

Old Town Community Review – Summary of Findings (9/09)

Aim : To ensure that the buildings and activities of Christ Church/St Mary's are integral to the needs of the Old Town Community in Swindon.

Objectives :

- ✓ To consult community members and key community leaders as to their perceptions of the Church and the needs of the area.
- ✓ To identify trends and opinions about what we do well, do less well or have not so far considered.
- ✓ To agree our response to these perceptions – with the setting of objectives and an action plan that realistically matches our vision and resources as a PCC.

Activities

- Distribution of 4000+ Surveys to Church and Community members – with option of large print & online survey facilities.
- Featured in Swindon Adver and with interviews on BBC Wiltshire + Swindon Community Radio
- Two high profile days of distribution at Co-op Store
- Distribution at Old Town Festivals, local stores and businesses
- Distribution to local schools, churches and social groups.

Overall Results

- 6% return rate which is comparatively high for a postal survey of this length.
- Heightened awareness of the presence and activities of Christ Church – with a message that Christ Church cares about the community and its' needs.
- A wide diversity of the population responded to the Survey – beyond the confines of the Church going population.
- Funding for survey secured from Deanery and with co-operation of local businesses and use of volunteers to distribute – so financial outlay to CC was negligible.
- The survey was seen in the context of Mission and created opportunities for Church members to introduce their neighbours, shoppers and festival goers to the Church.
- Although the survey was aimed primarily at getting statistical analysis, there was a high number of comments and suggestions from individuals - these will be written up in October for consideration by the Core Working Groups. Examples include : *“ I am not religious but I would like to be in future”*
“ Drug dealing is a problem in the area – here are the names & Tel Numbers of local dealers” *“What can the church do for you – a few pews for my back*

garden would be good” “graffiti walls for young people” “Tea & Toast for young mums” “more concerts” “lack of parking” “potholes in roads” “noise and nuisance from nightclubs” “keep the pews”

Statistical Trends

- 253 completed the survey – with 132 supplying contact details. 67 wanted further contact with CC – through receiving information or involvement in future consultations.
- Old Town population appears to be predominantly white British – with an ageing population. Most respondents were long term residents and mainly owned their own home (with or without a mortgage). Most were retired or in full/part time occupations. Many respondents (65%) were single household occupants.
- There was however a high incidence of sickness or disability (32%) – related partly to the needs of the elderly.
- 58% considered Old Town to be their local neighbourhood with 97% enjoying living in the area. In particular the access to parks (22%) shops (20%) and places of Worship (16%) were noted.
- 66% of respondents attended a place of worship and 87% identified as Christian. The availability of a place to worship in making an area a good place to live was rated higher than that of schools, parks or health provision.
- Communication was rated highly for Church activities but less so for Community activities. Interest was expressed particularly in concerts, coffee mornings and rambles.
- The needs of young people (14-18 years), non availability of good parking and crime levels were all significant needs perceived in the area.
- There was high satisfaction with CC building/facilities – though non attendees may have judged the building by its external landmark status only.
- Community Spirit was seen as good though many did not know all their neighbours – interest was shown in a Good Neighbour Scheme.