



Diocese of Brentwood

# Stewards of the Gospel Parish Questionnaire



## Stewards of the Gospel – Parish Questionnaire



This questionnaire provides a framework for each parish community in the Diocese to explore its vitality and future direction. The prayer, consultation and reflection that lead to your responses are of central importance to this whole process; the questionnaire is simply the document for systematically recording the outcomes of your deliberations.

## The Questionnaire

The questionnaire is presented in 3 parts.

**Part A** – *A Picture of Our Community* – provides the opportunity to gather, explore and present facts and figures about a wide range of facets of parish life.

**Part B** – *Reflective Questions* – key questions under 10 main headings for open discussion by your parish community, and the opportunity to highlight existing good practice.

**Part C** – *Our Community's Initial Thoughts and Ideas about the Future* – where your parish community is asked to provide its first thoughts about how it might move forward.

Ultimately, we would like all parishes to provide their final responses using an on-line questionnaire as this will allow us to collate and analyse responses efficiently – and we will be providing information later in the year about how to do this. However, while drafting and sharing your responses within the parish, you may find that the electronic version of the questionnaire proves to be the best way of recording and storing your responses. The e-version of this document is available to download under “resources” on the diocesan website, [www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/departments/evangelisation](http://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/departments/evangelisation).

Please get in touch if you have any questions or if you have any comments or suggestions to make.

The DSPG Steering Group: Fr Tom Saunders, Fr Andrew Headon and Ms Adele Angel can be contacted at [dspg@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:dspg@dioceseofbrentwood.org)

## Background Details

Name of parish:

**Our Lady Queen of Peace, Braintree**

Details of church(es) in the parish:

Church name	Church address
Our Lady, Queen of Peace	The Avenue, Braintree, CM7 3HY
Convent of St Francis	Broad Road, Bocking, Braintree CM7

Key parish contacts:

Priest(s)	Permanent Deacon(s)	Steward of the Gospel
Mgr David Manson		Graham Meek

Details of main contact for this questionnaire:

<b>Name:</b>	Graham Meek	<b>Address:</b> 1 Chestnut Grove Braintree CM7 2LU
<b>Telephone No:</b>	07789338744	
<b>Email Address:</b>	cgm123@hotmail.co.uk	

## Part A – A Picture of Our Community

*Part A of the questionnaire takes respondents through the 10 main headings and requests detailed responses to a number of factual questions under each.*

### 1 The Christian Faithful

1.1 Please complete the grids below to indicate how the number of those worshipping in your parish community has changed since 1985.

#### Mass attendance

1985	1990	1995	2000	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
	695	408	457	471	518	462	505	493	504	499	488	495	488

#### Baptisms

1985	1990	1995	2000	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
49	52	29	33	41	49	39	61	67	73	66	64	50	59

#### Confirmations

1985	1990	1995	2000	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
0	44	4	0	12	22	26	20	15	37	4	20	28	5

#### Marriages

1985	1990	1995	2000	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
12	7	7	11	5	8	13	7	8	14	7	11	11	7

#### Receptions

1985	1990	1995	2000	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
2	0	4	0	3	1	7	7	3	3	4	2	3	5

1.2 Are you aware of any significant demographic changes (e.g. a large increase / decrease in the overall population, an increase in the number of immigrants etc.) in your local area in the last 10 years that have impacted / will impact on your parish?

- Yes
  No

1.3 If Yes, please give a brief description of the changes and their impact on your parish community.

Brief description of change	Impact or potential impact
Increase in house building in the area over last 30 years	Should have been an increase in congregation, however has declined from 700-750 to 400 – 450.

1.4 Are you aware of other significant changes in the local area that are impacting / likely to impact upon your parish? (Examples could include: major housing developments, the closure of a large employer, the development of a new industrial estate, an increase in youth unemployment etc.)

- Yes
  No

1.5 If Yes, please provide a brief description of the changes and their impact / potential impact on your parish community as far as you are able.

Brief description of change	Impact or potential impact

- 1.6 Based on the most recent reported average mass attendance for your parish please give an **approximate** age breakdown using the categories below.

*Note: We are seeking a 'best guess' here - unless you feel that taking a more systematic / survey approach would be helpful to you.*

Age range	Approximate number
0-10	100
11-18	50
19-25	50
26-49	100
50-70	70
Over 70	110
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>480</b>

## 2 Leadership

- 2.1 Please provide details about the leadership roles in your parish community (e.g. Permanent Deacons, Lay Leaders, Chair of Parish Pastoral Council, SVP President, Chair of Finance Committee, Head Teacher, Chair of Governors, Music Group Leader etc.) Please provide approximate numbers where possible.

Role	Number
Chair Parish Pastoral Council	1
Chair Finance Committee	1
Head Teacher St Francis RC Primary School	1
Chair of school Governors	1
Leader, Children's Liturgy Group	1
Organist and Choirmaster	1
Music Group Leader	1
Leader. "Cobweb" Youth Club	1
Leader, Parent and Toddler Group	1
Leader, Faith Group	1
Leaders, Women's Group	2
Leader, First Holy Communion preparation	1
Leader, Confirmation preparation	1
Master of Ceremonies	1

2.2 Please describe the situation in your community regarding a Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) or equivalent group.

- No PPC or equivalent is in place (*Go to Question 2.11*)
- A PPC or equivalent is in place but is having little or no impact on the parish community
- A PPC or equivalent is in place and is having a significant impact on the parish community

2.3 Where a PPC or equivalent is in place, please indicate the year that it was established.

1980

2.4 Where a PPC or equivalent is in place, does it have a written constitution?

- Yes
- No

2.5 Where a PPC or equivalent is in place, how frequently does it meet?

- |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                                  |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Monthly               | Every<br>2 months     | Every<br>4 months     | Every<br>6 months     | Annually              | Other                            |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> |

If other, please specify

2.6 Quarterly

What is the process for setting the agenda for the PPC or equivalent?

- The agenda is agreed at the beginning of the meeting
- The agenda is set at the previous meeting
- The chair seeks items in advance
- The chair determines the agenda
- There is a standard agenda for every meeting

2.7 Who chairs the PPC or equivalent?

- Priest
- Deacon
- Lay person
- Religious

Glory be to the Father –  
in whom we live  
and move and have our  
being.

2.8 How are people in the parish informed about the membership and work of the PPC or equivalent?

2.9 Mainly retrospectively, after decisions have been made. Via the weekly church newsletter and from Father after Mass

Which parish(es) is / are represented on the PPC or equivalent?

2.10 What is the number and approximate age profile of members?

Age range	Number
Under 40	1
40 -70	8
Over 70	
<b>TOTAL</b>	9

2.11 Is there a Finance Committee in place in the parish?

- Yes  No

2.12 If Yes, how frequently does it meet?

- Monthly       Every 2 months       Every 4 months       Every 6 months       Annually       Other

If other, please specify

Every three months

2.13 What is the process for setting the agenda for the Finance Committee?

- The agenda is agreed at the beginning of the meeting  
 The agenda is set at the previous meeting  
 The chair seeks items in advance  
 The chair determines the agenda  
 There is a standard agenda for every meeting

2.14 Who chairs the Finance Committee?

- Priest       Deacon       Lay Person       Religious

2.15 How are people in the parish informed about the membership and work of the Finance Committee?

Not formally advised. Main issues are discussed at the Parish Council. Gift aid refunds published in the Parish Newsletter.



2.16 What is the number and approximate age profile of members?

Age range	Number
Under 40	
40 -70	5
Over 70	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>

Glory be to the Son -  
whose name we bear and  
who calls each of us to be  
his disciples;

### 3 Active Involvement of People

3.1 How many people in your parish community are registered for ministries that were subject to DBS (formerly CRB) checks in 2015? **35**

3.2 How does this compare with the position in 2010?

3.3 higher

Are there any paid workers for your parish community?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide details below.

Role Title	Number	Total hours contracted per week
Parish Secretary	1	21
Cleaner of Presbytery	1	5
Gardener/handyman	1	11

3.4 Please indicate approximately how many lay people in your parish, in the age categories shown, are involved with delivering parish / deanery programmes.

Role	Under 40	40 - 70	Over 70	Total
Baptism preparation				0
Holy Communion preparation	1	4		5
Confirmation preparation		1		1
Marriage preparation				0
RCIA programme delivery		2		
Other (please list these below)				

3.5 Please list below other non-liturgical\* lay voluntary roles that are present in your parish community along with numbers in the age categories shown. Please think widely here (e.g. PPC members, church cleaners, welcomers, Finance Committee members, musicians, flower arrangers, gardeners etc.)

\*Note: Question 4.4 will ask for information about liturgical roles.

Role	Under 40	40 - 70	Over 70	Total
PPC members	1	8		
Church Cleaners	3	7		
Finance Committee members	1	5		
Welcomers	4	4		
Musicians		25		
Flower arrangers		3		
gardeners		1	1	
Youth club helpers		2		
Fire marshalls	0			
Counters of collection		12		
Tea and coffee hospitality providers	5	15	5	
Jubilee Hall maintenance and cleaning		6		

3.6 Please identify the full range of social activities that take place in the parish community along with their frequency (where relevant).

Social Activity	Frequency
Tea/coffee after 11:00 a.m. Sunday Mass	weekly
Tea/coffee after Friday weekday Mass	weekly
Women's group	Fortnightly
Parent and Toddler Group	Weekly term time
Indoor bowls	Weekly
Youth Club	Fortnightly
Parish Christmas Bazaar	Annually
Celebration after the Easter Vigil	Annually
Tea/coffee after 9:00 a.m. Sunday Mass	Weekly
Summer BBQ	Annually

## 4 Worship and Spiritual Life

4.1 Please indicate the venues and times of masses currently celebrated each weekend.

Venue	Day	Time
Our Lady, Queen of Peace	Saturday	18:00
	Sunday	09:00
	Sunday	11:00
OLQP Mass in Polish - monthly	Sunday	16:00
OLQP Mass in Polish – other Sundays	Sunday	18:00
Convent of St Francis	Sunday	10:00

4.2 Please provide details of any planned changes to these arrangements.

4.3

--

Please provide details of other regular services celebrated in the parish community along with an indication of their frequency and venue.

Service	Frequency	Venue
Holy Communion	Weekly-Mondays	Our Lady, Queen of Peace
Mass	Tuesday-Saturday	Our Lady, Queen of Peace
Rosary	Weekly	Our Lady, Queen of peace
Morning Prayer	Daily Monday-Saturday	Our Lady, Queen of Peace
Stations of the Cross	Friday	Church during Lent
Mass at St Francis School	Monthly	School

4.4 Approximately how many lay people have specific roles in the planning, preparation and celebration of masses and other liturgies?

Contribution	Number
Readers	27
Eucharistic Ministers	35
Funeral Assistants	0
Children's Liturgy leaders	2
Altar Servers	27
Musicians / Choir	25
Leaders of Morning / Evening Prayer	2
Sacristans	2
Homily Preparation	0
Other, please specify below	
Wedding Registrars	2

4.5 Please identify the range of other activities that contribute to the spiritual life of your parish community. Please think widely about the full range. (e.g. Prayer groups, Rosary groups, Parish Pilgrimages, Retreat Days, Accompanied Prayer etc.)

Group / Activity	Frequency	Venue
Faith Group	Monthly	Church Hall
Parishioners took part in the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Rome	Ad hoc	
Bible study group	Weekly	Convent
Flame Youth Congress	24 months	Wembley
Children's Liturgy at 11.00 Mass	Weekly	11.00 Mass

## 5 Education and Continuing Formation

### Adult Formation

5.1 Please identify the Adult Formation activities (offered by the parish, deanery or diocese) that people from your parish have participated in over the last 3 years. Where possible, please indicate the approximate number of people who have participated.

Adult Formation Activity	Yes / No		Approximate Number
Catechist Training Programmes	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Eucharistic Ministry Training	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Reader Training	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	11
CCRS Courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Lenten Study Groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Other Formation Activities <i>(please list below)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	

5.2 Does your parish offer a Journey in Faith programme to support Catholics who wish to learn more about their faith?

- Yes  No

### Young people in schools and their families

#### Catholic primary school(s) serving your parish

5.3 For each Catholic primary school serving your parish please complete the following information:

<b>School Name: St Francis Primary School</b>			
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2015</b>
Total no. of Pupils	191	211	207
% of Catholic Pupils	93	71	73
Total no. of Teachers	8	10	11
% of Catholic Teachers	75	60	73

<b>School Name:</b>			
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2015</b>
Total no. of Pupils			
% of Catholic Pupils			
Total no. of Teachers			
% of Catholic Teachers			

<b>School Name:</b>			
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2015</b>
Total no. of Pupils			
% of Catholic Pupils			
Total no. of Teachers			
% of Catholic Teachers			

<b>School Name:</b>			
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2015</b>
Total no. of Pupils			
% of Catholic Pupils			
Total no. of Teachers			

% of Catholic Teachers			
<b>School Name:</b>			
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2015</b>
Total no. of Pupils			
% of Catholic Pupils			
Total no. of Teachers			
% of Catholic Teachers			

<b>School Name:</b>			
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2015</b>
Total no. of Pupils			
% of Catholic Pupils			
Total no. of Teachers			
% of Catholic Teachers			

5.4 Please describe briefly how the primary school(s) and the parish work together to prepare children for the sacraments.

5.5 Teaching assistants at school also provide FHC education

How is / are the primary school(s) involved in the adult faith formation of the children's parents?

Nothing organised at present.

5.6 Where a Parish Pastoral Council or equivalent exists is there representation from the Head Teacher(s) or other staff member?

Yes  No

5.7 Where a Parish Pastoral Council or equivalent exists does the membership include school governors?

Yes  No



5.8 Please describe how the primary school promotes links with the parish community and how the parish community promotes links with the school (e.g. Mini Vinnies, Fair Trade, joint social activities etc.)

Link	Brief description
<i>Example: Joint Social Events</i>	<i>Termly joint fund-raising social events held in school hall</i>
Summer Fair	Supported by Parish and local community
Mass in school	Well supported by parents and Parishioners.
Carol service with St Francis School	Carol service in December with school

5.9 Please give details of any joint parish / school celebrations of the Eucharist. Please include frequency and location.

Mass celebrated in School monthly and on Holy days of obligation

5.10 Please give details of any joint school / parish non-Eucharistic celebrations. Please include frequency and location.

Annual school carol service

5.11 Please describe any ways in which the school and parish share their buildings and other resources. (e.g. Hall, meeting rooms, minibuses etc.)

During Advent, school hall used for Senior Citizens Party organised by Cobweb Youth Club and supported by Parish.



**Catholic Secondary (including Middle) school(s) serving your parish**

5.12 For each Catholic secondary school serving your parish please provide the following information:

<b>School Name: St John Payne Secondary School</b>			
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2015</b>
Total no. of Pupils	1160	1138	1173
% of Catholic Pupils	91	87	78
Total no. of Teachers	34	75	73
% of Catholic Teachers	47	49	48

<b>School Name: St Benedict College</b>			
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2015</b>
Total no. of Pupils	835	824	823
% of Catholic Pupils	92	87	74
Total no. of Teachers	56	66	59
% of Catholic Teachers	79	27	46

<b>School Name:</b>			
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2015</b>
Total no. of Pupils			
% of Catholic Pupils			
Total no. of Teachers			
% of Catholic Teachers			

5.13 Please describe briefly how the secondary school(s) and the parish work together to prepare young people for the sacraments. **Nothing organised**

5.14 How is / are the secondary school(s) involved in the adult faith formation of the children’s parents? (Include any joint work with the parish).

**Nothing organised**

5.15 Where a Parish Pastoral Council or equivalent exists is there any representation from the secondary school(s)?

- Yes                       No

5.16 Please describe how the secondary school(s) promote links with the parish community and how the parish community promotes links with the school(s) (e.g. Fair Trade, John Paul II Award, joint outreach activities etc.)

Link	Brief description
<i>Example: Lenten Fundraising initiatives</i>	<i>Joint fundraising effort between parish and school with a specific outreach cause identified each year.</i>
Summer Fair	No communication with Parish
PTA organised events	Not publicised in Parish.

5.17 Please give details of any joint parish / secondary school celebrations of the Eucharist. Please include frequency and location.

None (Fr Nix was invited to regularly celebrate Mass at school. This has lapsed – probably due to Fr Bill’s ill-health – and has not restarted following Mgr David taking over.)


5.18 Please give details of any joint parish / secondary school non-Eucharistic celebrations. Please include frequency and location. **None**

5.19 Please describe any ways in which the school and parish share their buildings and other resources. (e.g. Hall, meeting rooms, minibuses etc.)

No involvement.
-----------------

## 6 Outreach

6.1 Does your parish / deanery offer a RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) programme?

- Yes
  No

6.2 If Yes, how often does this take place?

Annually (Easter)

6.3 Please indicate any outreach activities that your parish is involved with *in the local area* (e.g. Food banks, Homeless projects, Asylum Seekers / Refugees, Prisoners / the families of prisoners, Drop-ins, Chaplaincy, Justice and Peace, Lourdes Youth etc.) Please indicate whether the parish makes a financial commitment.

Outreach activity	Brief description	Financial Commitment (Yes / No)	
		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Example: Redbridge Sunday Drop-in</i>	<i>5 parishioners are involved on the weekly rota for this ecumenical project across the town. All parishioners are asked to contribute canned goods which are collected each week.</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Braintree Youth Project Charity	One parishioner is a Trustee and volunteer helper for this ecumenically founded youth drop in centre. The Parish donates a regular sum towards running costs.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Play and Resource Centre (PARC)	Several parishioners volunteer regularly to support this centre for children with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
First Stop Braintree	One parishioner cooks lunches at a weekly session of this support group for vulnerable adults	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Braintree Food bank	Parishioners respond to specific requests.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mid Essex Branch, National Osteoporosis Society Support Group	One parishioner Chairs this local group.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Braintree Rugby Club	Parents and young people are active members.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6.4 Please describe any active involvement your parish has in the cultural and political life of the local neighbourhood / district (e.g. local governance, social action, ward meetings, community forums etc.)

6.5 Not aware of any current activities.

Please describe any links that the parish community has *with other parts of the world*. (e.g. CAFOD, MISSIO – Red Boxes, our twin Diocese of Dundee, Aid to the Church in Need, parish overseas projects etc.) Please indicate whether the parish makes a financial commitment.

Outreach activity	Brief description	Financial Commitment (Yes / No)	
		Yes	No
Example: Kenya Project	A strong link has been in place for 10 years with Community in Kenya resulting in the development of various activities including a village-based water project and a chicken farming project.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CAFOD	Parish regularly collects for Cafod. Justice and Peace group holds Fairtrade breakfasts for Cafod	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Red boxes		<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Link with Ermelo, South Africa	Needs reviving	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6.6 During the past 12 months in what ways has the priest / deacon / religious engaged with other Christian faith leaders in the locality?

Took part in the Good Friday Ecumenical Service and Walk of Witness

6.7 During the past 12 months in what ways has the parish community engaged with other Christian communities in the locality? (Please include activities / services as part of Churches Together, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Joint acts of witness / shared worship, joint social activities and joint outreach activities.)

Activity	Brief description
<i>Example: Good Friday Walk of Witness</i>	<i>Around 70 people from all Christian denominations in the town walked behind a cross being carried between the churches concluding with prayer in the Town Centre.</i>
Good Friday Walk of Witness	Around 100 people from many Christian denominations took part in a joint service at Braintree Baptist Church, then processed behind a large cross to George Yard Shopping Centre for an outdoor service of prayer, readings and song.
Lent Lunches	Our Parish prepared one of the weekly Lent Lunches and parishioners participated in others
Joint acts of worship (Approx. 4 per year on 5th Sundays)	Parishioners are invited to Sunday evening joint acts of worship in local churches.

6.8 Over the past 12 months in what ways has the parish community engaged with Faith communities other than Christians in the locality? Please include visits, talks, joint activities etc.

Activity	Brief description
<i>Example: Talk about the Jewish Passover Festival</i>	<i>Well attended evening talk at St Michael's Church with invitations to all Christian denominations in the area.</i>
None at present	

6.9 In what ways does the parish publicise itself and its activities to the wider community locally? (e.g. local media, posters in public buildings, website, leaflets etc.)

Website  
 Posters and Grand Draw tickets for the annual Christmas Bazaar  
 Publicity for the St Francis School Fun Day, held in May.  
 Publicity for and hosts an annual concert of choral and orchestral music given by the Anglia Singers

## 7 Finances

7.1 Please complete the details below.

### a) Income and Expenditure

£'s	2006	2010	2015
<b>Income:</b>			
Offertory	N/A	58,835.00	65,547.00
Gift Aid	N/A	12,567.00	12,409.00
Donations	N/A	5,381.00	16,876.00
Other income	N/A	36,838.00	33,052.00
<b>Total Income</b>	N/A	113,621.00	127,884.00
<b>Expenditure:</b>			
Property	N/A	22,975.00	7,681.00
Personnel	N/A	11,890.00	22,106.00
Other costs	N/A	79,723.00	76,312.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	N/A	114,588.00	106,099.00
<b>Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	N/A	<b>(967.00)</b>	21,785.00

### b) Surplus / deficit ignoring any extraordinary income or expenditure

£'s	2006	2010	2015
<b>Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	N/A	8,554.00	7,032.00

*NB. This represents income minus expenditure, ignoring any extraordinary income or expenditure, e.g. one-off legacy or significant property repairs, etc.*

Please answer the following questions based on the information collected above.

7.2 Does the current annual income for the parish meet its annual expenditure?

- Yes
  No

7.3 How has the parish income changed since 2006?

Increased Offertory donations

7.4 What are the major factors that have impacted upon Parish income since 2006?

Increase in offertory donations  
Legacies  
Gift aid

7.5 Please provide the following information about parish balances:

£'s	Amount at March 2006	Amount at March 2010	Amount at March 2015
Parish Deposit (or loan)			
Parish Current Account		21,788	38,446

7.6 What is the percentage of people in the parish community who are signed up to Gift Aid?

65%

7.7 What is the average offertory per head each week?

£2.62

7.8 Please describe how parishioners are informed annually of the parish finances.

- By verbal statement
- By a displayed written statement
- By each person receiving a written statement (e.g. in bulletin)
- Through a general meeting
- Other – please describe

7.9

Please describe any significant fundraising activities that are in place within the parish at present.

Purpose of fundraising	Method(s) used
<i>Example: To subsidise costs for young people going to Lourdes</i>	<i>Raffles and sponsored walk</i>
Church Funds	Christmas Bazaar
Church hall improvements	Quiz
Organ restoration	Specific second collection
Support Youth pilgrimages – Lourdes, etc	Specific second collection

7.10 Please identify any factors (e.g. population shift, changes in local employment etc.) that will have a significant impact on the *financial position* of the parish over the next 5 years.

Factor	Potential Impact

7.11 Please describe any expenditure (excluding property costs) of more than £15K per individual project, anticipated within the next 5 years.

Nature of Expenditure	Anticipated Cost
Redecorate Church	£8K in 2009. Being requoted





## 8 Facilities

*Note: Where there is more than one church within a parish, this section will need to be repeated for each church site. Additional copies of this section and the next (Section 9 – Geographic Distance) are available on the website. Please use as many of these as you require.*

- 8.1 Please provide information about the buildings associated with each church site within the parish.

Parish Name		Church Name		Capacity		
Our Lady, Queen of Peace, Braintree		Our Lady, Queen of Peace		225 seated		
In your opinion			Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
8.2	What is the overall state of repair of the Church?		<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.3	What is the overall state of repair of the Presbytery?		<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.4	What is the overall state of repair of the Church Hall?		<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
					Yes	No
8.5	Is there a car park?				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.6	If Yes, how many parking spaces are there?				<b>10</b>	
8.7	Is there a parish office?				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.8	Are there secure on-site storage facilities for confidential documentation?				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.9	Is there an appointed Health & Safety Officer?				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.10	Are the following regular check-ups up to date:					
	• Portable electrical appliances?				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	• Gas safety				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.11	Are the following facilities available for people with disabilities?					
	• Accessible toilets				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	• Level access				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	• Ramped access				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	• Loop system				<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.12	If any of the above provision is lacking are there plans in place to improve the facilities?				<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8.13	If Yes, please elaborate:					

8.14 Does the church have a cemetery?

- Yes  No

8.15 If Yes, who has responsibility for its care?

8.16 Please identify any other land / property for which the parish is responsible. (e.g. Residential lettings etc.)

Property / Land	Description

8.17 Please describe the meeting spaces that the church has and how many people they can accommodate.

Meeting Space	No. of people
Church Hall	100

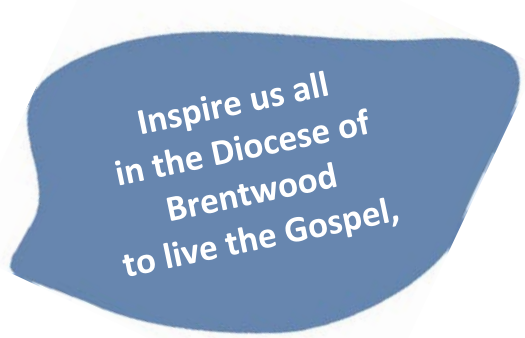
8.18 Is there a place for smaller weekday Masses?

- Yes  No

If Yes, please provide details

8.19 Does the community have property that is in excess of its requirements?

- Yes  No



8.20 If Yes, please give details and any suggestions of ways to realise its potential.

Property / Land	Details / Suggestions

8.21 Are your premises used by external groups / organisations?

- Yes  No

8.22 If Yes, please provide details of the nature and frequency of the activity and whether the organisation pays a hire charge.

Group	Activity	Frequency	Hire charge (Y / N)	
<i>Example: Scouts</i>	<i>Pack Meeting</i>	<i>Weekly during term time</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tai Chi	Exercise	weekly	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brownies/Guides	Pack meeting	Weekly during term time	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
aerobics	exercise	weekly	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ad hoc private hire	e.g. gatherings after weddings, Baptisms, etc.	Approx. 30 per year	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private hire	Post-funeral receptions	Ad hoc	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Carpet Bowls	Sport	weekly	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents and Toddlers	Children	weekly	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8.23 Does the parish collaborate with other denominations locally regarding use of buildings?

- Yes  No

8.24 If Yes, please elaborate.

The shared church in Great Notley Village. (Not at present)

8.25 Do you anticipate any instances of expenditure on property (£5k or more on a single item / project) in the next 5 years?

- Yes  No

8.26 If Yes, please provide details.

Expenditure	Anticipated Cost
Redecorate Church	??

8.27 Please indicate the distances from the nearest primary and secondary schools to the church.

Name of school	Distance
St Francis Primary School	0.5 miles
St John Payne Secondary School	11.2 miles
St Benedict's College	15.9 miles

## 9 Geographic Distance

*Note: Where there is more than one church within a parish, this section will need to be repeated for each church site. Additional copies of this section and the previous one (Section 8 – Facilities) are available on the website. Please use as many of these as you require.*

Parish Name	Church Name
Our Lady, Queen of Peace, Braintree	Our Lady, Queen of Peace

9.1 How many miles is it by road to the nearest 3 Catholic churches from this church?  
(See data pack)

Church Name	Distance
The Holy Family and All Saints Catholic Church Witham	7.6 miles
St Francis of Assisi, Halstead	6.8 miles
Our Lady And St Anne Line Church, Great Dunmow	10.7 miles

9.2 From which parish church was your parish originally founded?

Franciscan Convent, Broad Road, Bocking, Braintree

9.3 With which local parish / church communities does your parish have the strongest relationship(s)?

9.4 

Franciscan Convent

Please describe any significant geographical obstacles between this church and other Catholic church(es) in your locality.

9.5 Based on the experience of your parishioners, how accessible is this church using public transport?

Easily                  Moderately                  With difficulty                  Not at all

Please elaborate.

9.6 

Public transport on Sundays between churches in 9.1 above is extremely limited. There is a bus service (352) at two hourly intervals to Halstead, after which there is a further mile walk to St Francis of Assisi Church. A round trip to attend a Mass at 10:00 a.m. would take at least four hours. By private car the journey in one direction would take less than 30 minutes. There is an hourly train service between Braintree and Witham Stations (from Braintree on the hour, return 25 minutes past). The train journey takes 16 minutes. Bus services to and from the stations are limited. Bus service 133 travels between Braintree bus park and the outskirts of Dunmow hourly, with a significant walk at either end.

Does the parish provide any regular transport to church services?

Yes                                   No

9.7 If Yes, please explain.

## 10 Young People

10.1 Please describe how work with young people is co-ordinated within your parish.

- No co-ordination in place
- Co-ordinated by the priest
- Co-ordinated by a permanent deacon
- Co-ordinated by a paid youth worker
- Co-ordinated by a volunteer
- Co-ordinated by a group of volunteers
- Co-ordinated by the Parish Pastoral Council
- Other (please describe)

*to be open to change  
and to move  
forward together in hope.*

10.2 What activities, opportunities or projects are currently in place specifically for young people in your parish?

Activity	Brief description
First Holy Communion preparation	This takes place annually and involves families in helping to prepare their children, including a special monthly Sunday Mass during the programme.
Preparation for Confirmation	Takes place annually by volunteer
Children's Liturgy of the Word Group	For children too young to have made their first Holy Communion, and others who find this approach to the Liturgy of the Word more accessible. Currently this takes place at every 11:00 a.m. Sunday Mass during school term time.
Serving the Altar	Training and support?

10.3 How are young people involved in the wider planning / decision-making within the parish?

10.4 Nothing in place at present.

Please describe the level of involvement that your parish has with opportunities provided by our Diocesan Youth Service (BCYS) and other Diocesan opportunities for young people.

Activity	Not involved	Limited involvement	Quite involved	Very involved
Walsingham House Youth Retreats	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Monthly Youth Mass	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
St John Bosco Camp	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flame Events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
World Youth Day	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School missions programmes (e.g., by the Sion Community)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National Youth Sunday	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lourdes Pilgrimage – Youth Section	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Others – please specify: Danbury Youth Camp				

## 11 Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life

11.1 How many ordinations to the priesthood or diaconate have there been from your parish in the last 20 years?

Fr Maximilian, a Conventual Franciscan. (Family lives in Braintree area)

11.2 How many men or women have entered religious life from your parish in the last 20 years?

one

11.3 Are there any current seminarians or religious postulants from your parish?

No

11.4 Are there any initiatives which your parish is taking to promote and encourage vocations to the priesthood, diaconate or religious life?

OLQP hosted Fr Graham's Vocational evening



## 12 Ethnic Chaplaincies and Eastern Catholic Churches

12.1 Are there any ethnic chaplaincies or Eastern Catholic Churches meeting in your parish?

Description	Frequency: Monthly/Weekly	Numbers
Polish Mass	Monthly on first Sunday of month 16.00	
Polish Mass	Weekly Mass at 18.00 apart from 1 <sup>st</sup> of month	

12.2 Are any Catholics who are resident in your parish regularly attending an ethnic chaplaincy outside the parish, either as an alternative to the parish Sunday Mass, or in addition to attending the parish Sunday Mass?

Description	Location	Time	Freq.: Mthly/Wkly	Numbers

12.3 Are any Catholics receiving pastoral care from an ethnic chaplaincy either within the parish or outside the parish?

Description	Location	Numbers

Thank you for completing Part A of the questionnaire.  
Part B is very different, encouraging more reflection and discussion.

When Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee and called his first disciples (Mt 4:18), they must not have had a clue what they were getting into. Four fishermen became 'apprentices' to an itinerant leader, teacher and healer, overnight. In Mark's Gospel (Mk 1:21) the first thing they did was to accompany Jesus into the Synagogue in Capernaum, where he proceeded to break the Jewish law by healing a possessed man on the Sabbath.

There is something exciting about being a disciple, an 'apprentice' of Jesus. There is so much to learn and discover. Jesus walked around the countryside with his followers, both women and men; they were a community, a community on the move. The disciples were formed and shaped within this community.

Once Jesus died and rose from the dead, the disciples were terrified. They ran away (to Emmaus) or hid in an upper room or reverted to their previous job – seven of them went back fishing. Time after time Jesus came among them and reassured them. They were totally taken over by the Holy Spirit and began their work as missionaries; they are instructed to go out into the world and proclaim the Gospel.

We live in a very different world today. But as a result of our Baptism, we are called, gifted and sent. We too are sent into the world. We are missionaries within our local population, disciples among all the residents in our neighbourhood.


The local priest looks after the flock. We are immersed in the world; and we engage with each other, with those hurt by the Church, those separated from the Church for whatever reason and those beyond the institution of the Church. Every one of us has a particular pathway of discipleship to follow, and many of us discover it through the communities within which we live.

It is only right that we pray for more men to respond to the call of God to become ordained priests. It is also true that we all need to explore how God is calling us to make a difference in the world we live in. This calling (or vocation) may be to marriage, parenthood, the single life, nursing, policing... . God has an infinite imagination; there is a unique calling for each one of us. We become disciples when we learn to look at our world through the eyes of Jesus.

This questionnaire will help us to look at our community and discover how it can help each and every one of us become an apprentice of Jesus.

We have heard the facts and figures, the prospect of having 50 priests in our Diocese in 2030, the need for a wider variety of leadership in the Church and the very basic need to become more open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit who is leading us into the future.

Pope Francis gives us clear guidance when he says in *Evangelii Gaudium* (para 20):



“Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the ‘peripheries’ in need of the light of the Gospel”.

With this call in mind, let us begin to explore the questions before us.

## 1 The Christian Faithful

The Christian Faithful are the heart of every worshipping community. If it is to flourish, a community needs a core of members who are committed to the Gospel of Christ and are willing to make the community a priority, giving generously of their time, imagination, gifts and other resources. A viable parish needs a healthy number of active members.

**a) How can your community look to sustain and increase the number of people worshipping with you towards 2030?**

Involve youth – the involvement of young people vital for future of church.

Community – reintroduce neighbourhood groups. Way of catching new people will complete a census form and the Parish Secretary passes info on to the leader of their local group. Non-Catholic spouses can be made welcome.

## 2 Leadership

It is certain that in the future even more communities will be sharing a priest with other worshipping communities. Priests and deacons will be working more collaboratively with people. The prospect of having around 50 active priests in our Diocese in 15 years' time (2030) certainly sharpens the mind. While we must continue to pray that men will respond to the call of discipleship as ordained priests and deacons, we also need to look carefully at the development of other forms of leadership in the Church.

### a) What lay leadership is currently viable and effective in your community?

Eucharistic ministers/readers/altar servers. Regular training and refresher retreats are required.  
Children's liturgy leaders.  
Catechists. All need training and support.

### b) For what other areas of your community life could trained lay men and women assume responsibility?

Deacons required possibly women. Further training for Eucharistic ministers (weddings and baptisms)?  
Encourage young people to train and get involved as readers and ministers.

### 3 Active Involvement of People

In parishes where the same small, ageing group of parishioners has served the community extremely well over very many years, there may be some real anxiety about the future. As that small group retires and withdraws from active involvement, the community is at risk of floundering if younger parishioners are unable or unwilling to take their place.

**a) How diverse and active are parishioners within the community?**

There are a number of people who help on an individual basis and this would be greatly enhanced by introduction of neighbourhood groups. People of many ethnic origins get involved in Parish life, both spiritual and social.

**b) How can the parish community invite and prepare more people to support it?**

Individual approach, invitation by priest. Leaflet at back of church re Parish Groups, what they do, where and when. Social evenings.

## 4 Worship and Spiritual Life

A flourishing community has worship at the centre of its life. The ultimate goal is to make Jesus Christ known and loved. This is why Jesus Christ is at the heart of every worshipping community. The Eucharist is the principal means in which we celebrate this. The Holy Spirit may well be leading us to discover a variety of forms of worship and devotion in the future. For this very reason a living community makes every effort to encourage parishioners of all ages and backgrounds to participate fully in prayer, devotion, worship and study.

God loves us individually. We respond to God's love in our own ways. When we come together for worship we all need to have a sense that our relationship with God is strengthened and affirmed.

**a) Are there aspects of your community's regular worship together at Mass that are working particularly well and deepen the spiritual life of those present?**

Response 1

All parts of the Mass work well for me. I look forward to the Homily each week.

Response 2

This is an individual response. People who worship at Mass are praying to God, praying for their own needs and needs of others in the community. I feel many individuals praying together deepen their own spiritual life and share this spiritual feeling with others present.

Response 3

Personally! I enjoy music to support the Liturgy, either Choir led or the Folk group. Others believe this extends the length of Mass and prefer a shorter Mass.

Response 4

Monthly evening prayer group at church for special attentions/petitions.

Response 5

The choir and folk groups help.

**b) Is there anything your community can do to encourage a deeper prayer life and engagement with Scripture?**

Mission. Talk by someone from Diocese what works for them in prayer life.

Bible study group? Alpha course, youth Alpha course? Ecumenical opportunities?

Try advertising in Braintree & Witham Times?

## 5 Education and Continuing Formation

A flourishing community will be able to show that the Catholic faith is handed on to children, young people and adults by means of regular programmes of religious education and Christian Formation.

**a) What good experiences has your community had in the past and what opportunities would you like to see for 'continuing formation' in the faith for members of your community?**

Through our example and discussions in the home, in our work in the community, attendance at Mass and by taking part in Parish groups and activities. Ensuring that they attend Catholic school. Parents and family members have handed on the faith to their children through teaching them prayers and praying with them at home; being role models themselves and taking them regularly to Mass; sharing Bible stories in picture book form. Later, ensuring they are prepared for First Holy Communion, and encouraging them when old enough to prepare for and receive the sacrament of Confirmation.

As a community we have followed the children's journey towards first Holy Communion with monthly Masses where we support them and their families. Young people preparing for Confirmation now celebrate a weekly Mass in the two months before this sacrament.

Girls as well as boys can now become altar servers. Children are becoming more involved in the Mass as welcomers and in providing the offertory procession. The Children's Liturgy of the word is an excellent way of enabling the children to understand the readings at their level. If possible, we would like to offer this at both Sunday Masses in the future.

The parish has benefited from missions, most recently from the Sion Community. We plan to hold another mission in 2018 to prepare for the eightieth anniversary of our church building in 2019.

**b) How can closer relationships be developed between the worshipping community, the school(s) the young people attend, and the families that belong to both?**

The Parish should encourage families to send their children to Catholic schools. Transport costs now seriously limit the ability of many parents to send their children to our Secondary Schools (St John Payne and St Benedict's). We think the Diocese and Parish should try to assist with funding for school transport. We are aware that the current intake of our Secondary schools is no longer 100% Christian, therefore pupils and their parents do not support the Catholic Christian values of the school.

Parishioners could engage with the Secondary School chaplain to help them promote the faith. Perhaps they could attend lunchtime activity sessions to support the chaplain. Perhaps we could hold meetings with students from our Parish at lunchtime. Perhaps our Parish Priest could say a monthly Mass in school for our students.

St Francis is a good school where Catholic foundations are laid. Parents and teachers work well in ensuring the Faith is handed on. While understanding that teachers, not all of whom are Catholics, have many other calls upon their time, we encourage them to deepen and strengthen the faith of their pupils by doing everything for the glory of God. Parents and parishioners should support school events.

We are able to use the school as a channel of communication with parents, including those who do not attend church regularly. Some parishioners may have skills which they can offer to the school as classroom helpers.

## 6 Outreach

A flourishing community extends a spirit of hospitality and invites people to become members. It also looks way beyond itself to discover how the spirit of Jesus can be brought to bear on everything that concerns us in the world: our relationship with other Christian Churches, women and men of other faiths and all men and women of good will in our world.

Under this heading we include: hospitality; Ecumenism; Interfaith relationships; involvement in local social and political issues and much more. It explores the practical ways we have of becoming 'missionary disciples'.

**a) What good experiences has your community had regarding our call to be involved with other Christians, other faiths, all men and women of good will?**

In the past we have worked with other Christians in Braintree Churches Together to provide ecumenical outreach. Currently we are invited to attend joint services approximately six per year. We participate in helping to run Lent lunches. Braintree church communities take it in turns to host a service on Good Friday morning, which precedes the Walk of Witness to an open air service in the town centre. Our parishioners contribute to and help with the Food Bank. Braintree Youth Project Charity – a support organisation for young people founded and supported by all the churches – includes volunteers from our parish and receives regular financial and prayer support. The Street Pastor service in Braintree on Friday nights has been supported by prayer – currently no Catholic Christians are actively involved. It is probably fair to say that those who engage in these activities represent a "faithful few".

**b) How can your worshipping community become more immersed in the local community?**

More sharing of worship by inviting other Churches to special; sacramental Mass where Christian (rather than absolute Catholic) service is followed.  
We need to build up more positive contacts through the Parish Council. Develop, participate in joint prayer and Bible study groups; encourage and attend shared events and ensure we have a parish representative in Braintree Area Churches Together (BACT). Ecumenical services offering talks/discussion groups/prayer services. Not necessarily to be led by the priests as we are trying to relieve them of the pressure they are already under. Perhaps shared Bible study and prayer groups; a shared Alpha Course including Youth Alpha



## 7 Finances

A sustainable community must have an annual income that is sufficient to cover its expenses. There needs to be a reliable level of stewardship among the faithful who willingly give of their time, gifts and energy to sustain the work of the community.

- a) How do you feel about the average weekly offertory donation in your community? Does this need to increase to enable your community to flourish in 2030?**

How would any of the parishioners know the answer to this question unless the Parish budget and future plans are made known to parishioners. This could be done through special newsletter issued 2/3 times a year (e.g. including progress reports on planned maintenance costs for Church, Presbytery and Hall and other projects that the parish may wish to develop over a number of years.

OLQP aims to breakeven with income equalling expenditure, including all Diocesan charges.

- b) If you are a finance-rich community, how do you feel about sharing some of your resources with very poor parts of the Diocese?**

When we know how we are managing our Parish finances, the Parish Council can consider this and offer advice and practical help in a planned and budgeted way. Do we not still pay an annual sum to the Diocese to assist poorer Parishes?

This is part of our Mission calling. There are genuinely poor Parishes and we believe that the wealthy Parishes should support these less affluent Parishes.

Ideas for additional budget items include subsidising the cost of school transport to enable more families to send their children to faith schools.

If we had enough, of course, however, do we have enough for ourselves?

## 8 Facilities

A flourishing community needs good facilities which need to be well maintained. It cannot undertake any building projects, renovations or improvements unless it has the resources to pay for them. It may be that in some places, there is a need for a plan for the community and a plan for the buildings, and they may be separate plans. It is also true to say that our buildings can be a witness to the presence of the Church in our world, or a drain on resources and energy.

**a) What sort of use can your community foresee for any unused or underused parish facilities in the future?**

Not aware that we do; However, we could use the church more for appropriate events; also for Choir recitals.

Our parish buildings are well used, but it might be possible to use our church building more frequently for additional events such as concerts of classical music.

**b) How can the community develop the capacity to look after its facilities in the future?**

When the Parish Council takes on more responsibility for the administration of the Parish it can establish a regular maintenance cycle of work that will require to be undertaken and prepare estimates for the work likely to be required such as repairs or redecoration of the Church and Presbytery. Currently the Jubilee Hall Committee does this most effectively for the parish hall. This model could be adopted for all church premises. This can then be reflected in the budgetary requirements and this information shared with parish. In this way, parishioners will be able to see and understand how such costs are made up, saved for and spent.

Recruit a small team of parishioners with skills in engineering and maintenance, who can properly advise on planned preventive maintenance. Ideally, individuals will have the skill to prepare proper work schedules and go out to tender to obtain professional standard help and value for money.

## 9 Geographic Distance

A flourishing community may be influenced by its location. The proximity of neighbouring parishes can have a real impact on the vibrancy of a community. If several communities are in close proximity with large, ageing buildings that are only half-full, this will need to be taken into account when considering the future.

Our basic question is about how we can enable communities to flourish in order for us to deepen our sense of discipleship and service. Our parish churches are not private chapels maintained simply because the community has enough money to cover the expense.

**a) How does your community feel about the possibility that the only way to ensure flourishing in the future is to become part of a new parish community?**

The Parish Council can set up a working group to look at all aspects of this for short, medium and long term.

With declining numbers of Priests, this will be necessary; however, rural parishes are separated by distance, public transport and time.

This needs to be led by Parish Council i.e. 3 and 5 year plans re management of Priest cover in years to come within local Parishes using neighbourhood groups. Transport issues must be discussed.

Distance is the problem and having to rely on other people for any transport that would be needed if people do not drive. Even within our own Parish I am sure there are people who want to attend Mass but cannot because of distance. Getting together with other parishes would be an advantage in that we could share ideas about various issues, meet new people, socialise and create new and different groups.

**b) Are there ways in which your community can serve and support neighbouring communities?**

The working group needs to explore with the Diocese what existing plans there are and the experience gained. The group then needs to identify other local parishes that we might want to work with and arrange exchange visits to discuss mutual help and support. Sharing the services of priests. Working together with other parishes to plan and offer special laity-led services such as youth worship and missions.

There is already a structure in place – the N Essex Deanery. We need to do more to support this and joint events already planned.

**c) If applicable, what is the relationship between different churches or Mass centres within the parish or between linked parishes?**

We have a close relationship with the Franciscan Convent in Broad Road, Bocking. Many parishioners attend both Our Lady, Queen of Peace, and the Convent. Father Sweeney, Convent Chaplain, assists our Parish Priest at Reconciliation services in Advent and Lent.  
Historically we had many Mass centres but this is no longer viable with a single Priest.

**d) Is/are there neighbouring parishes which would lend themselves to being linked to your parish or to becoming part of a partnership or “cluster”?**

Our nearest parishes geographically are Halstead, Dunmow and Witham. Historically, young people from Halstead Parish attended St Francis Primary School. Our main “feeder” Secondary School is St John Payne, but we have few links with Mid Essex Deanery. We join with other parishes in North Essex Deanery for some joint events, but travelling distances are great.  
Since Steward of the Gospel Initiative started there have been discussions with neighbouring Parishes and the will is there to meet any forthcoming challenges.

## 10 Young People

Young people are not just the 'future' of the Church; they are very much part of the present. We all need to look at how actively young people are encouraged and affirmed in their contribution to the community throughout the year. The enthusiasm and energy of young people can sometimes be daunting to those who are older, but they are also signs of the Holy Spirit within us and among us.

### a) What good experiences regarding Church life do the young people have in your community?

Recently our 16 Confirmation candidates attended the Flame Event, which they found very uplifting.

There is every opportunity available for our young people. They themselves have got to want to become involved, take part, and attend. There is the youth club for the younger ones but for the more senior it is difficult to have social events that they would enjoy at the church. They are helped a great deal with their Confirmation programme and we are always hopeful they will continue with their faith after Confirmation as with the First Holy Communion. 51 First Holy Communion Children and 16 Confirmation Candidates, that is 66 young people along with their parents and immediate family, that's a lot of Catholics even if only one parent is Catholic.

I think we lose our young people after they make the First Holy Communion. We need to focus on how to keep them in our Parish and attending regularly so that same number who make their Communion also make their Confirmation. We also need to ask them what they want and what will encourage them to keep contact with the Parish.

### b) How can the presence and witness of young people be more encouraged and supported in the community?

Invite and encourage them to become more involved in Mass services (e.g. Readers, altar servers, members of the choir) together with the future planning of spiritual events, visits and links with other parishes.

There are no social activities targeted at teenagers, only youth club for younger children. None of the Masses aimed at young people. Perhaps a combination of St Francis school attendance with some involvement: First Holy Communion and Confirmation candidates' involvement in the Liturgy during formal programmes to continue afterwards.

Mission (Sion Community) (Planned for 2018 to celebrate 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Church being opened in 1939.)

## 11 What Else?

- a) **Given all the findings you have explored in Part A of this questionnaire, what would you see as the priorities to ensure a viable and flourishing community in 2030?**

The priorities we noted from discussions with members of the Parish Community are

- Enabling people to get to know one another better
- Fostering the spiritual development of our children
- Encouraging teenagers in their faith, and enabling them to engage actively in community life and wider social responsibility
- Encouraging and enabling people aged 20 and older to be active Catholic Christians: particularly welcoming non-Catholic spouses/partners
- Setting up neighbourhood groups to foster the above and to assist the Parish Priest (if there is one for our Parish)
- Strengthening the remit and scope of our Parish Council to deal effectively with secular matters within the Parish
- Engaging with other neighbouring Catholic Parishes
- Engaging with other local Christians
- Providing regular opportunities, such as missions, by which parishioners can strengthen their faith and have greater understanding
- Evangelising widely beyond our community, both to lapsed Catholic Christians and to those who are searching for truth in their lives
- Developing our social responsibility in our own locality and the wider world.

- b) **Do you have any other observations - particularly about anything we may have missed?**

During our discussions with Stewards from neighbouring parishes (our Geographical Group) we have suggested that we could make a wider use of technology. For example, providing live recordings of Mass celebrations to be available to house-bound people, or share between church communities, where there are insufficient priests for a Sunday Mass.

We also wonder whether the obligation to attend Mass on a Sunday could be relaxed to make it acceptable to attend Mass weekly, not necessarily on Sunday. This might take some pressure off Priests to travel between Mass centres on a Sunday and possibly say too many Masses.

## 12 Good Practice

There is no doubt that there are some really innovative things going on within our worshipping communities from Parish Fun Days which bring together the whole community to imaginative liturgies during Holy Week; from exciting Confirmation programmes to pilgrimages and vigils.

**a) Is there something your community is involved in which will be of interest to others in the Diocese?**

*Please use as much space as you need.*

Confirmation group forming a choir  
Offertory procession group 9.00am Sunday Mass  
Re-instatement of tea/coffee mornings 9am  
Steward of the Gospel social evenings involving Parishioners  
Ongoing commitment of Confirmation group  
Mission 2018 to promote 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary current Church being opened.

Thank you for completing Section B.  
The final section is brief but does need serious thought.

## Part C **Not to be completed until November 2016**

### Our Parish Community's Initial Thoughts and Ideas about the Future

*Based upon the wide consultation and reflection that has taken place in completing parts A and B of this questionnaire, please use this section to provide an indication of your parish community's initial thoughts about its future. You are also asked to provide information about the consultation process that has taken place to inform these views.*

#### **a) Our initial thoughts and ideas**

Based on everything you have prayerfully and carefully considered so far please set out below the initial thoughts and ideas from your community about the way forward for your parish. You may also wish to provide a view about anything that is emerging regarding the ability of your parish to flourish into the future – either on its own or in conjunction with another community.

OLQP Parish has identified what is needed for the future.

- 1). Much more involvement from the young people.
- 2). More communication and community amongst parishioners.
- 3). More involvement of the Laity to relieve pressure on the priest now and in the future.
- 4). Parish Council takes on a more proactive role along with the Finance Committee to help Priest run the Parish, especially if the Priest is also looking after other Parishes.
- 5). Communion services could become more frequent.
- 6). Individual parishioners have links to Outreach within the Parish area, perhaps this could be revitalised and promoted further within the community, especially other Churches and Religions.

#### **Steps being taken by OLQP to meet the above;**

A Senior Youth Club is being looked at for the young people 14+ years, there is an event at end of April where youngsters will be encouraged to attend and give their ideas to carry the project forward.

A group of young children have offered their services at the 9.00am Mass for the offertory procession. There are 14 of them at present and it is hoped that this number will increase. The age range is 5 and upwards.

Looking to the future, there is a timetable of events linked to Steve Webb and feedback from questionnaire etc.... Meetings and social events will be organised to further explain the SOG initiative to Parishioners.

The Parish Council needs to be more proactive. The Council needs to effectively take over the Administration and Running of the Parish meeting on a monthly or six weekly basis. The Finance Committee would have to be one of the executive working groups of the Parish Council. The Parish Council would, therefore, be made up of representatives from each Parish and Neighbourhood group thereby enabling a truly representative group being aware of the needs and activities within the parish. The Parish Priest will then be freed up to concentrate on the Spiritual life and development of the parish or parishes.

Anything less than the above will continue to assist the slow decline which has been evident in Mass attendance and the falling away of young people; and, the lack of Priests, where those who remain will be required to cover two, sometimes three parishes, in the years to come. The Diocese has been direct with us in spelling out the future problems which it has asked us to respond to, and we must make clear the vision we have that can start to remedy this. We see the newly formed Parish Council, set out above, as a dynamic body supporting the parish priest and rebuilding the parish community in a caring and accountable way.



**Our initial thoughts and ideas (continued)**

Discussions will take place to organise a Mission to the Parish in 2018 with the objective of leading the Parish into the 80th Anniversary celebration in 2019 of the Church being opened in Braintree.

**Outlined below are two scenarios which shows what we have today, and forecasts what could happen in the future. These scenarios are based on responses received to the Diocesan Flyer questions and seems to crystallise the situation we are facing in Braintree at this moment in time.**

**Considering that there is a congregation of 400 – 450 parishioners every weekend, the response to the questionnaire from the Parish was disappointing. The quality of the responses received was first class and has helped us to highlight where we need to be in the future.**

**Scenario one**

We are fortunate to have a Parish Priest, Daily Mass Tuesday-Sunday with Three Sunday Masses available, Confession weekly, Rosary weekly, Youth Club, Women’s Group coffee mornings and private quiet prayer time. Franciscan Convent with a Priest and Masses available. St Francis School.

**Scenario 2**

**People.** If we don’t have people attending Mass, we won't need a church then we won't need a Priest. Those who do not attend Mass at this present time will one day need a priest and their church but it will be too late. It’s getting the future generations to wake up and realise that Priests and churches are not always going to be there if they do not continue with their faith within the church and everything it offers.

**Scenario one** shows that, for some parishioners, they are happy with what takes place in Braintree. There is more happening in Braintree than outlined above, however there is a lot more that can be done and as shown above in our initial thoughts etc... we have identified and have projects in place to develop the Parish community spirit which will help us in the future.

**Scenario two** Some parishioners can see what will happen if the Parish does not embrace the Steward of the Gospel Initiative. Everyone needs to realise what could happen in the future and get involved.

*Please feel free to use as much space as you need.*

## b) The Consultation Process

Please describe the process used within your parish to consult widely with the community on your responses to this question. Please include the dates of meetings and other activities you have held, their purpose and the numbers attending. Thank you.

Date of meeting or other activity	Nature of activity (e.g. open parish meeting)	Purpose of meeting / activity	Numbers attending / participating
July 2016	First talk to Parish	Inform Parish of SOG Initiative	400
6/7 August 2016	One Minute Survey conducted at all Masses	To gain initial thoughts and ideas	215
19.09.2016	SOG Parish support team Meeting	Discuss future plans to inform	6
20 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2016	Meeting with Head of St Francis Primary School	Discuss ways in which SOG and school could work together	2
1.10.2016	Young People meeting 1 <sup>st</sup> Oct	Discuss what young are looking for	6
07.November 2016	Meeting of SOG Parish Support Team	Update, prayer, future ideas	6
16 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2016	Geo Group meeting	Recent training day and future linkings	5
25 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2016	Social evening 1	Discuss Q 1 – 4	17
26/27 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2016	Second talk to Parish	Update/questions/clockmaker story	400
06 Dec 2016	Meeting of SOG Parish Support Team	Prayer, update, future ideas	6
16 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017	Geo Group Meeting	Further discussion on linking	8
31 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2017	Meeting of SOG Parish Support Team	Census and neighbourhood groups	5
04.February 2017	Social evening 2	Discuss questions 5 – 10	25
24 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2017	North Essex Deanery Pastoral Council	Meeting other parishes	8
28 February 2017	Meeting of SOG Parish Support Team	Agree Part B Questionnaire responses	5
16 <sup>th</sup> March 2017	Geo group meeting	Discuss clergy/steward day	6
21 <sup>st</sup> March 2017	Meeting of SOG Parish Support Team	Finish questionnaire draft	5
July 2016 – present	Various meetings held with different groups within the Parish. Some groups had to discuss within their group and then	Get an idea of what they were expecting in the future.	

	invite the Steward. (still waiting)		
--	-------------------------------------	--	--

We expect to receive completed questionnaires by 31 December 2016. We will then begin to analyse all of the findings and be back in touch with every parish once this task has been completed.

Thank you so much for all your work and observations.

We hope this whole exercise has been fruitful and enlightening.

Please continue to pray for all those involved in the next stage of Stewards of the Gospel.



Diocese of Brentwood, Vicariate for Evangelisation  
E-mail: DSPG@dioceseofbrentwood.org Web: www.dioceseofbrentwood.net

©Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle – May 2015  
used with permission.