

The Parish of Shute, including Whitford, Umborne, Hampton and Seaton Junction Community Survey Summary Report

Introduction

During March and April 2019, the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of Shute, assisted by the Growing the Rural Church project, conducted a community survey to assist them in planning for the future of the Parish Church of St Michael's. All households in the parish received a paper survey, with a link to an online version circulated widely to local groups including the primary school, contact lists of the Shute Festival, the Shute Theatre and Arts Guild and local media.

The survey (a full copy of which can be found in **Appendix 1**) asked questions relating to respondents' engagement with both spiritual and secular activities currently available in the parish. It also sought to discover what respondents felt would be positive additions to the current range of activities offered through the church buildings, principally St Michael's.

Response Rate and Demographics

The parish of Shute has **207** households made up of **596** residents (*source: Church Urban Fund*). The PCC received a total of **63** responses (**38** online, **25** on paper) of which **45 (71%)** were residents of the parish and **18 (29%)** were non-residents. **45** responses from **207** households represents a **22% return rate** from the resident population, which is a respectable return rate for public surveys of this nature.

The **age range** of respondents is illustrated below:

Age Range	Whole Population of Shute Parish (%) (<i>source Census 2011</i>)	Respondents (%)
0-18	17	0
19-30	7	0
31-45	14	8
46-65	37	41
66-80	18	44
81+	7	3

The **gender** of respondents is illustrated below:

Gender	East Devon (%) (<i>source Devon County Council</i>)	Respondents (%)
Male	49	35
Female	51	59
Prefer not to say	Data unavailable	3



It should be noted that whilst the responses from females are a little higher than the East Devon population percentage, it should be considered that these respondents might well have been completing the survey on behalf of their household, thus masking the percentage of men whose views have also been captured.

Key Findings

Theme 1: Community Life

What is most needed in Shute for...?

Respondents were asked to say what they thought was most needed in Shute for groups of people – children and young people, working age people and retired people. Responses are shown below as word clouds. In each, the larger the word, the more times it appeared in the responses.

Children and Young People



It should be noted that whilst there are **101 0-18s (17% of population)** living in the parish, there were **no respondents** in this age group. **4** respondents indicated there were not enough children in the parish to merit activities or facilities specifically targeted at this age group.



Working Age People



It should be noted that the 30-45s and 46-65s together make up **49%** of respondents so these responses are reasonably representative of the working age demographic.

Retired People



It should be noted that the 66-80s and 81+s together make up **48%** of respondents so these responses are reasonably representative of the retired *demographic*.



What activities do you take part in/what would you like to see happening in the parish and the surrounding area?

Both questions offered an open ended response, asking people what activities they currently take part in in the parish and surrounding area, and what they would like to take part in, were additional/alternative activities available. As might be expected, people are involved in a huge range of community, cultural, social and outdoor activities. The responses in full can be found in **Appendix 2**.

Do you think there is a need for any of the following in Shute Parish? (tick all that apply)

Activity	Number of ticks	Rank
Continued musical and theatrical events	52	1
Cafe	26	4
Library	15	6
Post Office	17	5
Activities for pre-school/young children	27	3
Activities for young people	34	2

In addition to responding to the given option, a popular proposal in the 'Other, please state' category was a pub/restaurant. 'Pop up' pubs are a concept that have been trialled by rural churches with success elsewhere in the country.

Theme 2: Church Life

53% of respondents had attended a service at St Michael's, Shute **within the last year**.

If you have ever attended church, which style of service do you prefer? (tick all that apply)

Style of Service	No of ticks	Rank
Traditional - includes hymns and traditional language	34	1
Contemporary - modern songs and language	18	2
Family - includes activities specifically aimed at families with primary school aged children	13	3
Contemplative - provides opportunities for quiet, personal reflection	5	4

Comments accompanying this question included:

"I like traditional, but the wishes of the majority MUST come first. We MUST appeal to the parents of children. Find out from as many as possible what they would wish for."

"I prefer traditional and contemporary services. It's good to have a diverse mix, but advertise them well when it's something different..."

"Not being a believer, I am open to suggestions."

"Why does it have to be a defined type? Why can't one service have elements of each?"



If you have stopped attending services in Shute parish, is there anything that might encourage you to come in the future?

Responses to this question were open ended and included:

"I came to church when my children were young. I enjoyed those services, as the songs were more joyful and the readings/lessons were easier to understand."

"I am not religious. There has to be a practical reason to go into the church."

"Making services more available. E.g. Could Harvest Festival/Carol Services be in the evening?"

"Heating in the church and welcome from the congregation."

Theme 3: Using our Church Buildings to serve our communities

How might St Michael's Church in Shute and St Mary at the Cross Chapel in Whitford Best Serve the Local Community?

Many respondents particularly engaged with these two questions and the full range of responses to these open ended response can be found in **Appendix 3**. Popular ideas for **St Michael's** included increasing its current use as a multi-purpose church and community venue. Respondents noted that this would require the development of a more flexible space, particularly through the removal of the pews, and the upgrading of the kitchen and toilet facilities. Whilst a few respondents were against internal alterations, the overwhelming majority noted the benefits of creating a more multi-function space. Several respondents noted the need to overhaul the electrics and lighting arrangements. Comments included:

"The Church should be adapted to become a more flexible space to accommodate a wider range of events. The current wooden pews are badly designed and make sitting through events difficult. They could be removed to allow for different types of events, e.g. community suppers, dramatic and artistic exhibition space. There should be better lighting and facilities for catering, as well as heating."

"Catering upgrade, toilets, flexible seating in nave, properly enclosed chapel for services/prayer."

"Holding a coffee morning on a Saturday say once a month to show the local community the church is 'open' to everyone not a selective few, but to leave the fabric as it is. i.e. not to remove the pews as this would rip the heart out of the church"

"Letting it double as a community centre, but that seating would have to be changed."

"By offering more community use, but without compromising its primary function as a place of worship, e.g. keep sanctuary are free from change."



There were also some group responses from key stakeholders which are pertinent here. **Staff at the school** raised two points:

“Could the church purchase spotlights for the stage? We do quite a few activities at the church and improved stage lights would enhance performances etc....It might be controversial, but it was also felt that a greater amount of space could be utilised if the pews were taken out and chairs set out/taken away as necessary to increase capacity seating or to create a large area that could be used by the school for activities/lessons.”

The **Directors of the Shute Festival** were enthusiastic about their partnership with church and the use of the building. In addition to calling for improved lighting, heating and kitchen facilities, they raised the following points:

“The pews are simply not comfortable to sit on for any length of time... Many of our audience are over 60 and sitting on a wooden uncomfortable seat for any length of time presents problems. Some people won't attend [events] due to the present seating. Removing the pews would also allow flexibility of the use of space.”

Finally the Committee of the **Shute Theatre and Arts Guild (STAG)** indicated that whilst they hugely enjoy using the church as a venue, the following improvements would be beneficial,

- Illumination of the approach pathways
- More comfortable seating which would improve audience visibility
- More toilet facilities – currently portaloos are utilised for performances
- Additional sink and hot water in the kitchen area

Respondents were more divided about possible future uses of **St Mary and the Cross**. Many said they did not know/had not been in the building, and **8** respondents suggested it was surplus to requirements, could be sold and the money used to improve St Michael's. Those who were more positive about future use of the building pointed out that it was close to the larger centre of population and its size made it ideal for smaller meetings/groups.

St Michael's has hosted musical and theatrical events for a number of years. Have you attended these?

71% of respondents had attended a musical and/or theatrical event at St Michaels. Many people cited attending various productions by the St Michaels Theatre Guild (STAG) as well as concerts.

Are there any musical events you would be interested in attending in the future? (tick all that apply)

Respondents were invited to add any additional ideas. Of these, the only one with multiple suggestions was **jazz**, drawing on the popularity of the jazz evening in 2018, which over 100 people attended.



Are there any theatrical events you would be interested in attending in the future? (tick all that apply)

Theatrical Event	Number of ticks	Rank
Plays	47	1
Comedy	40	2
Musicals	36	3

In addition to music and theatre, what kind of community/cultural events would you like to see taking place? (tick all that apply)

Community/Cultural Event	Number of ticks	Rank
Art Exhibitions	38	3
Art Classes	24	5
Knit and Natter	13	7
GP Outreach/Community Nursing	21	6
Fitness Classes	26	4
Historical/Literary Talks	40	2
Nature Talks	41	1

Respondents were invited to add any additional ideas. Several commented and their support of the church being used as widely as possible if this would help its long term sustainability. Craft classes and exhibitions, quizzes, film screenings and occasional training on how to use the community defibrillators were all also mentioned. And one comment stood out in particular:

“Offers for locals to participate not just be 'consumers'.”

Thinking about St Michael's church building, do you feel that any of the below need to be improved? (tick all that apply)

The biggest issue on the minds of respondents was improving the **parking** arrangements for the church. Within the building itself, the following was important to respondents

Facility	Number of ticks	Rank
Heating	21	3
Lighting	12	4
Seating	24	1
Carpeting	3	7
Sound	8	5
Kitchen Facilities	22	2
Entrance to the Building	5	6

In the additional comments section, several respondents also mentioned the need for safe access by foot as well as **improved** noticeboards outside the church building.

Some Recommendations

It is for the PCC of the parish of Shute, together with their local community and stakeholders, to consider the responses to the community survey in detail and take forward actions arising from it. However, the Growing the Rural Church team offer the following, non-exhaustive, list of recommendations as food for thought:



Theme 1: Community Life

Consultation of Children and Young People

As noted above, there were **no responses to the survey from anyone under the age of 30**. Whilst many respondents offered ideas about what would be of benefit to children and young people in the locality, **we strongly suggest that direct consultation of children and young people takes place before any planning for provision in this area.**

Consultation of primary school aged children could certainly be facilitated via the primary school. Teenagers can be harder to reach, but might be accessed via extra-curricular sports and activities organisations operating outside the parish, but drawing teenagers from it. Social media is also of value here, although the younger generations are moving away from platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, towards Instagram, Snapchat and others.

Theme 2: Church Life

Reaching as Wide a Group of People as Possible

Respondents indicated a strong preference for more traditional services to be available, perhaps showing that it would be worth considering **more of a balance between traditional and contemporary style services** in future. In addition to indicating their own preferences around the style of services available, however, respondents were keen to stress the offering should meet the needs of as wide a cross-section of the local population as possible. Possible ways to do this would be to **consider a greater range of service times**. Respondents of working age indicated the difficulty of attending during the day. Likewise, as many of the families with children attending the primary school live outside the parish, it would be worth considering **a mid-week family friendly service/activity to coincide with the end of the school day.**

Theme 3: Developing our Church Buildings to Serve our Communities

Developing the Church as Community Venue

Collectively, respondents indicated a desire to have **more events, whether of a social, cultural or fitness related nature in the locality**. They also indicated their **positivity towards St Michael's church being re-ordered to be able to provide the space** for this. In addition to simply the provision of space, responses indicated the opportunity for the church/community to consider an income generation opportunity, whether through a shop, café or pub, or combination of all three. This provides a strong mandate for development plans to be drawn up and consulted on further, all of which will be of huge benefit when demonstrating community need both to the Diocesan Advisory Committee (the Church of England's alternative provision for alterations to listed buildings) and funders, such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund, National Churches Trust and others. Funding is available through avenues such as the Big Lottery *Awards for All* programme to work on a formal feasibility study of these ideas. In order to assist with creative thinking in this area, some examples of churches re-ordered to provide community space, can be found in **Appendix 4.**

Next Steps

- This report will be circulated to all those who gave their contact details via the survey, as well as circulated as widely as possible through local online and hard copy networks.
- All those interested in forming a church/community project team to develop the ideas drawn from the survey into an action plan will be welcome to come along to a **meeting at 7pm on Wednesday 26th June in St Michael's church**. At this the PCC hopes to form a core team made up of church and community members who, together with support from the wider community, can take things forward.



Appendices

Appendix 1 – Community Survey – see separate document

Appendix 2 – Full Responses to questions about participation in activities in the area

What activities do you currently take part in regularly in Shute Parish and the surrounding local area?
some school, church, AONB & Legacy&Landscape activities, Umborne Hall events, Ladies social club & skittles, walking, pilates
Church, literary festival, attending concerts and plays at the Church and other similar venues, Legacy to Landscape walks and other related events.
Walking and cycling; lit fest; AONB activities; tennis
Drama
School related activities and occasional church
Activities in the Umborne Hall and valley. Horticulture club Kilworth hall
Shute Theatre and Arts Guild
We are members of STAG and occasionally attend the church.
Visit both Whitford and Shute Churches and Shute School regularly
Attend The Beacon Baptist church in Killmington
Not much, working overseas
Road repairs, school governance, occasional social activities at Umborne Hall
Walking. Walking. Walking.
Shute Theatre and Arts Guild and other events at St Michael's Church, Shute
Shute Theatre and Arts Guild
Dog walking. Portrait painting. Woodcarving. Fly fishing. Hillwalking. Photography. Writing novels. Cookery wine
STAG Refreshments during Shute Barton open weekends Refreshments during Shute Literary weekend
Concerts, Shute Festival, Talks and walks
Village hall Sunday lunches, quizzes and socials.
events at Umborne Hall, community events in Shute, nature events, literary festival, Whitford show.
Whitford lunches, other events in village hall eg carol concert
I no longer live in Shute, am nearly 88, not very mobile, and have a sick wife (Alzheimer's) who needs a lot of attention, so, sadly my direct involvement in Parish affairs has largely come to an end
I am actively involved in the life of the school and welcome the events which take place at the church for the school children.
School activities
Work at the primary school
STAG Other theatre groups and Local choirs
Umborne Hall events, concerts in church, organising races
Umbourne Village Hall Events
Dinners, barbecues, quizzes, skittles, large village show, plant shows, coffee mornings, boules matches, musical evenings,
Only just moved here so cannot fully comment
arts events and school and community functions
Umborne Hall activities, Colyton Church



Whitford Show, Legacy to Landscape, STAG plays
Umborne Hall Activites, Shute Festival
Holy Communion, Drama, Music, Parish Meetings
Craft group, Church, Theatre if I could afford it
Bell ringing, Whitford Flower Show, Cake Making, Organising locking of church, horse riding, walking
Church services (monthly), entertainment in the church, Shute Barton Open Days, Social events in Umborne Hall and Whitford
Umborne Ladies, PCC, Church flowers, National Trust, Colyford and District Flower Club, Kilmington Gardening Club, Shute Craft Group
Fundraising
Regular attend concerts, plays at church
Walking
Parish council meetings and PCC flower arranging at St Michaels and Whitford. Cleaning, opening and closing the Church. Making cakes. Barton weekends. Support Whitford and Umborne Village Halls
St Michaels Church, Whist Drive
Umborne Hall community and social events. Helping at steam up and Shute Horse open days
Legacy to Landscape, Umborne Hall activities, Shute Church musical activities
Parish councillor
Quizzes, Whitford Village Hall events
Village lunch, village events (most of them), organising events, playreading, swimming, walking, theatre, cinemas
Events at Whitford Village Hall
Walking (Public right of way)
All activities at Whitford Village Hall
Aerobic/weights, bingo, coffee and chat, skittles
Village hall, lunches, skittles, keep fit, bell ringing at St Michaels, Whitford Produce Association

What activities would you be interested in taking part in if they were happening in Shute Parish?
Cycling Club Social Club, Games Club Fitness Club
Music, choirs, literary and artistic events, walks.
Getting Gigaclear or someone actually to install the high-speed internet connection.
Music
Community celebrations
Yoga classes , gentle exercise classes. Flower arranging. .
Any music, drama, creative stuff. . . .
Tennis Coaching - one court at Shute House
Difficult to say at moment as not there every weekend. There are interesting activities but they tend to be on during the week.
Open to volunteering for most activities.
Relaxing singing sessions.
More outside activities in Shute and its environs
Drama, music, dance
yoga or other exercise classes



A variety of workshops of any interest.
Baby and toddler groups
As the majority of my time is spent at school I welcome a range of activities and events both at the school/Shute Barton and the church during school hours. I would like to see more activities taking place outdoors at all locations.
Social
Anything environmental.
Music. Theatre , arts. History. Talks
more concerts
More events like the Jazz night in Shute Church
Film evenings
Fitness activities
walking groups, local history groups.
Talks, films, demonstrations, concerts
Further, music, drama, arts
Holy Communion, Drama, Music, Parish Meetings
Social club in Shute
I hope Apple Day will continue. An annual fete/fair in Shute/Umborne
Local lunch club, coffee mornings, quiz nights
Nature walks
Social
Fitness class (evenings)
DIY, IT and computer applications, gardening and financial matters
Book club, Theatre appreciation group, concerts
Playreading (not performance), walking, netball, eco project
Keep fit, various talks

Appendix 3 – full responses to questions on how the churches might serve the local community

In your opinion, how might St Michael's Church in Shute best serve the local community?
As a church; music & theatre events; historical/literary/nature events; social meeting place; cafe; adhoc events
The Church should be adapted to become a more flexible space to accommodate a wider range of events. The current wooden pews are badly designed and make sitting through events difficult. They could be removed to allow for different types of events, e.g. community suppers, dramatic and artistic exhibition space. There should be better lighting and facilities for catering, as well as heating.
Catering upgrade, toilets, flexible seating in nave, properly enclosed chapel for services/prayer
Used to host exhibitions and social gatherings
To be used more for community activities and meetings
Continue it's current multi-use approach
By being used for more community events as well as providing regular services.
More flexible use if some or even ALL of the pews were removed.
If it were able to provide a comfortable informal meeting space that might encourage people in to use it.

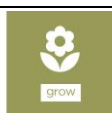
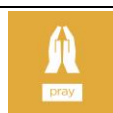


Day time activities, perhaps community store option if achievable
Regular coffee mornings
A gathering to discuss this subject with one and all may be useful?
I think it is doing pretty well already. Although the parking and access is difficult for many,
Continue to provide a place for reflection and worship
Be available for weddings to people outside the parish
Not sure
by being flexible and inclusive
By increasing its use for concerts, cultural and other non-religious events
From what I've heard it's offering a great service at the moment.
Holding more community events like the music evening. Being the place to go to for the local history etc a library would be nice.
Baby/toddler groups, coffee and chat, youth clubs
See above about more activities, but also we must be prepared to change the inside to suit using it for more social events. This means removing a fair number of pews, and replacing them with chairs, so that an open space can be made, when needed: essential. Ok, so it could be expensive, what with heating pipe runs, but it must be faced. Let's go into it.
Continue to have a range of activities during school time which the children from the school could attend.
More things for families
I think it serves those who attend services fine as it stands
By encouraging people to visit. Through events and perhaps a cafe
more drama and music
In a Shute, a community without a village hall or community centre or library, the church is a focal point for the community and should try to meet their needs
More use for arts and musical events
As a church
Continuing and expanding pastoral care. Setting up a library/book deposit within the church
By offering more community use, but without compromising its primary function as a place of worship, e.g. keep sanctuary area free from change.
By becoming an arts centre, along the lines of Eype's Church
As now, being available for community use and hire
By being a community centre. Flexible seating- get rid of pews- few people now kneel to pray. Seating is uncomfortable - especially during long sermons
As it does now, with local events. The church has held lots of different events over the years
Holding a coffee morning on a Saturday say once a month to show the local community the church is 'open' to everyone not a selective few but to leave the fabric as it is ie not to remove the pews as this would rip the heart out of the church
Retaining church services but increasing its use as a community space - eg exhibitions, events and entertainment venue
Everything we want is already available
Encouraging new people to attend events
No change in what it offers the local community at the present time
Community activities
By keeping the doors open and welcoming people into it, advertising the fact that people can have wedding etc there.



Continuing the policy of welcoming all sections of the community and trying new ideas to make it a focus for the residents.
The internal space could be useful for a variety of activities. The pews may need removing and free standing seats provided instead. Could be used by a Drama group, scout hall, badminton, youth club, hobbies.
Occasional/local songs of praise for the community
Open a coffee shop, house and post office. Be a centre for community activities
Letting it double as a community centre, so that seating would have to be changed
Pews removed so that it could be more widely used by the whole community

In your opinion, how might St Mary at the Cross Chapel in Whitford best serve the local community?
Don't know it
I don't really know this church but I'm sure it could be utilised by the community
To widen its range of activities, it's a small area more small gatherings could use it rather than the slightly larger village hall
Is it really needed or is it a drain on slender resources?
Better access, car park for disabled and elderly, signposted in the Village
No knowledge
Social facility for young adults, small theatrical performances, etc
Sorry, not familiar with this one.
I am not familiar with St Mary at the Cross
Not required
I'd like it to be an open church.
sell it and use the money to make St Michaels usable / viable as a community building.
Ongoing church services
Can't answer: my wife and I can't get up to it.
Never been there
not sure
There is already a thriving village hall serving the community whereas only one or two individuals use this building infrequently. Sell it for residential use and the money for a replacement village hall.
Don't know
As St Michaels
Not sure the building is large enough to accommodate sufficient numbers
As now. Size and location makes other use difficult.
Most of my generation prefer the services with hymns we know. If the system is changed there are no younger persons to appreciate the modern versions.
To close, but to provide those who wish to attend services at Shute with transport.
Unsure due to access and parking difficulties
It should be sold? And the monies be placed and used to maintain St Micheals Church in Shute; not used for the 5 alive.
I have never attended so can't comment
This is a small church and probably more adaptable than St Michaels. Since it is in Whitford with larger population it would be more versatile. Could be used for any of the above activities once pews removed. What about use as an "Mens Shed" where men and women can come together as a communal group to make things, crafts, carpentry etc. Check out "UK Mens Sheds Association"- becoming very popular. Childrens/nursery/playschool



Bible study groups/talks on Christianity
Be open and busy- somehow. Art exhibitions?
Letting it double as a community centre, so that seating would have to be changed
Maybe it should be sold as the Village Hall is a facility that can be used for Whitford events

Appendix 4 – examples of rural churches re-ordered to develop community space

For a full range of case studies from across Devon, please visit:

<https://exeter.anglican.org/resources/church-buildings/case-studies/>

One of these is St Mary Magdalene, Stoke Canon – see separate sheet for case study.

