

Foxhill Report 2016

After a period of change and review, a newly constituted Development Group has been formed, chaired by Bishop Libby. Each member has a pertinent area of expertise. The Group has met monthly with a focus on a variety of work streams: people; business development; finance, including budget setting; strategy; and property. The Development Group has set a budget for 2017.

Following the resignations of the Operations Manager, and the Warden early in 2016, Jonathon Green was appointed as Director in May and took up post in August. He has a hotel management background and twenty five years' experience of leading diocesan retreat houses; he is also ordained. Following Jonathon's appointment we recruited Chris Wood as Assistant Director. Chris has experience in hospitality and a degree in theology and international development. Subsequently Anne Green has been appointed as Administrator. At the end of the year Linda Forster retired after many years as Assistant Cook.

A significant development has been the production of a vision statement for Foxhill House and Woodlands: it states that we are 'the Diocese of Chester centre for prayer, study and mission with a focus as a Christian space for retreat, conferences and training.' Our statement is based on John chapter 4, where Jesus said, 'the water that I shall give will be a spring within, welling up and bringing eternal life.' Foxhill House is built around an internal well. As Jesus promises to be a well of life to all who come to Him, our commitment is to be a place of refreshment, restoration and renewal for all who visit us.

Foxhill is a remarkable and unique place; a place for hospitality, welcome and prayer; learning, discipleship and study; recovery, discovery and mission.

This statement shapes the ministry of Foxhill and is a valuable tool as we plan for the future. The team at Foxhill are evaluating each area of our life and work including methodology, budgets and costs, catering, housekeeping and staffing needs as well as equipment and furnishings.

A pattern of prayer has been established, of daily Morning Prayer and a service of Holy Communion each Tuesday at 10.30am. This is giving the house a prayerful heart, and we welcome guests and visitors who wish to join us.

The Friends of Foxhill recently made a generous gift of £9,000 which is being used to purchase new crockery, and dining room and lounge furniture. The office has also been moved near the entrance to create a reception area and there has been some refurbishment of the servery area.

We have planned a programme of events for 2017 which includes a monthly 'Stop, Look and Listen' quiet days, retreats looking at topics such as: 'Exploring the "I am" sayings with Jesus' and 'Preparing for Advent', and an Individually Guided Retreat. Although early in the year, interest in these is increasing and they are a useful way to encourage bookings at times of historical low occupancy.

We are looking forward to playing part of the 'Thy Kingdom Come' prayer initiative again this year; this will see a number of prayer events in the Chapel at Foxhill and a proposed prayer walk from Foxhill to Chester Cathedral for the Diocesan Beacon Event on Pentecost Sunday, 4th of June. Foxhill is hosting a prayer event working with local Diocesan Schools.

It is our prayer to be 'a spring within, welling up' for the Diocese offering the living water of Christ.