



PILOT ACTION PLAN

August Progress Report

As we are at the end of the Academic Year, this month's report is more of a reflection on the first 2 terms of illuminate and some thinking about how things progress into the new academic year in September. I will be reviewing the targets for the next term over the coming weeks and producing an updated action plan for 2019-20 which will form the basis of the report in September.

Engine Room - Gathering Christian YP

Vision

To bring Christian Young People together so that they make new friends, grow in gifts and are inspired to be culture changers together.

How?

A monthly gathering of Christian young people from across the district regardless of denomination, background or level of faith. Encouraging and empowering young people to lead each other in games, worship, prayer, mission and ministry. Helping them to discover their gifts, grow in them in a safe environment & be creative in how they live their life for Jesus in their schools and communities

Progress

Engine Room attendance has been sporadic since we launched in September 2018, ranging from 10 young people to 40, depending on time of year and how it has been promoted. The highest attendances were at the TRAC re-union and when we linked with Catalyst/Your Voice and had Bishop Rachel attend.

We have a core group of regulars from 5 different churches / groups who are beginning to build friendships and see each other as peer support.

Andy Poole has run a worship workshop which has resulted in a small worship band of young people leading worship every month.

We have had some input in terms of young people doing other things, including design of the logo/branding for illuminate and one young person speaking

From May we moved to St Laurence Church in Stroud, which provides us with a bigger venue and the church has been kind enough to allow us to store some kit there. The venue seems to work well and the core group have adapted to it well.

We have a core team of myself (Barrie Voyce), Anne Townsend (The Door), Rev Kate Stacey (Stroud Team) and Andy Poole (PSALMS) with Danny Brown and Scott Coles (Minch Baptist Church) and Rev Peter Francis (Brimmscombe & Woodchester) coming with their youth groups.

Future Thinking

Andy Poole is leaving PSALMS in September which leaves us without a "worship expert" within the team; I have thoughts about a possible replacement and need to follow this up before September.

We need to create more of a culture of "for young people by young people" and find opportunities for other young people to be involved in planning, running and serving in Engine Room. I want to ensure that it can grow and evolve to meet their needs and not be a thing that they "attend" but "own"

Subject matter for talks/reflection/prayer have been sporadic, I am creating a clearer programme for the 10 Engine Rooms in the new academic year with potential for young people and their leaders to follow up in the weeks between ERs

Promoting and marketing ER is really important, without losing the intimacy of the core group - I hope that the PSALMS team look to promote to those who came to this year's TRAC as they have identified a need to find an ongoing worship opportunity for those young people to be a part of.

We also missed a trick with promoting the last ER of this year to the outgoing year 6s as part of their transition - need to find ways of engaging with schools work / Open The Book / Church Schools in April and May of 2020.

Connections and Communications

Vision

Supporting local churches in discipling young people as missionaries

How?

Clear communication and connection to churches, ministers, youth leaders and other stakeholders about illuminate, with a flexibility to support and serve them well

Progress

Thanks to support from Stroud Deanery and the “endorsement” of Bishop Rachel, the message of illuminate has been spreading well across the Anglican churches in the Deanery and beyond, and I have met with a number of clergy and other church leaders who are keen to get involved and signpost their young people towards illuminate, and specifically Engine Room.

Connection with other denominations in the pilot area has been sporadic, with good connections with Stroud Christian Fellowship, 5 Valleys Christian Fellowship and Minchinhampton Baptist Church but less with others. The ministers from PSALMS are keen to continue to promote and support illuminate but finding practical easy ways of doing this hasn't always been obvious. In the Stonehouse area in particular the work of PSALMS is very strong and developing well, and it has seemed counter-intuitive to bring a different name and concept to those churches, however I have a good relationship with Emily Twigg the PSALMS minister in Stonehouse, eg my involvement in the Prayer Spaces she ran within Maidenhill.

We ran a small prayer breakfast in June which was attended by four supporters but no clergy or youth leaders.

Links with Gloucester Diocese are strong, with me joining the Life Priority Group in Autumn 2018, and being asked to lead the group from Sept 2019 with funding for The Door from the Diocese to cover my time doing this. The vision from the Diocese is to create “Connector” roles in each Deanery to support and develop youth discipleship locally, sharing a commonality of vision with illuminate.

We have developed a Social Media presence on Facebook and Instagram and have a website illuminatestroud.org.uk.

Anne has developed some ideas for Merchandise with young people at Engine Room, things that will subtly promote illuminate and be conversation openers for young people with their friends. We have received a small grant which will be used towards purchasing some of this in time for September.

Future Thinking

I need to think about the best ways of ongoing communications to church leaders, youth leaders etc. alongside the prayer email sent out monthly. I would also like to create a regular prayer breakfast once a term, but recognising that attendees of this are likely to be different from youth leaders. I'd also like to discern whether there is an appetite for a “youth leaders” gathering locally on a regular basis.

Over the rest of 2019 I will be planning to connect up with the other churches in the pilot area, and further afield into the district, whilst my role for the Diocese will naturally bring me into contact with other churches and leaders across the county. It would be good to utilise this to promote what we're doing through some of the Diocesan publications too.

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Work in Schools

Vision

Creating a generation of Christian young people empowered and supported to live a Kingdom-centred life which changes the culture of their school communities and shares the love and message of Jesus.

How?

By introducing Christian young people to others within their school, and inspiring them to believe that small numbers of people can bring about significant change when it is intentionally channelled together.

Christian youthworkers building a strong presence within schools through links with RE and Pastoral teams to be a known Christian role model for Christian and non-Christian young people.

Progress

Thomas Keble

Since September some volunteers from 5 Valleys Church have been running the Christian Union, re-branded as illuminate Lunch Club. I am very conscious that this is largely autonomous from the rest of illuminate, for instance there are several TK young people who come to Engine Room who are not part of the lunch club. I met with Claire Rossiter, head of Pastoral Support within the school to discuss illuminate, but without a clear picture of what else we might offer, the discussion was somewhat fruitless.

Maidenhill

Work has been progressing with PSALMS and Emily Twigg has made significant in-roads within the school including Christian Assemblies and a successful Prayer Spaces week, with invitation to repeat this in the future.

Archway

We continued to deliver Christian Assemblies every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday through the year using a team of youthworkers and local church leaders. These have always been well received by staff and students

I made great connections with the RE department and was given a group of year 11 students to "teach" weekly on the Christian elements of their GCSE curriculum. Staff and students appreciated this greatly and were keen to engage.

I met with the new Deputy Head, Julian Young, to discuss the vision for illuminate etc. and he is keen to support further mission weeks etc. in the future, however the Tom Elliott "illuminateLIVE" week did not happen due to timing issues for the school.

Transition

A subject which has recurred through the year is transition from Primary to Secondary school. We have a number of excellent activities and connections between churches primary schools locally and the climate & conversation is excellent, however there is little connectivity between this and anything within secondary schools.

Future Thinking

Thomas Keble

I will be meeting with Steve Woodcock and some of the lunch club team in early Autumn to ensure it is well connected. This has led me to consider the need to have a robust "partnership agreement" for those we are working in partnership with us in this way to ensure we are consistent with content, branding, communication, relationship with schools, etc.

There is also a need to connect with the RE department in the school, as experience elsewhere shows this is an essential relationship to build.

Maidenhill

Emily has been invited in to run Prayer Spaces again around Christmas and Easter, and I have offered to support her in this.

She clearly has a great relationship with the school and churches in Stonehouse, running sports clubs in the school and has launched a youth club with the churches. It seems pointless to try to do anything separate from this, so again I need to consider how the work of PSALMS and illuminate connect up well, without there being any conflict or competition.

Archway

At the end of the academic year Colin Belford, head of Archway, called me to say that the school was stopping all assemblies from 2019/20 due to other commitments and priorities. This is obviously a significant blow to us as our weekly assemblies have been an amazing opportunity to connect with young people in the school and share the Christian message.

Steve Saville, Head of RE, contacted me to discuss other ways in which we could continue to serve the spiritual needs of the school, and has invited me to play a part in the curriculum throughout the year groups, as well as within the PHSE

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department – there are considerations about how much of the PHSE work could fall into Community Youthwork at The Door and I will be discussing this with Leah. Steve is also interested in bringing Prayer Spaces into the school.

3 young people who attend Engine Room are keen to launch a Christian Union in the school from September, and have spoken to a teacher who is happy to endorse it (providing a room etc.). I will be meeting with them in late August, early September to discuss this and support them throughout the year.

I had the idea of doing a research piece within the school about faith & spirituality. I spoke to Kay Young about this being an EPQ project for a 6th form student, and have approached a student who is interested in doing this.

SCAPS

Off the back of illuminateLIVE (see below) Richard Pollard, Deputy Head at SCAPS has approached me about supporting the school staff in their delivery of RE curriculum and spiritual development of students which is an area they lack confidence in. I am meeting with them in September to discuss this.

Other Schools

Whilst the main focus has been on these schools, I am conscious that we have a number of young people engaged with illuminate who attend other schools. We need to consider whether there is scope for work within Stroud High and Marling Schools, and also schools further afield such as Rednock and KLB where there are churches willing to work with illuminate.

Transition

We are considering this at a Diocesan level and running a Training Conference around schools work in February for both primary and secondary ages.

Locally there is a need to connect up some of the excellent things that happen in schools as Year 6 progresses (eg Open The Book, Assemblies, Its Your Move) and ensure young people are sign-posted to illuminate. This can include opening Engine Room up at the end of the academic year (June/July) to those who are just about to transition.

illuminateLIVE

Vision

To Deliver quality Christian live events to invite young people to.

How?

Create 3 “mission weeks” in schools during the year which engage with the Arts and RE/PHSE, using professional artists to deliver quality activities in school, and an end of week “LIVE” event where the Gospel is proclaimed.

Progress

We trialled illuminateLIVE in May using local comedian/magician Tom Elliott. Due to lack of preparation time we were unable to get any of the 3 target schools involved, however we did have interest from SCAPS (pupil referral unit) and Tom ran a morning workshop with their students, which has led to further discussions (above) however as their students are based in from across the south of Gloucestershire there was little interest in the event at the end of the week.

Tom’s gig at the end of the week was excellent but only attended by a group of young people from Brimscombe church and some of their friends. The venue we used (Old Town Hall) was excellent and worth using again.

I have been in discussions with the Rise Theatre Company about the potential to run a drama mission week sometime in 2020 across the schools. Rise are considering how they shift their working to be more about legacy and working with local Christians to plan and deliver mission rather than just “dropping in” to somewhere which very much fits with the vision for illuminate.

Future Thinking

The learning from the May illuminateLIVE is that to do anything within a school takes much longer planning and negotiating so anything we do in the future will need to be in February at the earliest. I have already mentioned the concept in passing to some of my school contacts.

I am excited about the potential of working with Rise and having them engage with local Christian young people to develop their own mission activity in their own schools. The main challenge to this would be around funding the project, and Rise’s other commitments in 2020.

I have been put in contact with Nikki Seville who runs Cheltenham Christian Arts, and has just taken over the leadership of the Creative Arts LIFE priority group for the Diocese. They have a vision for creative arts and secondary schools so I will be connecting with her to share vision and hope to find ways of working together on this objective.

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