GROSVENOR CHAPEL  
MISSION ACTION PLAN: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Fr Richard Fermer

**To aid our discussion at the House of Lords on Wednesday 19th November, I have set out the key areas of the Chapel’s life, its ministry and mission, drawing on the document, “The Chapel Gathering: Mission Action Plan,” 16th March 2014 and stating what we already do and what has developed since that meeting in March. In our meeting, we need to examine whether this is a good outline of the state of play and draw out clearly plans of action for each area, cognisant of the limits of our resources and personnel.**

WORKING FROM WHAT WE ALREADY DO, AND DO WELL.

1. Our Musical Tradition:

The strength of our musical tradition is universally acclaimed by both congregants and non-congregants.

In the last two years we have built on that with the idea of *sharing our musical tradition and excellence with others*:

* Mayfair Community Choir – directed by our Musical Director, Richard Hobson.
* After School Children’s Singing Club – led by Helena Raeburn and largely financed by the parents, although offering bursaries to families in need.
* Termly Concerts by our Choir
* Working with up-and-coming musicians in ways that link music and spiritual reflection, e.g. “Passion” (March/April 2014), “Song Lines” (11th November 2014 – Centenary of WW1)
* Organ Scholar.

**Potential Action Plan**: Would all this work best be gathered together and supported financially by establishing a “Grosvenor Chapel Music Foundation”, which can raise funds on its own terms and help continue this work of *sharing* the riches of our musical tradition?

1. **Our Liturgy**: “The Beauty of Holiness”

Very much linked to our musical tradition. The challenges that face us here have to do with:

* Teaching the tradition: liturgical traditions are no longer intelligible to many.
* How do we extend our worship beyond the Sunday Eucharist? E.g. Very successful All Souls’ “Lucernarium” this year.

How do we offer more suitable midweek worship? E.g. Midday Prayer (20 minutes in the lunch hour).

1. **The Intimacy of the Chapel’s Space and Sense of Community**.

The Chapel community prides itself on being friendly and welcoming, and certainly the Chapel is not happier than when there is a buzzing Chapel Room after the service. In short, we have great facilities to offer welcome. But are we actually as welcoming as we think? Or are we selectively welcoming? Feedback received by the priest suggests that all is not quite as rosy as we think in this regard.

We already:

* Host an exciting range of post-Service events, from drinks celebrating birthdays, marriages and baptism, to “Formation Sundays” with a Christian theme, to encouraging members of the congregation to give talks on their pet subjects. But do these events always sweep up newcomers? Not unless we are bringing them in from Chapel to room!

Areas for our consideration:

* When was the last time that sidesmen met to discuss welcome? When were new sidesmen recruited? Does the Chapel Committee and its Officers also feel responsible for welcome?
* What would help newcomers navigate their way around the Chapel and its life better?
* How welcoming are we to families?

1. **Communication**Communication is absolutely vital and something with which we continue to struggle because of lack of manpower and the relevant skill base. Our website is currently being overhauled, and we continue to need more support and help with that. We have developed a Twitter Account and hope to create a new Facebook Account. In September we published a Chapel Newsletter and intend to do so again in January. We attempt to keep members of the congregation up-to-date through regular email circulars of events and services. Additional matters to consider are:

* A poster display unit for the Office window to avoid sticking posters on the window itself.
* Targeted Google advertising in relation to Weddings.
* The possibility of selling tickets for events online from the website.
* Pop-up display stands for the entrance giving essential information about the Chapel: how to navigate the Chapel; key points of historic interest etc.

1. **Discipleship and Christian Formation**

We currently hold “Formation Sundays” with a visiting preacher/speaker on a relevant Christian theme. We have a tradition of good Lent Courses. Recently we have tried out two courses that seek to reach (i) working people (T.S. Eliot “Four Quartets” – reasonable well attended with 7 people), and (ii) a course on the some of the building blocks of the Christian life, “Being Christian.” Few people attended and more face-to-face recruitment would be necessary in future. We have also held an Advent Quiet Day and a Chapel Pilgrimage. Confirmation Classes are now under way for a Confirmation Service to be held in February. We need to continue to explore new ways to offer people opportunities to grow in faith:

* Lunchtime Fellowship Group for working people in the area.
* “Christians in Property” to start in January.
* Consider starting “homegroups” for the existing Chapel congregation, perhaps meeting in the Chapel.
* Continue to develop our Marriage Preparation Course and extend it to post-wedding course.

1. **Our Responsibility to our Parish:** **Our Outreach Programme**.

Since 2012, we have made the following steps and progress:

* Our Community Carol Service has been able to embrace involve more directly members of the local community, not only in readings, but also in prayers, and now in music, through the Mayfair Community Choir (MCC) and invitation to other local choirs.
* We are reaching out with our music: MCC, Children’s Singing Club, our appearance in the “Summer in the Square.”
* Special Services and Social Events, such as Brazilian Carnival, St George’s Day Celebration, St Nicholas Day Celebration, the Summer Fair, have also attracted the participation of local residents. We are currently planning an Opera Gala for January 2015.
* In November 2013 we appointed Lis Hasted as the Chapel’s “Community and Events Officer,” to support the development of our outreach to the local community.
* In September 2014 we gained Westminster Foundation part-funding to aid our developing outreach programme in three areas that we hope to evolve in the next three years:

1. Work with those living with dementia and their carers
2. Building community through celebratory meals (in partnership with the West End Community Trust)
3. Building on the S. Raphael Healing Mass and coffee mornings, working with people living with cancer and their carers.

* We have also taken steps to reach out to the Working Population of Mayfair, through lunchtime recital/meditation ("Passion”), and T.S. Eliot Course at lunchtime (seven participants). “Christians in Property” wish to meet in the Chapel from January 2015.

1. **Our Responsibility to our Parish: Working with St George’s, Hanover Square and other local churches.**

Since 2012 we have taken the following steps forward:

* The Chapel has co-ordinated a special Ecumenical Service in the “Week of Prayer for Christian Unity”.
* There is no a much more equitable approach to the Parish School than there has been in the past. PiC regularly leads worship. PiC has encouraged greater participation by both churches in the life of the School.
* St George’s and the Chapel jointly set up a one-day “Marriage Preparation Course”, which has now been run successfully on two separate occasions. We are now hoping to recruit couples from our two churches to help lead future courses.
* St. George’s and the Chapel are currently exploring a joint mission project entitled, “Global City, Mayfair” and the 2015 Lent Course will aid our reflection in this respect: “Citizens of a Global City.” In a Mayfair which is increasingly international and fast becoming a global village, in which the world comes to London, there is a clear need to find ways of fostering dialogue among the many sub-communities and to help promote greater cohesion, harmony and integration: in short ‘to build community’. The project seeks to do so by forming a Working Committee made out members of the two congregations, but also, importantly, key local figures in the wider community, to plan a series of events that seek to promote civil society and build community across social, religious, economic and cultural divides. The idea is also in the medium to long term to set up links with other world cities that share similar concerns.
* Our Lent Courses are shared with St John’s Hyde Park and St George’s, and we are currently looking at ways in which we could meet together at other key points of the year.

1. **Our links to the Wider Church**.

The Chapel has a link with St Thomas, Clapton Common. Several joint events were undertaken in 2013, but we have not been able to continue the momentum.

The Chapel, with St George’s, has received funding for the placement of a Brazilian Anglican ordinand/priest for three months from the end of January 2015. We hope this might be broadened in future years to include placements by Angolan/Mozambican Ordinands/Priests, following our Diocesan Companion Relationship with those countries, called ALMA.

We are currently exploring the possibility of a link with a Parish in New York, again, following a Diocesan Companion Relationship.

1. **The Church Building (Fabric Matters) and Maximising the Use of our Land**

The Chapel building is always in need of maintenance. Since the redecoration in 2012, we have put in new external railings to the outside door to the Sacristy. We will shortly be installing a wooden balustrade to organ gallery, and plans are currently in consultation with the congregation and DAC regarding the new doors to the west end of the nave.

Our more medium to long-term plans for the Chapel fabric have already been articulated by the Chapel Committee:

* Sound and loop system
* Redecoration of the exterior of the Chapel, beginning with the steeple and west façade (National Lottery Funding required)
* Interior Improvements so that the Chapel can continue to be a space for the community: replacement of some flagstones, new lighting scheme, extensive repairs to the gallery.
* The pavement to the north of the Chapel is church land and a Working Party of the Chapel is currently researching the possibility of extending the stalls along the north side of the Chapel, serving the community through making local produce available and coffee/sandwich stall, plus benefiting the Chapel financially.
* The possibility of glassing in Beth’s garden to extend the all-year round use of that space and investigate the possibility of a café.