



PILOT ACTION PLAN

October Progress Report

The new academic year is upon us, and now just over a month in, there are some exciting developments, as well as a few challenges. I am particularly grateful for the honest and constructive feedback I've received from a number of people over the past couple of months as we look to progress the Pilot and move towards sustainable discipleship of young people as missionaries in their schools and communities.

Having reviewed and reflected at the end of the last academic year, this report includes some plans for the rest of the pilot shaped by these conversations and renewed vision

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

Where we were:

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.

What we've heard:

Engine Room has found itself falling between two stools -

there are young people connected to church in some way who are not being discipled due to a lack of provision within that context

there are other young people who are part of a small group locally who want something bigger that they can come to less frequently to worship, meet other Christians, move forward in faith and bring along their friends who are seeking

We've not been able to serve either of these in the current context

Running ER on a Sunday evening excludes quite a few people (homework, too late on a school night, other commitments)

Running ER monthly doesn't give the group enough continuity or build relationships enough

Content has not fully hit the mark for the group - worship is a bit awkward for a small number of people, discussion topics around the environment etc. would be welcome.

What we're going to do:

At the October Engine Room we are going to discuss all the above with the core group, with a proposal to move towards a House/Discipleship Group model:

Run ER fortnightly

Move to a small location (back to The Door)

Focus around food and relationship building

Discuss topics which relate to the world

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

Where we were:

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.

What we've heard:

The connectivity between youthworkers across the Diocese is mixed, with some good networks in Cheltenham and Gloucester but less further afield. There is a desire for more but not the time or inclination to organise

Around the Stroud District things are similar, but improving

There are quite a few churches who have a small number of young people they are connected with a little bit and leaders don't know the best ways to develop these.

There is a desire to engage with BIG things like Soul Survivor (and its successors) but a concern that for a lot of young people this would be too overwhelming

Church leaders, and therefore young people, don't really know what else is going on

What we're going to do:

There is a monthly Gloucestershire Youthworkers Prayer Meeting which rotates around the area, we are going to host the December one and invite all those people across the Stroud District to come along

We have produced an illuminate poster to be displayed in every church around the District to carry the brand through – coupled with speaking to churches wherever possible

We are working with young people to develop branded merchandise so that young people see the lightbulb around church, school, on friends bags etc.

The shift of Engine Room will give a clearer place for church leaders etc. to signpost young people without groups

With the Diocese we are looking at developing some county-wide events – Retreat Days, Camps, etc. which would provide next steps events more manageable than the big festivals

Continue to liaise with youthworkers, church leaders, etc. locally to ensure they are supported and served well.

*illuminate
Stroud*

To inspire, equip and empower Christian young people to be culture changers in their school communities through an active faith which draws others into relationship with Jesus



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.

Where we were:

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.

What we've heard:

Thomas Keble

The lunch club isn't well promoted or known about in school

Maidenhill

Prayer Spaces was really well received and the school wants more sessions

Archway

Christian Assemblies are finishing

Young people equate Christianity with BORING RE Lessons!

3 young people who attend Engine Room are keen to launch a Christian Union in the school to attract other Christian young people and those with questions

Other Schools

Wotton Baptist Church are interested in developing more work in KLB and have asked to partner with us.

Transition

Young people feel that talking about Christian Faith (or spirituality) at secondary school is less appropriate than in primary school.

What we're going to do:

illuminateARCHWAY (Christian Union) will be launching in Archway on October 16th

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Delivering a series of sessions in Archway which compliment the RE curriculum modules – bringing Christian Faith to life, off of the page and away from being seen as a “boring” academic subject.

Meeting with Karen from Wotton Baptist to discuss rolling out illuminate in KLB

Diocese-wide training event on 29th Feb focused on Schools Work with both primary and secondary schools work catered for, and a key theme of joining up our work

Continue to support PSALMS work in Maidenhill

Increase the profile of the lunch club in TK using the same marketing as the Archway one

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.

Where we were:

Trialled illuminateLIVE in May using local comedian/magician Tom Elliott.

Discussions with the Rise Theatre Company about the potential to run a drama mission week sometime in 2020 across the schools.

Connecting with the Creative Arts LIFE priority group for the Diocese. They have a vision for creative arts and secondary schools.

What we've heard:

Christian Young People are interested in bringing their friends to good quality Christian events

They would like things which engage people in worship and thought and not just entertainment

These should be more frequent than 3 times a year

Youth and church leaders are looking for things locally which have a good impact but are less overwhelming than the big festivals

What we're going to do:

Starting with a Christmas Party, run illuminateLIVE six times per year but on a smaller scale – making these the Youth Worship events for young people across the area to come to and bring their friends.

Giving the Engine Room group ownership and support to run and develop illuminateLIVE, using their gifts and skills and being mentored by the ER team

Ensure that local youthworkers and church leaders give these high priority and include them in their programmes for their own work.

Connect these into the wider County wide events described above

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