

Our Vision for Frant and Eridge Churches 2021 “Year of Community”



Holy Trinity Church, Eridge

To rebuild our services, including regular outdoor services in the memorial garden, when fine weather

Last year, we had some wonderful services outside in the sunshine, that was very much appreciated, and safe! This year we want to continue that trend, inspiring worship in our wonderful memorial Garden. In Autumn many of us helped out by tidying up the churchyard, making the prospect of more services outside this year a real delight.

To include families in our village

At Christmas it was so wonderful to have so many families involved in our filmed nativity, and great for the rector and Ed Pascoe to get to know some of them. We want to build on that, and are looking to run Forest School events in the summer at Eridge to engage them again. The hope is to build our relationships with our village families.

To have groups meeting again

We can't wait to have groups meet again! With such an emphasis on community, and the fact we were not able to have our usual lent course, we think now might be a good time to start a home group, so that we can encourage one another and connect with each other and God.

To continue our community activities

Eridge has a very strong community, and we want our church to be right at the heart of our community here. The events we run and participate in, add and enrich the lives of those about us, and create opportunity for our church to be known and supported, as we live out our faith in Jesus.

To begin a journey towards becoming a more eco church

The General Synod of the church of England have set 2030 as the date by which we want to be carbon neutral. This year we are already beginning this journey by investing in energy efficient lighting. Ongoingly we want to think about how we can lead our parish in the way in which we care for the world that God made, and the environment we enjoy.



Our Vision for Frant and Eridge Churches

2021 “Year of Community”



St. Alban's Church, Frant

To rebuild our services in church

As we look beyond covid, we want to build Frant Church services up again to include those of all ages into our congregation again. We want to resume Sunday School in the stables again, and enjoy all age services as well. We long to hear the organ again, and singing, and are very much looking forward to lifting our hearts and voices in worship again.



To make homegroups central to our church ministry

We are hugely excited and blessed that in a difficult time of Covid, we have grown as a church. Having more people brings with it huge opportunities for further growth, and development as we enjoy each other's gifts. It also presents challenges as we move into being a larger church to pastorally care for each other. Homegroups we think will be key to supporting one another personally ongoingly. We want to equip new leaders of groups, increase the number of groups, build one another up in love, and provide care for each other day in day out. When for so long we haven't been able to meet together, homegroups will be central to live out our “year of community.”

To use the opportunities, we have to grow as a church

Last year at Alpha we had 36 people join us, we want to run an Alpha again, and welcome more people to hear the amazing message of Jesus.

To become an eco-church

Our location as a rural church gives us amazing opportunity to explore the wonders of creation, and encourage wildlife. We want to help people appreciate the world around them, and lead the example of caring for creation. We hope to develop a group to inspire and oversee how we can better look after our world, and following the General Synod's aspiration, to become carbon neutral by 2030.

To develop a 21st century rural ministry for the future with Festival Church

Our outdoor space is an incredible gift which we want to make the most of. We have two fully trained Forest School instructors already in church, and hope for more! This creates a fairly unique situation where we can lead the way on how rural churches can engage families and youth. See more from our Festival Church and youth and children vision.

Worshipping our Creator, building up Community, caring for Creation.

Our Vision for Festival Church

Utilising our place, inspiring God's people and using His gifts for outreach and worship in 2021 and beyond.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to change the way we do church. As well as worshipping online, we identified a great opportunity for us to worship outside. Starting in September, our Festival Church opened up fresh ways to experience:



Inspired worship: Praising God outside drew us closer to God and His wonderful creation.

Relaxed atmosphere: People felt welcome and at ease, especially those who were not regular church goers.

Embraced new people: We grew as a church and welcomed new families.

Engaging children: Pioneered Forest School style Sunday School.

Included young people: It encouraged and involved all ages.

The Feedback we received was fantastic:

“We all loved it”

“The kids loved it... and I thought it was the best service I've been to in 30 years as a Christian”



Rev Brendan: Why I believe God is clearly leading us in this direction...

When I arrived here at Frant and Eridge, I immediately saw potential in our paddock field for mission and ministry. Years before, while attending my cousin's outdoor wedding in tipi marquees, I had a vision for a church meeting outdoors that would be attractive and engaging for those who might never consider going to church. I was soon to discover it was a vision that others shared in our church, and with Ed Pascoe and Penny Kift and their Forest School Training it put us in a very strong position to reimagine our worship and our ministry with Children.

Festival Church

become who you were *made* to be



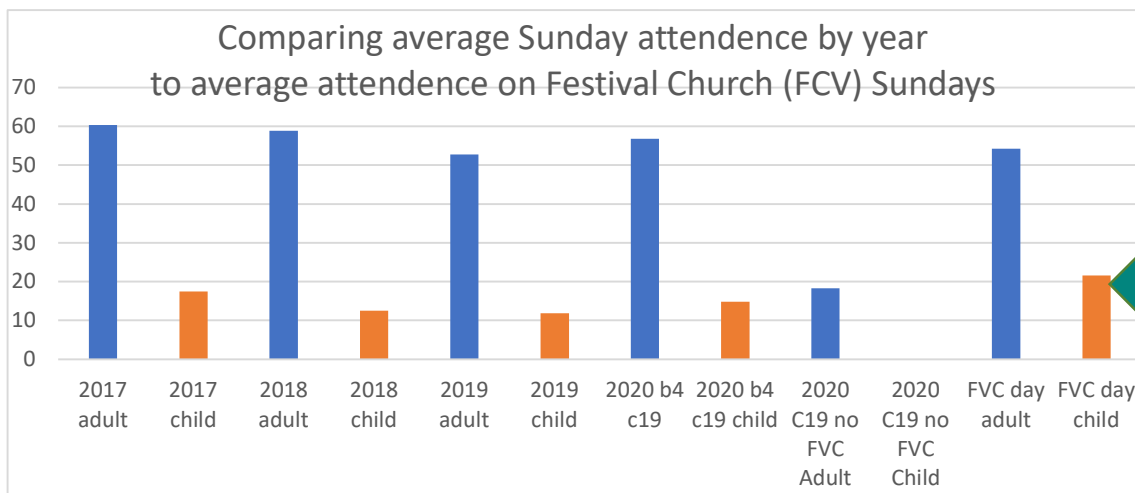
Festival Church Vision:

to create a place outdoors for outreach and worship
to thrive in 2021 and beyond.

Pioneering a 21st century model for rural ministry

We want to invest and grow our facilities for outdoor rural mission and ministry.

Our pilot months in 2020 meant when many other churches saw fewer people coming to services, we saw a growth in the number of children and families attending services. We believe we have proved this new ministry concept and now want to grow this opportunity. Comparing numbers shows that Festival Church enabled us during this most challenging time for churches, to maintain and grow attendance, when service numbers were incredibly low with no children:



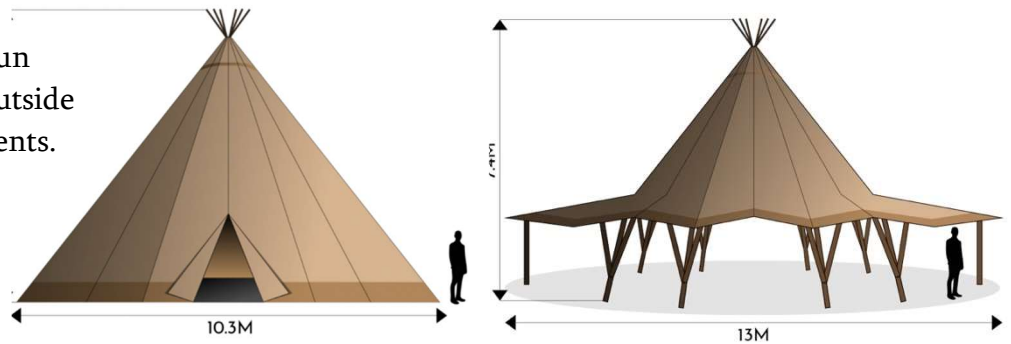
Continuity is important as shown by the difficulty of maintaining Frant@5 which is why we are committing to weekly outdoor services to keep fellowship and Christian community at the heart of everything we do. When we can we want it to be a place of fellowship, with refreshments, food, BBQs and more. Festival Church will also create opportunities to raise up and equip new leaders, speakers, musicians, worship leaders and prayer ministry.



Festival Church Vision: We have already sought funding to invest in one Tipi Marquee... and we want to do more!

A Tipi Marquee will enable a fun and vibrant place to worship outside with protection from the elements.

This will enable our Forest School-style youth and children's ministries to thrive.



We believe this will create huge opportunities for outreach in our community and beyond. We have already seen how outdoor worship and church engages families and young adults who have little or no church background. We think there is potential to engage many more non-church people, and those who might find the formality of a church building off-putting. We have also experienced how outdoor church increases a worship dynamic that deepens our connection with God in His creation.

We see a community benefit by working alongside our primary school, or community activities that could use this space. It could be used by people in the village for times of celebration at fetes or birthdays.

There is also real potential to bless the wider church with our experience of rural ministry. To inspire, support and encourage other rural churches in our vision for a 21st century rural ministry.

Please join us as we step out in faith and pray for God to bless our endeavours to share the love of Jesus with those around us.

This vision document was put together in conjunction with our Festival Church Planning Team:

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Our Vision for Frant and Eridge Churches 2021 “Year of Community”

Youth and Children’s ministry

To create an incredibly exciting and inspiring outdoor Sunday school

Forest School style Sunday school was a big hit with the kids last year. We can build on that to create one of the most engaging Sunday Schools that we can think of for Children, many of whom might not had a church background.

To rebuild ministries on hold

Not every kid loves the outdoors, Sunday School in the Stables will still be a main part of our ministry amongst young people. We want to get the encounter youth back together (having been on zoom for a year) and rebuild that fantastic group of young people together. Little Fishes is such an important ministry for young families and we hope to restart as soon as possible.

To increase our resources for outdoor activities with Youth and Children

This year Ed will complete his Archery Instructor training, providing more opportunity for us to utilize our space and gifts to engage young people outside in creation, with opportunity for school clubs and activities for youth. More than that we want to develop our site, to have a range of dynamic activities to help our children learn about creation, to build friendships that last, and to know and love their creator through faith in Jesus.

To work more and more closely with Frant School

We are planning to welcome children back into church for assemblies more often. We already do assemblies in school, but there is growing scope for increasing teaching in RE lessons, as well as enabling the school to use our Forest School site. We are also wanting to work out the best form of afterschool club, or even lunch time club for school. The rector is governor at Frant, with Mark Cross, Mayfield and Five Ashes and this creates important and growing links to enable the Christian ethos of our local schools to flourish.

To build our links with Eridge families

Forest School is not restricted to our own site, but can be set up almost anywhere! We want to be able to set up in new places and build links with families in our villages.

To inspire and support other rural churches

We are already supporting other rural churches setting up their own Forest Schools (St. Mary’s Crowborough and Hartfield with Colman’s Hatch), and we have a vision to grow that, and equip other rural churches for a new exciting ministry and mission opportunity which engages children in creation as we look to our creator.

