

**DIOCESE OF CHESTER  
FOXHILL HOUSE AND WOODLANDS**

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*'but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'* John 4: 14

We have continued to walk with this scripture, which has been a great encouragement to the team here. We are also encouraged with what has happened to the ministry and work here. Foxhill continues to develop as a place of encounter, discovery and transformation for those who visit us. More people are visiting us, with income for 2017 more than 25% higher than for 2016, despite market challenges. It is always good to see guests returning following previous visits. Guest feedback is positive and we are proactive in the evaluation of any, thankfully very few, negative comments and implementing any solutions required.

We have produced a working document looking at the vision and strategy for Foxhill to assist with future development and we are using this as a management tool for policy and long term goals. The Foxhill Development Group, which was formed with an initial brief of one year, concluded its work in July 2017 and a new group has been formed to continue with the priorities highlighted in our strategy document. The members of the new group are Bishop Libby, who is continuing as Chairperson, George Colville, Andrew Smith, Revd. Peter Geddes, Revd. Canon Jane Brooke and Jenny Gilbertson. Bishop Chris Edmondson will continue in the role of consultant.

We continue to be very blessed with a committed and dedicated staff team who work well together to ensure that those who come to Foxhill are cared for in the ministry of Christian hospitality.

One of our goals for 2017 was to review the work of the Friends of Foxhill. The Friends have served and supported Foxhill for a number of years. Part of this re-evaluation was to consider the opportunities that the Friends have in the future ministry of Foxhill. We have invited Bishop Peter to be the President of the Friends of Foxhill and Andrew Rudd has accepted the invitation to be the Chairperson. Andrew is currently forming a working group to assist the Friends and take this vital ministry forward.

In 2017 we launched a new programme of events which included quiet days and retreats; these have been successful, especially the monthly quiet days which are attracting an average attendance of twenty-four persons. The leaders for these days and all other events are from a variety of backgrounds both ordained and lay. We have also run a number of well attended residential retreats and are expanding the range of retreats and events we offer in 2018. Foxhill became a focus of prayer in 2017 for 'Thy Kingdom Come' and it is a part of our ongoing vision that Foxhill be a place of prayer throughout the year.

A new website has been developed and we are becoming more visible in social media in its various forms. We now produce a monthly newsletter entitled 'Refresh,' which is e-mail to those who sign up on our website and which endeavours to keep in touch with potential guests. The signage as people enter the Foxhill House estate has been improved.

Those who have visited us have appreciated the refurbishment of some of the public areas and the redecoration of the Chapel Wing bedrooms. The new furnishings were generously provided by the Friends of Foxhill.

The Revd. Canon Anne Samuels, who has been our Chaplain for three years, retired on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February and she and her husband (the Revd. Canon Ray Samuels) are now looking forward to retirement. Anne has been a tremendous gift to the ministry of Foxhill, especially during its time of transition. As we look to the future we are creating a chaplaincy team of both ordained and lay people to assist in the day to day ministry here. We now have a Holy Communion service on Mondays and Morning and Mid-day prayer is said in the Chapel. In July 2018 we will be welcoming a person who will be ordained Deacon and will be a curate in a local parish and at Foxhill. As a part of our ongoing vision to encourage young people to come to Foxhill we have formed a working partnership with St. Mellitus ordination training and have one of their ordinands on placement with us part-time with an emphasis on working with young people. We are hosting a Diocesan youth weekend as part of 'Thy Kingdom Come' with a follow-on event in July.

As we look at 2018 we are encouraged by bookings and the range of our programme events and retreats that we are able to offer. We are continually evaluating how we can ensure that Foxhill is open to all and are evaluating how we can endeavour to make our accommodation more flexible and suitable for parish weekends. We currently have three bedrooms which do not have private facilities; these rooms are often not booked and it would be good to be able to offer private facilities to all residential guests. We are currently meeting with energy consultants to consider more sustainable methods of heating the house. We are not on mains gas and currently use oil and electricity for heating. Our vision is to make the site as carbon neutral as possible.

We look forward to welcoming you to Foxhill in 2018.