
POLICY: PARTICIPATION, INCLUSION AND CARE

God Centred - God is the centre and source of all our activities and our stillness.

We believe that all people are made in the image of God, and as such, without regard to anything else, deserve our respect and compassion, our care and protection.

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith...There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3.26-29

A Sense of Belonging - Everyone will find a welcome, friendship and a sense of belonging here. We believe that all members of God's church have a vital and integral part to place in its ministry and mission. It is the church's responsibility to enable everyone to be involved, and everyone's responsibility to respond to God's call.

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. *Romans 12. 4-5*

A Place of Care - Everyone will find this church to be a place of safety, respect and care. We believe that God has placed upon us a fundamental duty of care for our neighbour, and especially for children and young people and those made vulnerable by age, infirmity or circumstance.

"Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. *Matthew 18.1-5*

This is not just about children, the child is an example of vulnerability, it is clear from scripture that those counted least in the world are at the heart of care and commitment in the Kingdom of God.

Live with Integrity -

Action will give truth to our words; we will seek to live the truth with compassion.

We believe that belief and words are not enough, they must be lived out in compassionate action.

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. *James 2.14-17*

Joy is at the heart of God -

We will seek to discover that joy in our life, and enable that joy in the lives of others. Joy comes from obedience to the will of God - our lives are joyful when we have surrendered ourselves to Christ and kept God as the centre and source of all our activities and our stillness – because the closer we are to God's will, the closer we are to being our true and best selves.

If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love,
just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. *John 15:10f*

Committees and Teams

Diversify

We will deliberately diversify the membership of our teams. While we still need to ensure that each Working Group is equipped for the task; we have a large enough membership to include a wide spectrum of people.

Church Officers

We will ensure a diversity of people serving across the roles of church officers – Church Wardens, Deputy Wardens, Treasurer, PCC Secretary, and Lay-Chair of PCC.

Rotation

It is to be assumed that people in working groups will follow the same rotation as PCC members – a three year term, followed the possibility of agreeing to a second three year term, followed by standing down from that group.

Committee chairs will serve for a maximum of three years and then step down to allow someone else to step up.

Multiple Roles

In order to share power and authority, we will ensure that no one serves in more than one core committee and that no one person serves on more than any two working groups.

Recruitment

Working Groups will share responsibility for recruitment with PCC. Each working group will aim to recruit two new people each year, working toward a whole church ministry of recruitment and service.

The church cannot expect this to happen automatically but must provide support and training for good recruitment.

Building Teams and Future Proofing

All roles need to be carried out by a team, not ever by an individual or even a pair. This will mean that:

- A person is able to step down and the work can carry on, even if we are looking to replace a significant role like parish priest or treasurer.
- Carrying out the work is more pleasant – the sense of working as part of a team, even if our part is relatively solitary, e.g. Laundry Cleaners
- It is easier to recruit people – no one is asked to take on a major responsibility alone; there is time for you to learn the ropes; and we have the comfort of knowing that, if it doesn't work, you can step out without creating a crisis.

Enabling Ministry

We will provide a role description including the commitment being asked and what they can expect of the church.

We will provide training and support for roles: this may be as little as making sure someone knows how the coffee machine works, to paying for a pastoral visitor to attend a Mental Health First Aid Course.

Recruitment needs to be the work of every group, but training is needed in how to do it well and safely. This spreads the load of recruitment, speeds things up and gives us a much greater pool of potential people.

Safety and Safeguarding

The safety and safeguarding of church officers and those the church works with will be at the forefront of our work, and we will ensure that we follow safer recruitment and working policies.