

Start with ‘battleship’ video clip <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Knu14TlvCQE>

SLIDE 1 + 2

Raises issue of the importance of responding to changing situation, new insights, new information

SLIDE 3

Politicians in the UK have had to come to terms with the new political realities of hung Parliaments and Coalitions.

SLIDE 4

We have all been affected to a greater or lesser extent by the financial downturn

Governments have had to be more proactive in control of banks and financial institutions.

Reduced incomes, drop in house prices & negative equity – we have had to change our way of doing things
purchase of new car, meals out, trips away have been scaled back – like the battleship we have had to change course.

Church is operating in very different circumstances to 10 or 20 years ago. Ireland is now very much a multicultural society and also a far more secular society.

SLIDE 5

explosion in the whole field of communication
more mobile population
more pressurised work place
greater willingness to question and to challenge

SLIDE 6

C of I in an effort to enable Parishes to respond to these and other changes established Church 21, the Parish Development Organisation

Beginning of last year Howth Parish embarked upon a programme.

SLIDE 7

Lenten Groups followed a programme designed to get us thinking about the various issues facing a Parish as it seeks to respond to changing circumstances.

Myself, Troy Hopkins, Shaz Basdeo, Helen McVeigh and Shirley Moon attended a conference in September that drew together all the Parishes participating in the current programme.

This has been followed by a period of reflection in which we have tried to identify a number of key objectives for the Parish.

SLIDE 8

There are many positives to our Parish.

We are a warm and welcoming community – people identified the Fete, the coffees after Church, the midweek service

We are inclusive and non-judgemental.

We have an attractive Church and Parish Centre that is used and valued by both the Parish and the wider community.

We have a strong Sunday School

Strong link with the Burrow National School

SLIDE 9

Recognised a number of challenges as a Parish

We have not connected with our post confirmation groups.

Age imbalance in our Sunday congregation

We have lost over the years a number of groups that bring people together for social contact – e.g. Mothers Union, Burrow Players

We are not good at providing opportunities for groups to reflect on their faith.

We are not good at communicating who we are.

People expressed an interest in finding areas of service to the community.

Where do we go now

SLIDE 10

SLIDE 11

We have already made a start in the area of our ministry to youth. The appointment of Shaz Basdeo and now Stephen Byford has had a major impact. Confirmation Group has formed the core of a Youth Club that meets each Tuesday night with about 15-20 people turning up.

SLIDE 12

We have identified a number of specific initiatives designed to build on our strengths and address some of our weaknesses.

SLIDE 13 Communication

Parish Website is ready to be relaunched – this will provide news about current events and services, text of recent sermons, groups using the Parish Centre , details of marriage and baptism services in the Parish

We are investigating a more prominent sign closer to the road.

SLIDE 14 Spirituality

Prayer group has been established that meets each Sunday after Church.

There will be a Networking Course run in the autumn – this provides a format for a series of meetings in which participants are enabled to identify their own particular gifts within the Church – such a course was run during Cecil's time in the Parish.

The Alpha Ireland Organisation are launching a campaign in the new year. This will be principally directed at the age range 20-40 and will be supported by an advertising campaign. We have expressed an interest in linking in with this campaign.

SLIDE 15 Building Community

A group is being formed to coordinate a series of activities for the older age group. This will provide a combination of day trips, talks on subjects of interest and activities in the Parish Centre that provide an opportunity to come together, relax and enjoy each other's company.

SLIDE 16 Service

In the autumn there will be a beginner's course in computing in the Burrow School computer suite. This will be delivered by Linda Frost and support will be provided by members of our Youth Club.

We offer this as a work in progress. Troy and I would love to hear comments, suggestions, criticisms over coffee after the 11 o'clock service.