Progress on Vision 2030

Introduction

At the July 2024 Church Meeting, we adopted a strategy document entitled Vision 2030. This set out a series of objectives for the church over the following six years, grouped under the following headings:

- Worship and Training
- Misson and Outreach
- Pastoral
- Children and youth
- Property, Finance and Administration

We said that the document would be formally reviewed in April 2027, approximately half way through the period covered by the strategy period. This document is designed to give the church an overview of our progress against those objectives in the plan period; we are not proposing to revise the document at this stage.

The church has benefited from the appointment of Kim Baker as its Church Development Leader, and this has enabled it to undertake many more initiatives than would have otherwise been possible.

Progress on Worship and Training

We said that we would broaden and invigorate our worship and move the emphasis away from a once-a-week event. We said that we would develop worship styles that talk to people outside the traditional church community.

This appears to be working as our average congregation has increased by 7% since 2024.

Things that have developed or continued since the adoption of the strategy in 2024 include:

- Kim is being trained to lead worship
- The introduction of monthly evening services in the Little Chapel , initially focussing on bible-led meditation and prayer

- Regular on-line prayer meetings to start the week.
- A team of people to pray available at the end of services.
- The appointment of Fiona Sampson as our Music Coordinator and the creation of a music group concentrating on more modern worship songs, which sit alongside traditional music in our services.
- An established house group that meets on a fortnightly basis.
- Themed services aimed to appeal to a wider cross-section of the community than was represented in our existing congregation. These services include a pet service, a nature service, an outside summer service and a forest church service.
- We have obtained permission in principle to remove the pews, and this should enable our form of worship to be much more flexible than it has been to date. See more under Property.
- We have continued to record our services and make them available on our YouTube channel. However, we still need to train more people to use the AV facilities and revert to live streaming.

We know that there are still areas that we still have to address, but we are confident that a good start has been made in this area.

Progress on Misson and Outreach

Our aim was to encourage and enable existing Church members, new Christians and enquirers from outside the church to live out the Gospel with confidence.

We have adopted the approach encapsulated in “Leading Your Church into Growth”, or LYCiG. Simon, our minister, Kim, our Church Development Leader and the elders have all been trained in this approach.

Initiatives that have been undertaken have included:

- Running the Alpha course and discussion groups based on the Beatitudes and the gospel of John.
- Running discussions on issues of morality and social justice with input from leaders of local charities, our MP and opinion formers from outside the church.
- Hosting events sauch as a Nature Day, organised with the National Trust and the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and had representatives at Stroud Pride and Rodborough Fete.
- Promoting the Church at wedding fairs, and offering the church and its Little Chapel as a wedding venue. There have now been four weddings held or scheduled since the strategy was launched.
- Lunchtime at the Tab and Singing for Fun social events have gone from strength to strength and numbers are steadily increasing.

- Playlists of John's poetry and songs appear on our YouTube channel, and these are widely used by other churches.
- A series of four poetry evenings organised by Eley.
- Establishment of a Green Church group and registering for the A Rocha Eco-Church award scheme. 20 swift boxes have been attached to the church! We are working closely with the Remembering Rodborough history group.

We still have to have a more active focus on mission and evangelism in the "Proclamation" stage of our LYCiG-based approach, but we must continue to recognise that the "lighter" element of our approach as part of the "Presence" stage is also needed.

Progress on Pastoral

Our aim was to nurture our church family through friendship and practical and spiritual support, inspired by the love of Jesus. In many ways this had been seen as the strength of the church, and perhaps it is not surprising that this has been an area where fewer new initiatives have been forthcoming. However, we have:

- Allocated pastoral elders to recent arrivals at our church and included their contact details in our recently published church directory.
- Broadened our pastoral ministry team, although there is a need to do this more as our numbers grow.
- Increased the number of people that we help to reach church for services and events by offering lifts, although this is a heavy load given the increasing number of people needing help, particularly those who are frail.
- We have joined "Inclusive Church".
- Benefited from the support given through the establishment of our first house group. This is proving popular and may have to be split to accommodate all those who wish to join.

There are still challenges that we need to overcome in this area, particularly in clarifying the role of those we have designated as "pastoral elders"

Progress on Children and Youth

Our aim under this section is to create a vibrant ministry for children and young people. First, we have to establish a framework and direct resources to help young people in their life in the church. We have had a long-standing team of volunteers ready to look after children who turned up on a Sunday, but we have now become more proactive, as follows:

- Rachel and Kim have started a Tab Tots café which is open on Tuesday mornings during term time, offering tea and as well as the opportunity for play and chat to parents of young children who attend Playgroup and for others.

- Katie Sampson has offered to join the Live Wires team that caters for the needs of young children who attend church on Sunday mornings. She is looking to introduce new ideas.
- Katie is joining with her sister Jenny in wanting to launch a Young Peoples group, yet to be named. The plan is for this to be a self-scoped group, largely free from "oldies", that will allow the young people to have discussions and to develop their lives as young and enthusiastic Christians. It is unlikely to involve formal services. Kim will probably be tolerated as a young-at-heart member.

Following on from this, once the frameworks are in place we are optimistic that we will develop a critical mass that will encourage children and young people to want to come to the Tab. The church will support these groups with space, admin support and a budget, as is needed.

Progress on Property Finance and Administration

Our aim was to maintain a safe and welcoming building and provide resources to support the mission of the church. This section has 14 objectives, and we have made a good start on eight of them, but we still have to make inroads in the remaining six.

The areas where we have made good progress include

- Replacing the guttering and downpipes to make us watertight!
- Getting approval for improving disabled access, although this will not now be undertaken until October.
- Obtaining substantial grant funding for the above two projects.
- Preparing a phased plan for the renovation of our buildings, which can only be achieved with further fundraising.
- Obtaining consent in principle to the removal of the pews, although this needs to be confirmed formally.
- Agreement from the Highways department of GCC to the resurfacing of the road outside the Tab.; this should take place at the end of September.
- Improvement of our web site and booking systems, although the last piece of this needs to be put in place by our web site developer.
- We have an offer from Jenny Sampson to act as our social media coordinator, mainly on Facebook and Instagram, although we have to agree how a cooperation with, or transition from John Rohrbeck might happen.
- We said we would improve participation in leadership. Elders are considering a structure under the heading of Tab organisation that would allow people who are not elders to head teams and yet still have a communications conduit to the eldership. This has not yet been approved.

If the church continues to grow, we might well be able to use the manse for church purposes but in the meantime, we are happy to continue to use it for refugee housing.

The two areas that are prospectively the most difficult are making our church buildings sustainable and reaching an affordable solution for the management of the graveyard.

The size, construction and listed status of our buildings make their upkeep expensive and our ability to achieve a “greener” footprint more difficult. We have not given up on trying to make these improvements, but detailed investigations have not yet taken place.

The graveyard is also a potential long-term problem. There is interest in the graveyard for members of the Remembering Rodborough history group, but this does not translate into financial assistance. The idea of a graveyard trust taking over the area has been mooted but this is another question that requires longer-term consideration.

Summary

The attached presentation shows the status of each objective as at the end of August 2025. It shows that we have made a good start on 32 of our objectives since July 2024 but have not yet got started on 18 of them. A lot of effort has gone into achieving what we have done so far, and we look forward to further progress in the coming year.