

SWOT ANALYSIS

St. Thomas Church 2020

	Helpful to achieving the objective	Harmful to achieving the objective
Internal Origin (attributes of the organisation)	<u>Strengths</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision, wiling to change & adapt • Building & location • Fellowship • Service & leadership • Active Church • Finance (SMF fully paid, bills paid...) • Goodwill • Murals, Organ & Acoustics • Governance • Fund raising & social activities • Digital footprint & Electronic payments 	<u>Weaknesses</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No full time Vicar • Building size • Offertory giving • Single traditional style worship • Communication PCC & congregation • Lack of teenagers/young people • Little use of technology in Church • Lack of outreach • Reliance on key people • External area not inviting
External Origin (attributes of the environment)	<u>Opportunities</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bequest to better utilise building • Extend Worship • Location • The Arts • Multimedia • Spread the load & plan • Wider Douglas outreach • Partner with relevant organisations • Teenagers / young people • Historic tours and telling story of Church 	<u>Threats</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance & specialist skills • Popular culture and modern lifestyle • Reliance on fund raising • Volunteer recruitment • Suspension of Benefice • Using Church for convenience & apathy • Political correctness • Lack of government support • Increasing costs • No public face of Church

SWOT Analysis - St. Thomas Church 2020

Strengths

Building & location

The Church is located in Douglas town centre, just off the promenade and in the heart of the cultural quarter. There are a large number of people who either go directly past the Church on a daily basis or pass within sight of the Church building. The building itself has many strengths that are used throughout the year from the large Church space to the smaller vestry and historic elements within its walls.

Fellowship

There is a strong sense of fellowship amongst the congregation creating a welcoming environment to new faces and holiday makers alike. With family and friends helping out at fund raisers even though they may not be regular Church goers. People from across the Island attend our fund raising events and appreciate the friendliness and fellowship offered by St Thomas caring Church community at its heart.

Service & leadership

The Church is well led by Rev Frear ably assisted and supported by Jacqy. There is a dedicated leadership team at St Thomas who have a lot of experience and skill set that can be called upon.

Active Church

Attendance at regular Sunday service is around 35 with a Sunday school operating in the school term. In 2019 St Thomas congregation actively took part in over 300 events during the year and the Church building was used on 66% of the calendar days. We've recently moved to holding communion in front of the chancel, making it easier and more inclusive for all.

Finance (SMF fully paid, bills paid...)

St. Thomas' pays in full, its Shared Ministry Fund. As well paying all of the additional running costs of the Church.

Goodwill

A lot of people on the Island and within the Parish either personally attended or had a relative who attended St Thomas school, which until recently was located next to the Church. So they have a natural affinity for St Thomas. The school uses the church for the schools end of term services and one of the Church wardens sits on the schools governing body.

Murals, Organ & Acoustics

John Miller Nicholson murals are of historic importance to the Isle of Man and a great attraction for the Church. William Hill pipe organ built 1912 and is regularly maintained, being used on Sunday services and concerts throughout the year. Heritage tours include the organ and bell tower. Without doubt the one thing that visiting choirs and musicians remark about the wonderful acoustics that St Thomas Church has.

Governance

St Thomas is up to date with governance, for example safeguarding, risk assessments, roles and responsibilities.

Fund Raising & social activities

Regular fund raising events are held by the Church within the building and also in the community and Island.

Digital footprint & Electronic payments

Over the past couple of years, St Thomas has raised its profile via digital media and now has links to many of the main social media outlets such as facebook and Twitter. As well as having a website, links on A Church Near You and Visit Isle of Man websites and local Radio adverts for social events. The monthly newsletter is emailed to a number of people including those off Island. The Church can accept payments electronically via the website and also with a card reader.

Willing to change & adapt

The congregation is willing to accept change, modernise and adapt to difficult/different situations. Regularly discussing different ideas for services and fund raising. Whilst retaining the traditional and well loved events and services.

Weaknesses

Building

Whilst the building is structurally sound, in use for 66% of the year and monies are available to become more community focused as well as being available for further maintenance to the fabric to make it more water tight. It must be noted that there is a considerable amount of work still to be done on the fabric of the building. As a result of the buildings size and construction, it can be cold in the middle of winter.

Offertory Giving

St Thomas congregation are very generous with their giving on a Sunday, but this alone does not cover the annual costs of running the Church. Although by either an increased congregation or commitment to giving via regular standing order or using the website donation button when not able to attend Church; this situation could be turned around.

Single traditional style Worship

Reliance on one Sunday service in the traditional format does not allow for people who maybe looking for a more Evangelical style of Christian worship within the Church of England and more importantly within our Parish. The monthly Family Service is our only service where young people take part. We do not provide much for those in the teens.

Communication between PCC and Congregation

A common comment is that there is no information provided to the congregation about what the PCC actually discussed at their meetings. This maybe a perception rather than reality.

Lack of teenagers / young people

The Church offers very little infrastructure and events specifically for teenagers young people.

Little use of technology in Church

There is very little in the way of technology available or used in Church during services and events.

Lack of outreach

Whilst St Thomas hosts many events throughout the year, there are not many that focus on outreach within the Parish community.

Reliance on key people

Whilst St Thomas has a strong leadership looking after the Church, there is a reliance on the same key people to pull events together. Whilst newer members of our congregation do help with these things, we need to find a way to actively engage with them to reduce the reliance on a handful of the congregation.

External area not inviting

The external features of St Thomas does not do much to inspire people to look inside. The outside needs to be improved to make it more inviting. There also needs to be a way of bringing the beauty of the inside of the Church to the outside.

No full time Vicar

While Rev Frear has done excellent work in his time looking after us at St Thomas, the lack of a full time Vicar has created a number of weaknesses that would normally be looked after by

having one. Such as improved community outreach, possibly looking at alternative services and groups, teenager and young people interaction within the Parish and so on.

Opportunities

Bequest to better utilise building

A recent sizable donation has been received from a benefactor (who wishes to remain anonymous at this time) with a view to improving the building to become a community focused facility while at the same time keeping the identity of the Church as a place of Worship and encouraging increased participation in worship and church activities. The Church can 'go green' with changes to the likes of LED lighting, a move to more energy efficient heating, explore the potential to generate electricity from renewable sources.

Extend Worship

Extend the current Worship offering by the addition of alternative styles of service to attract people looking for something other than the traditional Church service, evangelical for example. Develop ministry outside of regular services, such as a short mid-day service for workers in Douglas or a bible study group to build on the Lent/Christmas study group or a messy Church.

Location

St Thomas location provides a vast amount of opportunity to grow the Church, Mission and community outreach; with numerous hotels, B&B's Residential homes, apartments and homes, all within the boundary of the Parish. We will need to tap into the tourism market when things return to normal eg cruise visitors, heritage tourists and so on.

The Arts

The Church sits between the Villa Marina and Gaiety theatre complex and the Manx Museum. We should be able to build on this advantage by creating a link between them. For a rehearsal and concert venue as well as providing additional exhibition space for the museum.

Multimedia

With a growing digital footprint, investment in further technology for the Church will bring greater opportunity. Areas such as live streaming, projectors for display, improved lighting internal and external are to name but a few. These will also appeal to younger people to get involved with the Church.

Spread the load & plan

Creation of the likes of a fund raising team or committee would lead to a better distribution of the workload required to organise and run fund raising activities. Leading to people being more willing to offer help if they know they will not be over burdened with work. Establish a 'no blame' culture where it's deemed better to have tried and failed rather than not trying at all. We should also consider the establishment of a 3 / 5 year strategic plan based on the likes of this SWOT Analysis with SMART targets. As well as fostering a willingness to learn new ways of doing things

Wider Douglas outreach

There is a huge opportunity for the Church to do outreach work within the wider Parish, Douglas community and town centre.

Partner with relevant organisations

Due to the Churches location in the cultural quarter and its historic relevance, there are partnership opportunities with relevant arts and historical groups to maximise the potential of the building.

Teenagers / young people

Offering something that teenagers and young people want is an opportunity for growth within the Church.

Historic tours and telling story of Church

St Thomas has a rich history that is not brought to life or readily available for visitors within the Church. By making the stories and histories available to people who visit will make a better visitor experience.

Threats

Governance & specialist skills

Increasing governance requirements coupled with an approach that everyone needs to be qualified in everything, puts pressure on a dedicated band of volunteers. Equally the volunteers, Church wardens and PCC members in all of the Island Churches will mostly lack any knowledge required for specialist or specific roles that may be required. Over enthusiasm for the application of governance rather than taking a pragmatic sustainable approach leads to fear, uncertainty and results in people being un-willing to stand for Church roles, the PCC, simply helping out serving tea/coffee, reading a lesson, sides persons and so on, works vital to the continuance of any Church.

Popular culture and modern lifestyle

Today's modern culture, particularly among adults under 40 and younger people, has led to a disconnect between them and the traditional Church. The Church needs to find a way to offer something for them whilst caring for their spiritual well-being in keeping with Gods teaching and providing for the existing St Thomas Church congregation.

Reliance on fund raising

The Church tops-up its regular offerings from Sunday services with fund raising in order to meet the annual running costs for the Church. In an ideal world, the regular Sunday giving should meet these costs alone. COVID-19 has shown us that this revenue stream easily could dry up.

Volunteer recruitment

With increasing daily workloads for worshippers, coupled with increased governance, makes it difficult to attract volunteers to a position within the Church. People are always willing to help out when they are attend events but this needs to translate into joining the PCC for example.

Suspension of Benefice

During the period that St Thomas has been a suspended benefice, there has been a great deal of uncertainty about the Church's future. There has been a heavy reliance on the good will of the congregation and in particular Rev. Frear in order to keep the church going. Uncertainty can lead to a lack of commitment to fully support the Church, apathy and also 'gossip' in the wider Island community. None of which is beneficial to St Thomas future. Clear direction from the Diocese with a long term commitment to St Thomas is required in order to grow the Church within the Parish.

Using Church for convenience & apathy

Using the Church for weddings, christenings or to help get their child into the school then never setting foot in it again. Or just a general apathy toward the Anglican Church.

Political correctness

Whilst massive positive changes toward equality and disability legislation has been made. These changes can be skewed by a few to distort them for their own personal agenda.

Lack of Government support

There is very little in the way that the Isle of Man government support historic buildings and Churches. Unlike the UK government support and tax reduction schemes.

Increasing costs

There are annual increasing costs to be met. Whilst some are within the St Thomas control, some of the larger bills are not and are at Diocesan level.

No public face of Church

People perceive the Church on the Isle of Man as being for older people and are therefore turned away from. A strong public face of exactly what the Church is, does and how it can help is needed.