

The Parish of Boston

Three Churches One Witness



A Place of Hospitality

To Belong ✝ *To Believe*

Mission Action Plan

2020 - 2023

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Worship Rota Changes

For information and reflection on the changes to the worship rota. This is for information and will be removed at the final draft

It is proposed that the changes in the worship rota will be trialled for 14 months. At the 12 month point (Jan 2021) it will be reviewed
to develop further
stay the same
re-introduce services.

The reasoning behind the proposed developments have been talk through and agreed at the PCC. It was suggested that a paper of explanation that will go out with the 2nd draft plan to the congregation would be useful. The Revd Alyson will be meeting with the congregation of St Ts on the 20th of October to discuss and answer any questions.

The overarching theme of the Worship Rota is to Help move forward the vision of the MAP plan. This is to develop stronger complimentary links between the churches, continue to develop our worship offering and develop creative lay and ordained ministries.

Recognise that the Parish has to have a rota that 1 or 2 priests can do. The Revd Sue will be moving from her curacy next year. There are no plans at the moment for us to get another curate. This means that only Revd Alyson and Revd Jane will be available - who will both need holidays and at times be ill! As the deanery is very stretched re priests as well as priests not generally retiring into Boston cover can be difficult.

In addition, as the Diocese is currently running a deficit of 3 million pounds the Diocese is showing a trend to only replace clergy where parishes are fulfilling their ministry costs. Each clergy person on 26k - along with pension, and housing is thought to cost between 44-50k a year. For us that would be between 90 -100k a year on share. Presently we receive approx 30k from the congregation (congregational giving should pay for the ministry costs of the parish). This does mean there is a potential possibility on the horizon that the parish could lose one of its clergy if the giving does not increase.

Changes

St Botolph's

Sunday 8am BCP

Change: 1 a week to 1 a month.

Reason: Decreasing congregation. Can at times be attended by the priest and 1 other.

Sunday 10:30

Change: 1st Sunday of the Month could be Matins or Choral Eucharist

Reason: To allow 1 priest to do the rota - whenever there are two priests available it will be a Eucharist. A matins service has been picked for this so the the Choir rota can stay the same.

Evensong

Change: Time 18:00 to 17:00

Reason: To see if an earlier time will help more people attend. To allow the choir and congregation to attend as well as have a full Sunday evening.

St Thomas'

Change: The time of the 3rd Sunday Eucharist to either 8am or 9:30am (please give preferences).

Reason: The priest needs to preside at a service at St Ts and then go to St Bs.

Change: The third Sunday becomes a Mission Team Service.

Reason: A lay worship mission team will be set up to bring a more family orientated and creative services to ST Ts (this will be complemented by the youth and children's work being concentrated in St Ts). This could be a service of the word OR EUCHARIST - depending on the priests available and the wishes of the ministry team. This will also give a training platform to develop lay ministry.

St Christopher's

Change: One of the Eucharist's to change to a Mission Team Service.

Reason: To start a service that may encourage and be more appropriate for the Fenside estate. To provide ministerial opportunity for the MT

United Services

Change: to be evenly shared between St Bs and St Ts. When it is the 5th Sunday an 8am will take place at the church that is not hosting the United Service.

Easter 2020

Change: A United 10:30 Service on Palm Sunday and Easter Day

Reason: To be together as a community - 3 churches 1 witness - to celebrate the end of the fabric part of the Passion for the People project.

Context

'Where are we now?'

Today Boston continues to face a variety of challenges but at its heart are people who love it and work tirelessly to enrich the community. Facing Europe across the waters of the North Sea, it is a town that has always had to negotiate the demands made upon it by the ebb and flow of populations; whether Victorian agricultural workers or Hanseatic merchants from the low countries. Migration has increased significantly over the last fifteen years and continues to be dynamic. Whilst some nationalities such as Polish, Latvian and Lithuanian have become established, with many settling in the area to raise families, we are seeing an increase in people coming from counties further east, such as Bulgaria. At this current time, three years post-Brexit it is still a town dealing with the various impacts of migration, complicated by the sense of uncertainty that pervades all areas of our nation's life as we seek an exit deal from European Union.

As a parish we have worked hard, often with partners from the community, to build bridges between the different groups that live in the town. As well as in specific, focused projects this is seen in our everyday life, as we live out our commitment to be a 'place of hospitality' to all. We are all enriched by the variety of people and cultures represented in our church life; from those worshipping on a Sunday to the many valued volunteers whose hard work means we can do so much to enrich our community. However, despite the work of the parish and community groups in the town over the last few years, there are still divisions and resentments and many people prefer not to mix with cultures other than their own - on all levels.

Economically there is a feeling that the town is in decline; a walk through the marketplace shows a significant amount of empty shops and the market is decreasing in size. The loss, earlier this year, of a major retailer has hit morale hard. There are also issues around employment which have an impact; many people in the town work with zero hour contracts, there have been job losses through the closure of old and significant employers and this summer we face

more job losses with the coming closure of a large, local food processing plant. Related to this is the concern of local schools who continue to see a lack of aspiration in children and young people.

The human cost of economic vulnerability is the effect it has on the lives of ordinary people. We continue to see an increase of referrals to the Foodbank run by the parish and are currently running a project that offers free lunches to children in the town, helping families cope with the added pressure on their budgets that comes with the long school holidays. During last winter we also experienced first-hand the increased number of people either rough sleeping or vulnerably housed in Boston and we provided a breakfast club as well, during the worse winter months, hot meals on Sundays. It is worth noting that the number of homeless people in Boston last winter was only a few short of the figure for Lincoln, a city with far more provision than here. The parish has worked hard to help alleviate the day to day suffering of people who find themselves affected by financial issues, often beyond their control.

For all our projects we rely on volunteers and the goodwill that people feel towards the Church. It is a town where many people do care about the community and we are always overwhelmed by the response we get when we appeal for help with projects to help the vulnerable people in the town. Like many areas of the UK, Boston can feel both geographically, economically and emotionally remote from the sources of power in society. Giving people the opportunity to do something that will impact on all our lives removes this sense of powerlessness and is a significant gift we as a church offer to others.

Whilst some people describe Boston as 'being in decline', from both the feedback we have received and our own experience of working and ministering here, it is clear there is much that is positive. Not least, the incredible way that people respond to our appeals for resources and help, offering themselves to work with us. This perhaps highlights a significant role the church plays in allowing people to 'do' something, rather than feel powerless. It reflects too, the strong community spirit there is in the town and church; one of our respondents described it as a

'blitz spirit'! However, it is not just individuals who work with us, as a church we have gained the respect of many organisations in the community as seen by their desire to work in partnership with us. This is a reflection of how much our desire to be a community facing church impacts on the life of the town and has brought with it the sense that many of the projects we run, or initiatives we take, have 'community ownership' rather than congregational.

As the main church in the parish, with its imposing structure and location in the town centre, St. Botolph's represents many things. For us as a Christian community, it visibly proclaims the gospel we believe and seek to show to the world. For many other people though, regardless of matters of belief, it is a physical symbol of 'their Boston'; home, roots, and emotional ties. This becomes very apparent when we see the comments and posts on social media which show how important our building is to people. It also means that we have an opening into the lives of large numbers of people and can speak into a wide context.

Cultural change within the parish has been significant, coming from the deliberate change of ethos set out in our original SDP as well as from our ongoing growth and development as disciples of Jesus Christ. However, it has been helped to embed through some of the wonderful achievements that are mentioned elsewhere in this introduction, we could think perhaps of incredible services such as All Souls or Christmas that have engaged the hearts hundreds of people in the town, or of the privilege of being able to offer events such as our Festival of Remembrance in 2018 or the amazing Bollywood fundraiser!

As a team we place our trust in God and we reflect prayerfully on every part of our lives as the church in this place. We believe that it now feels we are being led by the Holy Spirit into a new phase. There is a sense of hope for the future of both parish and wider community, and we have been gifted with wonderful resources for this next step, not least of which are the amazing people who work with us in so many ways.

Summary of Achievements 2015-2019

As we look back, this has been a time when we have much to celebrate as we review all that has been achieved, looking at how God is transforming our lives and community. Some of the highlights are set out below.

The Development Plan for the Parish published in 2017 following consultation set out a vision that The Parish of Boston hopes to be known as a significant **Place of Hospitality**. A place where the hospitality of God can be encountered by all; for people who visit every day, people who may visit once in their lives, for the young and old, worshippers and pilgrims, historians and tourists. This has been very successful, - we welcome all God's family; offering an Inclusive Church, and an animal friendly church for all. Our congregation and volunteer group in St Botolph's has become more diverse, as we welcome members of Eastern European communities in our services, and to various roles around the church e.g. PCC, servers, and volunteers.

We can celebrate having a fantastic and hard-working team of volunteers and staff, lead by a strong and committed ministry leadership team.

Our ministry of hospitality has extended to feeding the rough sleepers and homeless in our town. Our breakfast club and periodic Sunday lunch clubs have helped combat hunger for the most vulnerable, and our warm rail has also been very successful in the coldest months. We are currently embarking on a new project to help combat hunger for school children during the Summer holidays.

The theology behind our hospitality comes from scripture. Jesus welcomed everybody. He particularly ministered to the vulnerable and those on the fringes of society. In Matthew 25, Jesus says that when we feed the hungry, give a drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, or give clothing to someone in need, then we are welcoming Jesus into our lives. As Christians we appreciate the wonders of

the created world around us, and our love extends to animals as well as the people around us.

Our musical tradition is very important at St Botolph's, and we planned to have a strong focus on children and young people. Our previous Director of Music increased our music links with local primary schools, and set up our Junior Choir which is flourishing. Our Church Choirs continue to support us to a high standard with a range of music during services, and our Community Choir has also continued to grow and develop.

During this period, we have engaged with young people in our parish. St Thomas' school has been visited frequently for collective worship and classroom visits, and our Associate Rector is a school governor. Before the building work started in St Botolph's, we welcomed families into church for our "Cotton Kids" toddler group. The Lego Project has been a good way of engaging with children and families, as well as raising funds for our development project. We have also been developing our work with baptism families, by introducing a preparation session, and recently we had our first "Messy Church" service at St Thomas' Church.

The Festival of Remembrance in 2018 was a great success in so many ways. We welcomed many visitors into church, bringing the community together for many varied events. This also provided an opportunity to do further work with local schools, with our Remembrance Boxes - a resource which will be used in future year. We were able to provide a space to learn, reflect and remember.

We have developed a presence on social media, which helps us to integrate with our local community. The Church is recognised for our work with those in need, and we see this as an important aspect of our mission to show the love of God to all of our local community.

Our Pop-Up Church and God-Bites programmes have provided different ways of coming together, particularly during the Passion for People project.

Our other accomplishment has been that the church is now on a much sounder financial footing. We successfully fund-raised and bid for the HLF Passion for People project, which will be complete by the end of this year - opening up new ways to use our sacred space for our congregation and visitors for many years to come.

Summary of Disappointments 2015-2019

Although there is much to celebrate, there are a few things to be identified as disappointments for this period.

From feedback received, some of our activities and events are viewed as being too secular, and not worship orientated; it can be difficult to get the right balance between having a magnificent space which can be used (or hired) by organisations - often supporting our need to fundraise, and the needs of those who wish to experience quiet and reflective space or a place to worship.

Similarly, views have been expressed that there can be too much emphasis on fundraising. This has been a hugely significant period when we have needed to secure the future of St Botolph's with a major renovation and development programme. This did mean that fundraising and bid preparation took up a lot of time, and this has been followed by a period of significant disruption in St Botolph's. It is recognised that this has been particularly difficult for our volunteer workforce coping with noise and dust as well as a church resembling a building site.

The ministry to rough sleepers and the homeless has, at times, been challenging. Occasionally there have been times when their presence in church has been disruptive, and some volunteers and members of our congregation have felt uncomfortable. The transfer of breakfast club to the Blenkin Memorial Hall towards the end of the Winter seemed to work well, and some behaviour rules were introduced.

Time was spent in a mission project at St Christopher's Church. We are disappointed that, with the exception of the arts and craft club, this has not led to increased use of the church or improved Sunday attendance.

Sometimes there seems to be a sense of apathy amongst the congregation; there have been Lent and Advent programmes organised with poor attendance. Nevertheless there is a need to continue to discern how best to help us to grow in the lifelong journey into all that is God.

Summary of the Mission and Ministry Trends in the Parish

What do we think God is doing?

Despite a few disappointments, we feel that God is busy here in Boston. As described above, we have continued to welcome all who visit, and we try to meet their needs in all sorts of different ways – spiritually and physically. We believe that the next step in this aspect of ministry is to now provide a sense of belonging for those we have welcomed – whether they are visitors “passing through” the church and town, local people who visit the church, our volunteers, and our congregation. We want people who volunteer and visit to feel comfortable in our church environment – to normalise the surroundings and do some “myth-busting” where we can.

Music continues to be a way of bringing people into our churches; with concerts including the Boston Symphony Orchestra, organ recitals, all of our choirs singing in St Botolph’s and St Thomas’. The growth of the community choir provides accessibility to singing and music to members of the community who may not have considered coming to church or joining a choir – many members have brought friends and family along.

Arts and crafts activities have been a good way of bringing community together, for example St Christopher’s coffee mornings; spinners and weavers and wood workers in St Botolph’s and Fun at the Stump. We have seen the fruit of our Baptism Preparation mornings which was particularly seen at the Baptism Family Service, held at St Thomas’. Our churches and halls provide meeting points in their different contexts and communities.

We have introduced new initiatives, particularly around children (Cotton Kids) and social action and many activities have helped us to integrate better with the local community, who have been inspired to volunteer or donate to help those in need or to take part in the Remembrance Festival.

We feel that God wants us all to fulfil our baptismal promises - to be outward looking, taking the Good News out with us to our community - (see attached excerpt from Common Worship baptism service for those who are able to make their own baptismal vows). As Christians this is what we are called to do; to be an active community, being transformed by following Jesus, and being prepared to transform others.

God is stirring us up by encouraging us to develop our preaching style, to enable a space where we learn and explore scripture together, and challenging us to take the next step in our transforming lives as we follow Jesus together; as we work out collaboratively how to fulfil these promises.

We recognise that each of our churches has it's own context and congregation. Now is the time to think about the next steps for St Thomas' and St Christopher's churches as we look at how each church building can best serve the needs of our parish and to support our path as we continue to develop our mission and ministry together.

Agreed Areas of Activity and Focus

A Place of Pilgrimage & Building Faith

A Place of Hospitality

Welcome Ministry

Welcomers,

Schools

Training

Welcome desk

Developing Tours

Marketing and clear branding

Growing Community

Monthly Coffee Club in the Coffee Shop - different hosts

Monthly Pop-up Church

A Place To Belong

St Botolph the traveller

Faith Tours and prayer walks

2021 St Botolph Festival

Inclusive Worship

Translation of services - Jayne

Shoppers Service - SS Peter & Paul Chapel

Mary Month of May

Multi Language Chapel Update

A Place To Believe

Labyrinth Ministry

Quiet Afternoons

Labyrinth Workshops

Labyrinth Parish Days

Building Faith

Faith based sign posting e.g. Altar / Font /
Pulpit, private prayer

Prayers throughout the building

Faith Music played in St Botolph's

Quarterly Lectures - The Church Speaks e.g.

architecture, stained glass, misericords,

Reredos



A Place of Hospitality

Occasional Office

Baptism

Continue to develop Baptism Prep sessions

Annual Service - Baptism leaves

Baptism catering

Establish a coherent network of children's work faith activity and events programme.

Establish a clear communication strategy for the children's work programme

Growing Volunteers

Maintain the Volunteer Manager post in either a paid or voluntary capacity

Intentional Faith strand in the training & events

Continue to develop our volunteer diversity

Continue to develop a family and community feel for all our volunteers

A Place to Belong

3 Churches, 1 Witness

St Thomas' will be the centre for all children's work in the Parish. EG (Tommy's Tots, Messy Church, Baptism Prep).

Establish a Mission Action Plan for St Thomas'
Investigate the future of St Christopher's.

A Place to Believe

Growing Disciples

God-bites

Lay led small group network [2x 8 people]

Monthly prayer meeting - growth

Preaching and teaching

Intentional visiting - inviting people to coffee

Growing Leaders

Weekly ordinal and vocation days

Developing a network of leaders - with away days

Establish a Mission Team



A Place to Inspire
(Music & Community)

A Place of Hospitality

Boston Connected: Safe Community Space
Community Music Space

A Place to Belong

Development of the BMH as a Music School
Development of the BMH as a
Community Hub

NB: The two areas above will be achieved through the development of the Blenkin Memorial Hall into a building as a Music and Community Hub. For further details please see Appendix ?

A Place to Believe

Transforming Worship

Please see the proposed new rota to trial from January 2020 - 2021. This will increase variety as well as empower lay and ordained worship leaders.

Boston Connected: Community Mission

Warm Rail

Kids Eat for Free

Special Lunches

Breakfasts

Sign posting centre

Worship Rota - Jan 2020 - Jan 2021

	Time	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
St Botolph's						
Sunday	08:00	BCP Eucharist				
	10:30	Choral Eucharist/ Matins	Sung Eucharist	Choral Eucharist	Sung Eucharist	United Choral Eucharist 31/05, 29/11
	17:00	Parish Prayer Meeting (alt)	Evensong		Evensong	
Wednesday	10:30	Shoppers Eucharist	Shoppers Eucharist	Shoppers Eucharist	Shoppers Eucharist	Shoppers Eucharist
	11:00	Chaplaincy	Chaplaincy	Chaplaincy	Chaplaincy	Chaplaincy
	12:00	Midday Prayer	Midday Prayer	Midday Prayer	Midday Prayer	Midday Prayer
St Thomas						
Sunday	08:00			Eucharist		
	11:00	Sung Eucharist	Service of the Word		Mission Team Service (MTS)	United Eucharist 29/09, 30/08
	18:00	Parish Prayer Meeting (alt)				
Thursday	11:00	Eucharist	Eucharist	Eucharist	Eucharist	Eucharist
St Christopher's	09:30	MW/HC		MTC		
Easter Week						
St Thomas' St Botolph's	09:00 10:30	Eucharist Palm Sunday - United				
St Thomas'	19:00	Holy Monday				
St Thomas'	19:00	Holy Tuesday				
St Thomas'	19:00	Wednesday: Stations of the Cross				
St Thomas'	11:00	Maundy Thursday				
St Botolph's	19:00	Maundy Thursday Eucharist with foot washing				
St Botolph's	14:00	Good Friday				
St Botolph's	1400-16:00	Holy Saturday: Sacred Space, Common Ground: Quiet afternoon.				
St Thomas'	09:00	Easter Eucharist				
St Botolph's	10:30	Easter Sunday Celebratory Eucharist				
St Botolph's	All Day	Bank Holiday Monday			Open Day	

Singing to God with gratitude

Colossians 3:16

"A space where change can take place"

Exploring a vision for the Blenkin Hall

Opportunities for Mission and a vocation to lead

A feature of God's story is that time and again we see how God works through the opportunities which history and culture offer. God's mission of being caught-up with people, revealing his love and his passion for human flourishing, can be seen in the way in which he unfolds his heart and mind within the cultural shifts and tensions of the Old Testament; through the dynamic of Jesus' ministry within the Roman occupation of the Holy Land; in the way in which Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit takes the Good News from its Jewish roots and unfolds it within the culture of the Greeks and Romans.

Recognising and using the opportunities which are there for the church to unfold the presence of God in the moments and movements of history, whether that be global, national or local, is fundamental to being caught-up in the mission of God. The Church, as the calling together of God's people, has a vocation to use its assets - human, financial and physical - in this cause of unfolding God's love and his passion for human flourishing within the culture of the age in which it finds itself. This vocation is to ensure that the Good News of Jesus Christ is not only expressed through word and action but is experienced as relevant and accessible to its context.

Each generation of Christians has the privilege of interpreting how best to use its resources to further the Mission of God - building on the biblical record of God moving and being present within the culture and context which people create.

Another strand running through the Bible is that God's mission is about leadership. We see this in the pillar of fire leading the people of Israel out of Egypt to the promised land and in the ministry of the prophets giving direction to the culture of God's people. God's leadership in mission finds its fullest expression in Jesus' ministry - instances such as when he sets his face to go to Jerusalem or where the risen Christ invites the disciples to follow him to Galilee. In the power of the Holy Spirit the infant church realises its vocation to lead people to a new understanding of God and to discover the fruits and gifts of God's love.

As successors of the infant church, we need to recognise that the people of God have a vocation to lead the community to fresh experiences of God. Recognising and using our opportunities should not be a pragmatic responsibility of a PCC, but a mission filled opportunity to lead people to discover new things about themselves, about God and about their potential amidst the uncertainties of the prevailing culture.

A building without a direction

The 2016 Options Appraisal for the Blenkin Hall helpfully explored the possibilities for this element to the Church's presence in Boston. The Appraisal demonstrates that the Hall is an asset which can be developed as a resource for the local community.

The Options Appraisal recommends that the Blenkin Hall be used as a multi-purpose resource for the community,

"Having completed the analysis, no single option stood out that would meet the needs of the community of Boston and the requirements of St Botolph's Church."

This conclusion in the Appraisal is a timely reminder that 'single use' halls bring a complexity of their own, as they only focus on one section of a community and can fail to respond to the diversity of needs and interests within that community. Single use 'community resources' can also engender a sense of 'ownership' which actually distances the community rather than drawing it together.

The Options Appraisal however points out that there is a good provision of halls/meeting places in the town.

“Boston has an extensive selection of rooms/spaces available for hire and that they host community groups.....This is Blenkin Hall’s current primary source of income, but it clearly has a lot of local competition.....Interviews with other community halls in the area found that local demand for these community spaces means usage typically runs at approximately 70% capacity through a range of different activities.”

This latter observation suggests that there is an element of overcapacity in the town. Any development of the Blenkin Hall to increase its use/availability may therefore be at the expense of the other venues, **unless another ‘market’ can be developed**. If the hall was a purely commercial undertaking, then development to increase its market share, would not be an issue in a competitive world. But the Blenkin Hall is a resource available to the church for mission. In this light, relationships with other parts of the community, which have similar resources to offer to the town, are perhaps more important than developing the hall so as to have a ‘competitive edge’ over other providers of community space in Boston.

The Options Appraisal suggests that the Blenkin Hall has a future as a multi-use facility reflecting its current use.

“Having considered all the options, there is no single one which stands out as being a perfect fit for St Botolph’s Church or for the people of Boston. As an area of high deprivation, there is a demand for all sorts of resources and activities. Blenkin Hall will not be able to cater for them all, but by being a multi-purpose building which has a mixture of space for community hire, planned activities for children and families, and activities for young people, will contribute towards a better Boston.”

The Options Appraisal goes on to set out a credible plan to up-grade the Blenkin Hall and to make it more accessible and attractive. It envisages the Hall being used as:

- A training facility e.g. café
- A youth club
- A music venue / performance space
- A young children’s activity centre (e.g. soft play)
- A community hall for hire

The business case developed in the Options Appraisal for realising the resource in this way offers a sound foundation to maximise the opportunities which the resource offers. The Options Appraisal however does not set this development in the wider construct of God's mission. This is not a criticism of the Options Appraisal, as developing the resource as an instrument of mission, was beyond their remit.

Taking the pragmatic conclusions from the Options Appraisal and setting them within the mission of God is where a PCC brings their sense of vocation to set a direction for the Blenkin Hall. A direction which exploits the resource for the mission of God and brings the leadership of God's people to encourage the local community to discover new things about themselves, their potential and the way in which God moves through the everyday things of life - its activities and relationships.

Dimensions to hospitality

The vision for St. Botolph's is that it should be 'A place of Hospitality: a place to belong, a place to believe'.

The Dutch Catholic priests and theologian Henri Nouwen reflects that

"Hospitality means primarily the creation of free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines".

The Blenkin Hall offers what Nouwen describes as "a space where the stranger can enter.....a space where change can take place"¹, This poses a question as to what are the strengths of the people who gather at St Botolph's for worship and witness, which might give structure and shape to the space offered by the Blenkin Hall?

In the Options Appraisal, the opportunity for the Hall to offer a venue for music - practice and performance is suggested. This suggestion connects with a

¹From Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life, by Henri J.M. Nouwen, published by Doubleday in 1975.

significant strength offered by St Botolph's. It is known for its musical excellence and its aspiration for high standards of music to offer in worship. It is a formidable strength as music is a vehicle to develop relationships, it can be, when approached generously, that space *"to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines"*. Music is a feature of community which transcends boundaries, develops individual potential and which enables people to express something of their inner-self. Music enables people to convey their spirituality.

Music has many expressions which reveal culture and through which other people's culture can be accessed and understood. Hospitality through music is not to impose one genre of music over another, but to find space for other genres to be expressed. Such generosity opens doors for mutual discovery and respect. Music has the capacity to reach across the divides of age, background, ethnicity and social diversity.

The Options Appraisal points to how to develop the business of Blenkin Hall to enable it to be a sustainable feature of the church's presence in the centre of the town. Alongside this there needs to be a vision for how the Hall can be at the heart of the God's mission in the centre of the town. It is not just a facility for the church to use and gain income, it is an opportunity to further God's mission amongst the people of Boston.

Exploring a vision

Over its history the church has provided leadership in the community for activities to draw people together. The history of many community activities find their roots in the energy provided by Christians taking the lead. Everton, Manchester City and Southampton footballs clubs each find their origin in that form of 'Muscular Christianity' which recognised that the development of the individual in sport had a spiritual dimension.

In the same way, Christians have been at the forefront of enabling people to discover their potential. The development of the Ragged Schools from the 1840s was infused by Christians and in early 20th century, Archbishop William Temple became a strong supporter and proponent of the Workers Education Association which has a long history of transforming adults through education.

These are just a few example of how Christians have found a vision of how they might be instrumental in transforming individuals, community and culture.

There are many challenges facing the community of Boston. The question is how developing the Blenkin Hall might create transformational opportunities for the community, by using music as the common denominator for the activities which emanate from the Hall?

A number of possibilities come to mind, but which can only be fully explored once there is a vision to drive the conversation, but the following suggestions would be a starting point in exploring the vision:

- The everyone can sing approach to establishing community choirs
<https://www.everyonecansingchoir.co.uk/>
- Music for the homeless
e.g. <https://stmartinshousing.org.uk/1330-2/>
- Music and soft play
e.g. <https://www.openmicuk.co.uk/advice/benefits-of-music-for-children/>
- Music and developing youth engagement
e.g. <https://theartsdevelopmentcompany.org.uk/>
- A Boston Music Festival centred around the Blenkin Hall and St Botolph's and energised by a St Botolph's Music Trust.
- Base a training band at the Blenkin Memorial Hall
- Provide opportunities for music groups and bands to practice their music
- Provide facilities for individual practice and tuition
- Collaborate with others making music in the town and identify opportunities and strengths

Taking the vision forward

For this vision to move forward, there needs to be a group to 'take ownership' of the possibilities and lead this agenda, dovetailing it with the overarching vision for hospitality and to set the agenda for mission.

The development of a St Botolph's Music Trust would provide a vehicle for a group of people from the church to develop, share and realise a vision for the Blenkin Hall as an opportunity to put music at the heart of the community.

How this trust would interface with the PCC etc. would need to be carefully considered. In the same way the interface between responsibility for the Hall and the Trust would need to be identified.

The recommendations in the Options Appraisal would need to be set within this wider vision for music as a vehicle for Mission. The activities described in the Options Appraisal would still be needed to generate an income for the hall, yet preference might be given to those incorporating music into their activities, thus taking forward the vision for the Hall. The vision for the Blenkin Hall being a 'home for music' would need to be factored into any refurbishment or development of the property.

The first step however is to decide whether this is the vision to take forward the opportunity for mission offered through the Blenkin Hall.

