

## **Communications and Administration at St Kea.**

I am proposing that we make some changes to the way we administer the church. These changes will result in significantly improved communications, streamlined and more efficient practises and significant financial savings in staff time.

We anticipate that were these suggestions to be adopted, we will make a saving of just over £1,000pa.

Over the past few weeks we have already introduced a new website, this both saved money on our previous provider and gives a much more contemporary and useable look to our online presence.

I am proposing that we take the next step and adopt more fully the use of ChurchSuite (formerly Church App). See the following introduction to the different modules, how it will make a difference and the savings that are available.

### **Introducing ChurchSuite Modules**

#### **Current Modules Used**

As a church we currently have access to the Address Book, Attendance and Children's Modules in ChurchSuite.

The staff team currently use the available modules in the following ways:

##### Address Book:

- Communicating with Church members via telephone or email.
- Logging Key Dates such as attendance at a Welcome Lunch, completing Safeguarding Training.
- Creating a Tag which indicates whether a church member is in a Small Group, part of a rota, which congregation they are usually a part of and if they are a member of the PCC.

##### Attendance:

- Registering if people attend services in order to ensure people don't fall through any gaps in terms of pastoral care.

##### Children:

- This module is currently not used, but should be.
- Storing important information about children's contact numbers, allergies etc etc is much safer in this database than on paper forms left in cupboards.
- Digital registers allow for greater data protection as paper forms are not used each week. Should a safeguarding issue arise in the future, the digital footprint of an online register will have logged who was at a particular session, what time they arrived and left.
- Children's progress up through the Sunday groups can be logged to make sure they transition into adult groups effectively.

- No one can see any child data except for the parent and administrator. As a normal user of ChurchSuite you cannot see any children on the database, even if they are attached to their parent's account. They simply do not appear.

These current modules cost £32.50pm (£390pa).

### **Other Available Modules**

The additional modules would allow the following:

#### Bookings:

- This allows external bookings of church facilities to be computerised. Although this Module would have limited use at the moment in terms of external bookings, it does work well with the Calendar module which is much more useful.

#### Calendar:

- All St Kea events and services can be added to this. There is also the facility to embed the calendar event into a website, therefore removing the need to update more than one application which we do at present.
- Specific groups of people can be tagged for a certain event, for example the Light Party, Memorial Service. This will help to make sure that relevant information on events gets to the right people and improve communication.
- People can sign up to events so that those organisers have a better idea of numbers.
- There is the function to be able to automatically send an email to Team Leaders to let them know that the event is taking place and that a member of their team is needed to help run the event.
- Workflows can be created to ensure that each stage of organising the event is covered. This is useful for events such as Remembrance Sunday (a lot of external people have to come together), Christmas events, Women's conference and Kea school events which take place at All Hallows.
- The Calendar also works with the Bookings module to avoid clashes and double booking.

#### Giving:

- This module allows for immediate giving. A recent example of its potential being repairs to Church Cottage. A request could be given at the start of a service and people can just log in using their smart phones and make a donation there and then. This Module would be of limited use at St Kea at present as we have introduced Parish Giving.

#### Small Groups:

- This module allows the staff team and Small Group Leaders to make sure that everyone has access to a Small Group.
- It allows for better communication between Small Group Members. This is particularly useful as Small Groups at St Kea take on various forms.

- It enables people to see the small groups and consider joining a particular group.

#### Rotas:

- This is by far the most useful Module to the office. Currently the rota system is extremely cumbersome and difficult to manage. It takes around 5-6 hours to set up each term's rota and complete. It then takes maintenance and weekly updating. There is a Master rota which then feeds information into the All Hallows and Truro Rotas via formulae in a spreadsheet.
- The Rota module allows those on the rota to see a completely up to date version, allows them to make changes themselves, allows communication between rota teams plus much more. The staff team can have an overview of who is on what rota, whether a few people are on many rotas and who isn't serving on any rota but might like to. The module allows for emails to be automatically sent reminding you if you are serving the next week.
- Essentially the administration is significantly streamlined, saving considerable office time increasing the capacity of the office.

These modules cost an additional £276pa.

### **The combined use of Modules**

A good example of combining modules is the welcome process for newcomers to the church. A function called "Flows" is used to track people from filling in a Welcome Card, receiving a Welcome Pack, attending a Welcome lunch, starting in a Small Group, attending events and serving on a rota. The Calendar module is used to make sure that newcomers are invited to right events, the Small Group module is used to encourage them to join a Group, the Rota module is used to encourage them to perhaps consider serving in some way. Newcomer flows are very useful to the clergy and staff team to ensure that everyone feels welcome at St Kea and can get fully involved.

### **Current Usage**

There is currently minimal usage of ChurchSuite by members of the church family. Over the period 1<sup>st</sup> May to 22<sup>nd</sup> June only 40 of the 288 contacts that attend any of our 3 congregations logged in. 146 contacts have not logged in for more than 6 months. 134 have not logged in for over a year. 66 do not have a registered email address so could possibly be using a spouse's log in.

Whilst the main use at the moment is in pastoral and staff use, given the cost, we need to increase the utility for the church. One of the main reasons we have low level adoption at the moment is because of the limited functionality and dependency on old, out of date paper directories. With this increased functionality people will have more reason to use the App.

Increasingly communications are online and through apps like this. Over time the adoption rates are only going to increase.

## **Costs and Cost Savings**

Notes and News – The Calendar Module, along with increased use of ChurchSuite by church family would mean that the paper copy of Notes and News could be reduced considerably. It currently takes around 3 hours to produce and print Notes and News each week. This is roughly £30 administration time cost each week. 140 copies are produced each week with an additional 25 produced on weeks when Old Kea meet. This is a weekly printing cost of between £1.50-1.65. It involves pulling information from various calendars and rotas as well as adding information from church members and clergy. Using the Calendar module would mean that this pulling together of information is automatic and church members would just need to log in and look at the calendar or an email would be sent to remind them of events.

Total current cost of Notes and News £1,512

Term cards – The production of the quarterly Term cards and inputting of services onto calendars currently takes around 8 hours each term. In administration time cost this is around £80 with a printing cost of around £50 for 250 copies.

Total cost of Term Cards £650

The annual cost saving of moving these two documents online (including staff time saving and adding the extra ChurchSuite modules) would be £1,096

## **What about those who are not online**

For those who are not online, less able to use technology or visiting, a paper copy of information can still be available. This can be printed directly from ChurchSuite into a notice sheet format. If the online route were taken, it would be essential to ask those who are not online or do not use computers and smartphones how they would like to receive information to ensure they are as up to date as those using the online system.

## **Conclusion**

I believe church members would benefit hugely from increased use of ChurchSuite. At the moment, some are confused between ChurchSuite and the Old Member's area of the website as they both hold different information. Full use of ChurchSuite would put everything in one place. All information that is relevant would be there.

There are concerns around privacy, particularly children's information being online. As said above, only parents and those with Administrator access can see any children's information. If the Children's module was fully utilised then children's group leaders would have access, as they currently do but in paper form. Using this

system would avoid the vulnerability of paper lists being left accessible in our cupboards.

In addition users are in control of what information is on the database aspect of ChurchSuite. When users first log in they are encouraged to review the data that has been already added and select the security and visibility settings that they prefer. Obviously if a church member is on a rota then the minimum of an email address or phone number would be required to enable other members of the rota to make contact.

From an office administration point of view, using the full range of Modules in ChurchSuite would streamline tasks enormously. Working hours would be spent more cost effectively and it would enable a lot of office functions to join up.

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