

Muswellbrook Parish Consultation 19th October 2019

This parish consultation took place in the Parish on the morning of Saturday October 19, being led by Bishop Sonia Roulston. About 30 people were in attendance.

The consultation highlighted a hard working parish, looking for a good team leader, someone who is faithful, willing to be engaged in the local communities which are part of the Parish, and who will continue to support and work with the two centre churches of Aberdeen and Castle Rock (Spring Creek).

The Parish of Muswellbrook is a key parish in the Upper Hunter region of the Diocese. as a Diocese we see a future for collaborative relationships between parishes in this region.

1. What is good about Muswellbrook Anglicans?

- Friendly
- Welcoming
- Accepting
- Hardworking
- Supportive of people struggling with, or new to faith
- Support for the sick – pastoral care

- Pride in the history of the parish – in its buildings and people
- Diversity within the parish –farmers to townsfolk
- Supporting country centres – especially in times of drought –very important ministry outreach

- Come to the Waters – pre-baptism preparation
- Baptism follow ups
- Weddings –sometimes

- Messy Church
- Sunday@6

- Social Saturday
- Bible studies –Castlerock, Lenten
- MU
- Anglican Women
- Wednesday Group – elderly worship plus morning tea (fellowship)
- Hospitality Group
- Ministry Centre/Op Shop/Parish Pantry
- Court ministry –outreach of MU

- Spring Fair – inviting the community in, monies raised fed back into the community
- Good community connections and outreach
- Aberdeen –Shrove Tuesday - ecumenical, Kirkin' of the Tartan – outreach to local area
- Minister involved in community services –Anzac, Police Remembrance Day, RSL Sub Branch, Kirkin' of the Tartan, Wave of Remembrance
- Christmas carols at Castlerock – good outreach, supported by MbK parishioners, Castlerock parishioners and draws in old families
- Combined carols with Catholic community

2. What would make us better?

- Increase in size of congregations
- Young families
- Young people in general
- Fellowship Group – would this bring teenagers back, teenagers see church as for the elderly
- Time – availability of people – one person (Rector) doing too much, compared with when we had 2 assistant lay ministers (pastoral and families) – a big workload – need some way to even the load
- More people to help do things – note aged congregation who are tired, need for younger people to assist
- Priest availability to the parish – a question of balance (wrt Diocesan and other ministries)
- Secure future for outlying centre at Castlerock – core congregation, hub of community, special place, great support amongst themselves
- Devise ways to get out in the community – increase engagement as a worshipping community
- Prayer groups and study groups are things we would like to grow - these are so important – foundational. Would like someone to encourage and grow these
- Public opportunities for morning and evening prayer
- Should we be using social media – using well

3. Hopes

- Growing church full of all ages
- To grow in faith – good bible study and discipleship
- People favouring church once more
- Keeping the rules, living by them – good foundations
- Improved funeral and baptismal follow up
- Castlerock and Aberdeen Centres still going
- Treating people with disabilities equally
- Being seen in the community - people knowing who we are and using this for good - living our lives so others see Christ in us
- Working in the community
- More concerts in the church building – community connections – finding and using more opportunities to open the church to the community again
- Coming out from the shadow of bad news – making church attractive
- Ministry Centre – to grow outreach possibilities
- More people doing things – spreading the load (lay leadership)
- Guild re - formed with other or younger members
- To have fun and fellowship together
- Links between Messy Church and traditional congregation – finding pathways to grow the links – eg: occasional Messy Mass – thinking creatively about how to achieve this

4. New Priest

- Connects well with people – mixes with and is seen as part of the community
- Loves people
- Approachable
- Has time to listen to parishioners if they come for advice – on any subject

- Delivers preaching that applies to our daily lives
- Loves the Word and wants to spread it
- Brings church more forward – not reverse
- Will maintain our traditional high church worship – (there are also opportunities for other styles to be embraced)
- Allows, encourages and supports lay people to exercise their gifts in ministry

- Will not be a “new broom” but will allow time to learn about parish ways and the people of the parish before changing things
- Appreciates the good work already underway – eg: Messy Church
- Happy to travel to outer areas

- Understands money/financial management
- Has practical experiences in the secular world – community, work – life experiences
- Is a good organiser of time
- Understands the ins and outs of facility maintenance in the parish – noting Heritage issues/Heritage listings