



# Wakefield Ministry Scheme



## VISION BUILDING A Resource Pack for Churches

### (4) Implementing a Vision

GR C4

## ***DISCOVERY / PRIORITIES / PLANNING / ACTION / ASSESSMENT***

This leaflet outlines the five stages any process of building and implementing a vision needs to go through. The first stage, DISCOVERY, sums up much that has already been covered in the material on 'Finding Your Vision'.

### **STEP ONE: DISCOVERY**

Gather *accurate information* to enable you to find out about the real needs of your parish and church community and the real trends in current church and community life. Remember not to take only the views of 'insiders'.

Identify *community needs*. Can the church help? Could church members contribute to work for the community in a secular context, or has the church something to offer in its own right?

Think about *church members' needs*. Do people need to be serviced and supported mainly for their occupations in secular life, or helped to be the church more effectively together?

What *constructive change* might be required to begin to meet these needs? What changes in the life of the church might a vision of the future demand?

### **STEP FIVE: ASSESSMENT**

When a task is completed (the whole project or a measurable stage of it)...

ASK...

- Did we do what we set out to do?
- Did we fall short or go wrong anywhere? If so, why?
- What have we learnt?
- What's the next step?

Always be honest, supportive and ready to accept common responsibility for what has been accomplished, and also for anything that has not.

*THINK AHEAD*...What about needs you didn't prioritise earlier (the 'important / non-urgent' things)? Is it time now to take up one of these?

What about methods you chose not to use or resources you didn't have? Is it time now to get some fresh training or try a different approach to the task in hand?

Has this project itself revealed fresh needs, for training or for further action?

*WRITE IT DOWN!* Your group should be able to agree on a short report which sets out 'what came out of this project'. What was concretely, practically achieved? What did we learn as a team? What has been the personal value for us? For the church?

*Remember:* the answers you give here will be the building blocks for the next stage of your 'vision building'!

## STEP FOUR: ACTION

When everything is under way...

*Keep an eye on progress.* Ideally one member of the group should have special responsibility for this. He or she should be making sure that the various elements of the plan are progressing. This is not about 'chasing people up' but 'keeping people together'. No-one should be starting to feel they've been left to do it all by themselves. The group will need to meet regularly for progress reporting, reviewing and looking ahead.

*Be flexible.* Remember that things will come along which require the original plan to be 'tweaked' here and there. There may be a bit of it which seemed all right in the planning stage but isn't working in practice. Don't feel this is a failure- change it and have another go. Learn from experience.

*Support one another.* Some people will want to celebrate a success, a boost of morale because something went well. Others may need to express a disappointment. Sometimes there will be a letting off steam or a good moan! Remember that collaborative ministry is very much about relationships.

*Keep a record.* You need to know what has been done and how it went. Provide a regular report to the PCC and other relevant church bodies (keep it brief). Check out progress on individual parts of the action plan with the complete plan and its timescale that you produced earlier. Never let the action drift along unmonitored and unsupported.

## STEP TWO: PRIORITIES

Obviously you won't be able to tackle everything at once. What is both *urgent* and *important*?

Make sure you have established this as a real need and that it is *realistic* to begin to tackle it. (For most churches it might seem both urgent and important to get 'young people' into church on Sunday but is it a realistic hope starting from where you are?)

Find out what is already being done- for example by other churches in the area. We need to get out of the competing mentality which tends to duplicate work in a wasteful way.

Be aware of resources available to help you: contact the relevant diocesan officer or local representative of a church agency like CPAS or Church Army. Can they advise?

Make sure everyone knows about the project(s) you have decided to tackle- appoint someone as responsible for passing on information and liaising with other bodies.

Having taken the plunge, fix a date at which you will review progress and evaluate the work done thus far.

## STEP THREE: PLANNING

You have done your research, developed your vision, established your priorities. Everything is being soaked in prayer. Now your team is coming together to plan the campaign ahead. The planning process can be broken down into seven stages as follows:

### *WHAT (in brief)?*

State your objective. Make sure you can all agree to a simple clear statement of what you are setting out to do. Everyone must be clear exactly what the aim is.

### *HOW (in theory)?*

List ways of achieving the objective. There may be several possibilities which will not all be used. What will the cost be?- in time, personnel and money? What resources do you have? What might you be able to obtain? What about training needs?

### *HOW (in practice)?*

Decide which methods you will use. Be bold, but realistic: do not set out to do things you are unlikely to be able to carry through. Use methods appropriate to the task: for example most church projects are 'people-centred' and so a lot of expensive high-tech publicity and literature won't always be appropriate if it's at the cost of real personal contact- don't use up too many person-hours on 'admin' tasks.

### *WHO?*

Allocate tasks to people. Who will do what? Make sure everyone is clear what action they have agreed to and what is expected of them! Encourage everyone to have an honest appraisal of both their abilities and limitations. Don't forget the availability of expertise and advice from people outside the planning group or core team.

### *WHEN?*

Introduce a timetable. The various actions should have deadlines for completion: do not make these too tight. The general rule is that over the short term you won't get as much done as you think, but over the longer timescale you'll probably be able to do more than you imagine. The timetable should not be too inflexible: there has to be room for adjustment to unforeseen circumstances.

### *WHAT, WHO, WHEN, WHERE AND WHY?*

Communicate! If the project is being taken on by the local ministry team, the PCC need to be aware of the details and the wider congregation need sufficient information to know what is going on. It might be helpful for neighbouring parishes and other churches to know; diocesan personnel and newspaper; local media.

### *WHAT? (in detail)*

Commit the plan to writing. You can never overdo this: keep clear notes of all discussions and set down as soon as possible after a meeting what has been agreed, who is doing what and by when. Circulate the written plan to everyone involved.