well in advance and coordinating your approach across all of your communications.*

**Measuring success and refining approach**

What are your metrics for success? Can you combine useful digital metrics with real-time church growth and change?

If you set metrics for each of your goals and find that your actions are not helping you to make headway, what do you need to change in your communications approach that will yield better results?

Here are some digital and non-digital metrics you may wish to consider:

* Post reach (how many people saw your content)
* Video views (10 seconds +)
* Post engagement (likes, comments and shares)
* New followers
* Private messages received
* Website/ACNY hits
* Regular giving, legacies
* Takings at an annual event
* Sunday attendance
* Mid-week service attendance
* Online service attendance
* Study group participation
* Youth/Children attendance
* New volunteer numbers
* Electoral roll
* Prayer requests
* Baptism/confirmation requests
* Weddings
* Community group connections

**Resources**

Digital Support Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/757868267917903>

Diocese of Manchester YouTube Digital Playlist: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0rX44ZU-F3Z7awPsGitXEpU_b-zgVbKV>

Facebook for Churches online training: contact [shaunreynolds@manchester.anglican.org](mailto:shaunreynolds@manchester.anglican.org)

Diocese of Manchester Communications webpage: <https://www.manchester.anglican.org/communications/>

Diocese of Manchester Communications Team  
<https://manchester.diocesedirectory.org/places/40490>