



SELLY PARK BAPTIST CHURCH
A CHURCH FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

Our vision for the future

Full document

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Our vision for the future

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. WHERE WE ARE – SPBC NOW	3
3. WHY THE CONSULTATION?	4
4. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS	4
5. THE OUTCOMES	5
A. FIVE THEMES (Leaders half day 9th May 2009)	6
B. SEVEN ACTIVITY AREAS (Leaders half day 23rd May)	6
6. THE STRATEGY - WHERE WE ARE GOING AND HOW WE’LL GET THERE?	8
1 Complete the old building renovation – But why first?	8
2 Community Involvement – 18 months to gain trust	8
3 Engaging Neighbours	10
4 Youth Work External	10
5 Youth Work Internal	10
6 Tots	10
7 Pastoral care	11
Timescale	11
First Phase	11
Second Phase	11
7. CONCLUSION	13
8. APPENDICES	14
Appendix 1 - Notes from the sessions from leaders away weekend	14
Appendix 2 – Consultation time table	15
Appendix 3 – Assumptions for all discussions on leaders half days.	16
Appendix 4 – Ground Rules for discussions at leaders half days.	16
Appendix 5 – Answers to the question “When we get there what will we have?”.	16
Appendix 6 – Leadership themes for SPBC from Leaders half day 9/5/09	17
Appendix 7 –Themes from the two consultation events	17
Appendix 8 – Activities to do (from the two consultation events)	18
Appendix 9 - Activity Type and Activities	18

Our vision for the future

1. Introduction

This is a living document and will be reviewed on a regular basis by SPBC in conjunction with the membership. At the end of three years there will be a comprehensive review of this document and its impact upon SPBC to check that it is still relevant to the church and in line with God's will.

This document is the culmination of a process that started back in October 2008, when SPBC started to re-examine its purpose and ask the questions "What is the shape of our mission at Selly Park? – This led to further questions; how do we fulfil the Great Commandment (Matt 22:37) and the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) in a way that engages with the community we are called to serve? How do we play our part(s) in helping to guide people to a real and loving relationship with God who alone has the power to radically transform lives?"

The question this document seeks to clarify is; with the people and gifts that God has given us at Selly Park Baptist Church how will we share the Good News of the Gospel with those in our community? It is clear that all around us people are living their lives without knowing Jesus, and so the challenge lies right before us.

To reach the point where we are able to present this strategy for SPBC we have asked many questions, searched, prayed, worshipped and above all tried to listen to both God and the congregation. This document contains both the record of that journey and the outcomes of that process.

2. Where we are – SPBC now

Selly Park Baptist is an evangelical Church that belongs to the Baptist Union and has a 132 year history! Currently there is a membership of around 40 people with average Sunday attendances of about 55 people. Within the fellowship there is a healthy mix of ages, backgrounds, and nationalities.

Currently there are about 12 people who worship with us for whom English isn't their first language. This diversity presents its own challenge but also contributes significantly to the richness of the fellowship. The style of the Sunday services is informal and relaxed (the music being led with guitar or piano) yet reverential as befitting the God whom we worship. Though the number of members and 'attenders' has stayed roughly the same over the past 10 years the personnel has changed enormously. Like many churches on the edge of a city we have a mobile congregation. Families move in and they move out and occasionally students worship with us during their time at university.

However one of the most significant aspects of the church is its link with God's mission world-wide. We are privileged at SPBC to have strong links with the Baptist Missionary Society's training college in Selly Oak called the International Mission Centre. Over the years we have had about 40 missionaries who've worshipped with us, built friendships with us and shared in the life of the church here. We have tried to support most of these folk in prayer and we have in some cases been able to support them financially. This is in addition to the 8 missionaries who went out from this church whom we still support prayerfully and financially. All of this gives us an amazing insight into what God is doing right across the globe and allows us to play an important part in this work. I believe that this is one of the most significant ministries of SPBC making us truly a global church.

However we are also a local church and one of the exciting developments of recent years is our contact with young families. Nearly 7 years ago now we stepped out in faith and started a toddler

Our vision for the future

group. We had no young families in the church at the time and those who ran the group (bar one) were all grandparents. For the first year we had about 3 mums and three toddlers who came along each week. The second year it grew to about 6 and this year (2009) we have been regularly getting 30 toddlers with mums/carers/ grandmas coming along. This has also been reflected in the Sunday school which now (with crèche) numbers around 20 children. The other regular contact that we have with members of the local community is through our hiring out of the premises to other groups. Regular users are; 'The West Midlands Autistic group' and the 'Midlands Amateur Radio Society'. We are attempting to build on the relationships that we have with these groups.

So there are many encouraging things happening in the church yet it seems often as though we aren't as focused as we might be. Though we've been involved in some large local evangelistic initiatives we have no specific evangelistic strategy at present. We've run Alpha courses, Emmaus groups, the Jesus Video project and the Mind the Gap initiative (to mention a few) but often with low participation. So we're now at the point where we're diligently asking the Lord "what are you calling us to be and do at this time in the story of Selly Park Baptist church?" This is both an exciting and scary point to be at!

3. Why the consultation?

The answer to that question falls into two parts:

- A There are a lot of really good things about SPBC that make this church a great place to be. Some have commented that we are;
- Welcoming,
 - Friendly
 - Diverse
 - Bible based
 - Honest and so on. (See Appendix 1 – Things you like about SPBC)
- B Although we acknowledge point A there has been a growing feeling amongst SPBC that we have been standing still, not really connecting with those in the community around us. SPBC is ready to look for a fresh new direction / vision. A new way for SPBC to be that salt and light.

It was this that led us to seriously explore God's will for SPBC and to carry out the consultation process within the church. The desire to see Christ's love and power at work in all our neighbour's lives' has helped SPBC to look to the future with a renewed direction.

4. The Consultation process

The consultation process really started when SPBC had a 24 hour day of prayer in January 2008. The themes that emerged were based around restoration (spiritually and physically), being united as a church and filled / refilled with the passion for Christ, and being better witnesses. From these first thoughts SPBC was stirred into thinking about how it could respond. Conversations and informal discussions began to take place about the future.

There was another 24 hour prayer day on the 14th and 15th June 2008. Again the theme of 'Our Commission ' was a clear reflection point where, as a church and individually, we were asked to pray through issues including witnessing and evangelism, the use of the old building, how to 'make

Our vision for the future

disciples' and so on. We were praying through issues and questions that would frame the vision of SPBC. We were beginning to ask 'how does God want us to do this'.

It is from these two prayer days, and the questions and directions that arose, that the leadership team felt it would be very useful to spend a weekend together praying, and talking through what had come to light so far. It was decided that we should not do this unguided and that it would be beneficial for the leadership team to have an outside voice, one with experience of helping churches work through the process of defining church vision. We invited Adrian Argile, a regional minister for HEBA (Heart of England Baptist Association). Adrian had helped other churches through this process before, not telling them what the vision should be, but how to best recognise what was being said to them by God directly and through the congregation.

The leadership team went to Ludlow on the weekend of the 10th October 2008 and spent the time considering the following points;

- A. Where we are currently as a church
- B. Where we are aiming to get to
- C. How do we plan to get there.

Adrian then helped the leadership team tease these questions out by further asking them to consider;

- D. 3 things you like about Selly Park
- E. 3 things you struggle with at Selly Park
- F. 3 things you would change about the church
- G. 3 things you would like to keep.

The outcomes of the questions Adrian asked can be seen in [Appendix 1](#)

Following on from the weekend away and a leaders half day in January the leadership team embarked upon the consultation process. Although this sounds very formal it was really just a way to listen to what God has been saying to people at SPBC about the future direction. This process consisted of the following steps high lighted in Appendix 2.

The following section outlines both the questions that were posed to the congregation and the leadership team and their outcomes as part of the consultation process. The questions were

1. What type of church do you want?
2. What should the church be doing?

. The important thing to remember is that through all the meetings and events it was at the forefront of everybody's minds to really seek after God's will in finding, and exploring the vision for SPBC. Prayer and consideration have underpinned the process from beginning to end.

5. The Outcomes

All the discussions that brought us to these outcomes within the three leadership half days (see Appendix 2) were based around four assumptions (see Appendix 3), four ground rules (see Appendix 4) and an overarching question that kept our focus throughout, "When we get there what will we have". (see Appendix 5).

Our vision for the future

A. FIVE THEMES (Leaders half day 9th May 2009)

The leadership started by making a list of themes for SPBC which can be seen (see Appendix 6).

The themes, and those that came from the 2 consultation days (see Appendix 7), were compared.

The themes from both the leaders half day and the two consultation events were distilled following discussions to arrive at the 5 themes below

- These themes are the foundation of SPBC's vision and direction.
 1. **Discipling** (Training/teaching people to follow Jesus)
 2. **Mission minded** (Reaching the unchurched/with the Gospel/social action)
 3. **Caring** (Servant hearted/churched and unchurched/social action)
 4. **Bible Believing** (teaching/preaching/studying)
 5. **Accepting & Welcoming** (family friendly/atmosphere/inclusive)

B. SEVEN ACTIVITY AREAS (Leaders half day 23rd May)

- The next outcome was to map out the matrix of activity types against the themes for SPBC. The following table shows how the activity types were matched against the five themes, allowing for a clearer picture of what shape the future ministry of SPBC should take.

Theme	Activity Areas						
	Complete Building	Community Involvement	Engaging Neighbours	Youth Work (External)	Youth Work (Internal)	Tots	Pastoral Care
Discipling					Y		Y
Mission Minded	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	
Caring		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bible Believing					Y		
Accepting and Welcoming		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

From the table it is clear that;

1. Caring, Accepting and Welcoming are themes that run through almost all activity areas and reflect the bedrock principles (Appendix 6)
2. The other clear theme that emerged was that of "Mission Minded" which linked with all but two of the activity areas. This was a good reflection of all the responses taken from both consultation events and the leadership discussions both at the away weekend and later on.

Our vision for the future

3. For each activity area, we listed more detailed activities (some we already do and some we could do). (See appendix 9). This list is not exhaustive and may grow as we move on in the next few years but it does give a flavour of the direction we are heading in.
4. The last important point from this half day was that the leadership were in agreement that the key to much of what SPBC would like to achieve is based on completing the renovation to the old building. This has been raised several times in the last few years but it was strongly felt that this would be the key that helps unlock the wider vision. This is not to say that without this SPBC could not reach those that God wants us to, but with it finished we would be able to serve the community in so many more ways. We have a large resource that God has placed within our midst and we should use it to our fullest potential.

6. THE STRATEGY - Where we are going and how we'll get there

It should be obvious by now that through this process there is a clear and repeated desire for SPBC to be reaching out to the wider community, not just to be inviting them into our environment, but to go out to the world and be the "Salt and Light" that we are called to be. This is our church direction and it is exciting. It also carries a responsibility that, having listened to God and sought His direction for SPBC, we now need to do what we have been called to do.

The question this whole process has been about is "What does this look like for SPBC"...how are we to be "salt and light"? The answer to this was crystallised in the leadership half day on the 20th June 2009. So what is the answer? How does all the above information get tied together? What is the strategy?

The themes and activity areas show on what areas we will be focussing, but it doesn't show the order in which these would fit together. Below is the strategy for SPBC over the next three years.

A. Complete the old building renovation

The question is "Why start the building now?" When we were considering how all the activity areas and themes fitted together a discussion developed that asked in what order we should be doing these things, and where renovating the new building would fit in. If we are going to be a bigger part of the community then we would need to utilise the space we have to its fullest, to share all that we have with the community and make it available for people to use.

This means making the church into a vibrant building, alive and being used throughout the year. This project would take approximately 18 months to 2 years to complete and will have large financial implications for us. We will need to step out in faith. Does this mean however that for 2 years all our energies would go into renovating the hall and other activities would be 'put on hold? No at the same time we will be getting to know our community. We will use this time to invest in those around us and really let them know us. So the building work is not first, but runs along side other strands of activity.

B. Community Involvement – 18 months to gain trust

This part of the strategy may in some ways be the hardest to accomplish as it will require trust that God has doors ready to open for us in the community. We may also need to work more closely with other churches and other groups supporting what they are doing. The first question that was decided was "What is our patch?". Where should we concentrate our efforts? We decided on the following roads as they were our 'neighbours', those closest to the church. In the diagram these roads are outlined in blue

- Pershore Rd – from Cartland Rd to Holly Avenue (Both sides)
- Selly Park Rd – from Pershore Rd to Woodside Rd
- Greenland Rd
- Woodside Rd to Warwards Lane
- Warwards Lane to Pershore Rd and Raddlebarn Rd
- Milner Rd

Our vision for the future

- St Stephens Rd
- Westminster Rd
- Ten Acre Rd (Not on map)
- Bewdley Rd (Not on map)
- Dorris Rd (Not on map)
- Dog Pool Lane (Not all of it) *
- Fashoda Rd *
- Manila Rd *
- Kitchener Rd *
- Cecil Rd *
- Hobson Rd *

* indicates possible overlap with Christchurch and where partnership working would be most beneficial.



Another initiative to be explored is to survey of the area (or look at results other recent surveys). We would also look at <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk> and extract information from here to build up a picture of our neighbours, the people we are closest to as a church.

The church could and should be a community hub and it is within the context of this “Community Involvement” activity area that Youth Work (External), Tots, and engaging our neighbours all fall.

It will take a fair while to see any fruit as developing genuine relationships with people doesn't happen instantly. However, real relationships provide the best context for sharing the love of Jesus.

Our vision for the future

C. . Engaging Neighbours

This part of the church strategy recognises that although we as SPBC are seeking to engage with those closest to the church there are many people who we meet in our lives outside of the church setting, people we work with, meet on social occasions, family members and so on. The question often arises; “how do we talk to these people about our faith in a way that will engage them?”. As with the “Community Involvement” (activity area) it’s true that all people we meet are at some point between knowing Jesus personally or not at all. It is here in the area of sharing our faith that we will focus some of our teaching and training in order to equip ourselves better to do this. If we truly want to see people coming to know Jesus we need to be prepared to spend time developing genuine and loving relationships.

D. Youth Work External

SPBC will seek to become more involved with the youth in our area, getting to know them and how we can support them through the challenges of growing up. There is a great opportunity for us here to become a real place of support and encouragement, to help make a difference to the future generation.

E. Youth Work Internal

This activity area will look at developing how we interact with the young people within the church. As we grow spiritually we hope to see a growth in our numbers and that may bring more families from outside SPBC as well as internal growth. If we loose the interest of the younger generation within the church we lose the younger generation completely. Our young people are part of the current and future church and we need to understand their needs and involve them in all aspects of church life. They are a part of the SPBC family and need to be encouraged and nurtured.

We long to develop the youth work on a Sunday for the 11+ range. We want to explore the possibility of after schools clubs, youth alpha and much more. The Junior Church team are already doing a large amount here but as we grow we will need more people involved in this work.

The Crèche is also an important part of this ministry. It gives the congregation at SPBC the chance to take part in a service without the younger children distracting those about them. However these youngsters (0-3) are a part of our family at SPBC and those Creche workers caring for and teaching them (parents and helpers) need our support. As the church grows the crèche grows and the need for more helpers grows and we recognise this as a vital part of church life. Jesus said “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” (Luke18:16)

F. Tots

This is already one of our significant ministries here at SPBC. As we become more involved with the community around us there is the real possibility that this work could grow even more and be a huge point of contact for those who would not normally go to a church building. We need to continue building this work.

Our vision for the future

G. Pastoral care

The emphasis of this activity area is to develop the internal pastoral support for the people who attend SPBC and to offer support to the wider community. We plan to develop a pastoral team and train them appropriately. Also we expect that house groups leaders will take on more responsibility for the discipleship and pastoral care of their members. We will look to encourage as many people as possible to join house groups. External support could include developing links to outside organisations to help with, for example, debt counselling.

Timescale

The diagram below shows that the vision for the next three years is split roughly into two phases.

First Phase

“Sowing” (“Preparation”). To take the analogy of farming, this is our sowing time, tilling the land and removing the stones....sowing the seeds meaning that we will be working on getting to know our community, neighbours etc. Deciding which, if any, wider services we wish to get involved with (debt counselling etc.) Completing the renovation of the old building. It also within this phase that we will actively look to strengthen links with other churches

It will be a time of spiritual growth, of praying together for a common set of goals (our vision), for a defined set of people (our community). It will be our preparation time. It will be hard work but we are ready for it.

Second Phase

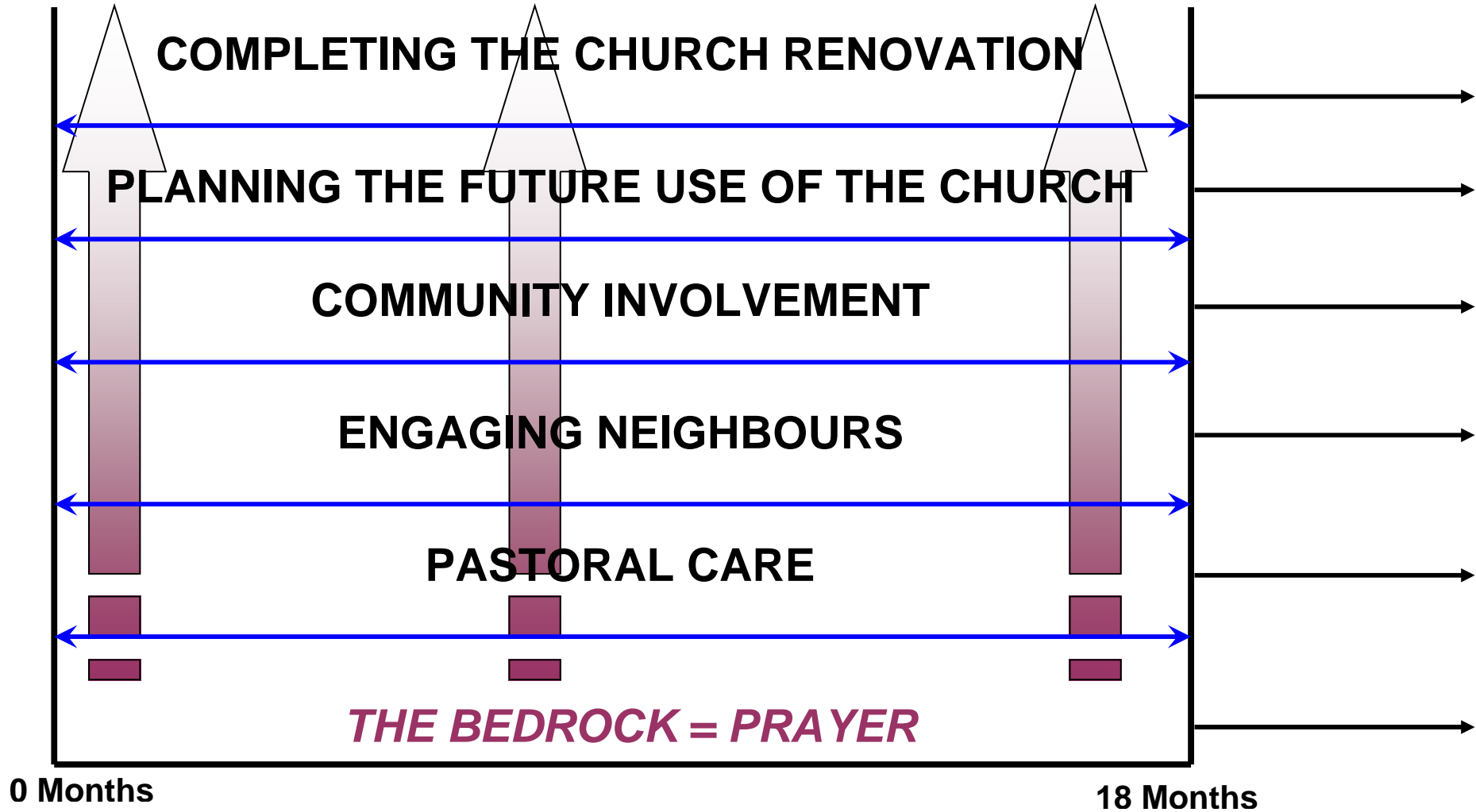
“Reaping” (“Activity”), We trust that as we engage in ‘outreach activity’ (which is not defined yet), we will then start to see our work pay off and the reaping process begin. When we see our community respond to us, knowing we are a safe place to find help and support, we will be doing what we should as a church. We will be active in our community and we will be a salt and light in this vicinity. We will indeed be bringing people a step closer to Jesus.

³⁷Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

This strategy needs to be firmly grounded in prayer, now and into the future. Without constantly listening to God, as a whole church, it is possible to become quickly sidetracked and not stay focused...Prayer is not the only thing we can do, it's the best thing we can do.

PREPARATION

ACTIVITY



7. Conclusion

SPBC sought for God's direction and guidance about our future. We believe that he answered and the themes that came through were consistent and clear throughout the whole process. SPBC should be a church, not just "For the Whole Community" but *in* the whole community, a place where anyone can come and feel at home and most importantly a place where people can come and find Jesus. SPBC will need to spend time sowing and waiting as well as reaping. As we invest in and develop relationships with people and the community we will get to know the needs of those around us and be better prepared to come along side them. This is true both inside and outside the church. As we follow through on all that we believe God is saying to us in these days our prayer is that through the witness of Selly Park Baptist Church people in our community will come into a living relationship with Jesus Christ.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Notes from the sessions from leaders away weekend

<p>Changes you would like to make</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined direction • Complete Building Project • Open up for community • Publicity i.e. radio • Strategic planning • Communication • Delegation • Disciple/Mentor/Develop • Initiative <p>Things to keep at SPBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family feel • Fellowship Lunch • Gospel Focus • Flexibility • Inclusive <p>Purpose of SPBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage, develop, grow • Mission / Evangelism • Worship • Evidence • Salt and Light • God's Kingdom <p>Struggles at SPBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Football Field – core / too many watching • Expectation of the players • Time talking – little happens • Lack direction • Health and Safety • Predictable (and dull!) • Perception from outsiders • Not responding 	<p>Things you like about SPBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming • Informal • Big family • Diversity – cultures & nations • Sending out – missions • Location - accessible • Buildings • Accepting • Gifted • Range – professionally <p>Where do we want to be at SPBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community hub – meeting of people • Partnership • Charismatic • Joyful • Discipling • Confident • Missionary – outward • Gospel centred • Christ like • Growing • Social action • Visible • Pro-active • Prayerful • Caring
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** Results from a brain storming session at the leaders away weekend

Our vision for the future

Appendix 2 – Consultation time table

	Event	Date
1	The consultation process was launched in the service	1/3/09
2	Themed morning services to help us consider the implications of our mission.	8/3/09 – 22/3/09
3	Leaders meeting to plan the consultation events and discuss related questions.	3/3/09
4	Members meeting where the consultation process was raised and discussed, including the plans for the consultation events.	10/3/09
5	House groups discussed the consultation events and their thoughts on vision, direction etc.	1/4/09
6	Leaders meeting to plan the consultation events and discuss related questions.	7/4/09
7	First consultation event	22/4/09
8	Second consultation event	26/4/09
9	1 st Leaders half Day for consultation	9/5/09
10	2 nd Leaders Half Day for consultation	23/5/09
11	3 rd Leaders Half day for consultation	20/6/09

Our vision for the future

Appendix 3 – Assumptions for all discussions on leaders half days.

These are valid and hold equal weight at any time.

1. All actions decided upon should bring people closer to God.
2. Everything we decide should help the “Great Commission” (Matt 28:16-20)
3. Everything should be tested against “The Greatest Commandment” (Matt 22:37)
4. That we are here today through God’s grace and in His will.

Appendix 4 – Ground Rules for discussions at leaders half days.

1. Everyone’s view is valid and should be listened to with respect
2. When someone else is speaking don’t interrupt
3. Remember why we are here....God has a purpose for SPBC
4. Trust, Openness and Honesty are key.

Appendix 5 – Answers to the question “When we get there what will we have?”.

1. Activities that will facilitate every member ministry (that all in the church have their parts to play)
2. Short, medium and long term goals
3. Strategies for obtaining those goals
4. “ A statement that encapsulates God’s will for SPBC and that people will identify as such”
5. A list of which leaders are responsible for actioning specific parts of the new strategy
6. The church should “own” the new strategy
7. There should be a workable document for all to read, understand and be able to understand the direction for SPBC (other than the bible!)
8. The goals should be achievable
9. The strategy should ‘empower’ SPBC to reach the lost and bring them into relationship with God.

Our vision for the future

Appendix 6 – Leadership themes for SPBC from Leaders half day 9/5/09

Leadership themes for SPBC

- Individual Growth	I
- Church growth	I
- Every member ministry	B
- Discipleship	I
- Reaching the Unchurched (evangelism)	E
- Dynamic small groups	I
- Prayer	B
- Worship	B
- Servanthood	B
- Direction	B
- Community	B
- Kingdom of God	B
- Social action	E
- Passion and enthusiasm	B
- Honesty, openness and trust	B
- Money	B
- Spiritual warfare (awareness & training)	I

-

Total:

I=5

B=10

E=2

I=Internal focus

B= Bedrock principle (underpins everything)

E=External focus

Appendix 7 – Themes from the two consultation events

Discipling,	I
- training for succession	
- individual growth	
Mission-minded	E
- Evangelistic	
- Community centred	
- Church growth	
- Reaching the unchurched	
Caring Inside Outside	B
- Neighbours	
- Helpful	
- Social action	
Bible believing	I
- teaching & preaching	

Our vision for the future

Servantheart	B
- fervent serving	
- loving	
Accepting/welcoming	B
- family friendly	
- friendly	
Spirit filled & charismatic	I
Spiritual warfare	

Total:

I=2

E=1

B=3

Appendix 8 – Activities to do (from the two consultation events)

Activity	Number of votes
Youth work	7
Tots	8 (Youth total 15)
Community Involvement	15
- knowing	
- partnering	
- engaging	
- social action	
Engaging own neighbours	9
- friendship evangelism	
Complete building	7
Pastoral care	7
- assessing needs	
- healing	
Small groups	

Appendix 9 - Activity Type and Activities

Activity Type and Activities
<i>Youth Work Ext</i>
Games Mornings
Puppet Mornings
Outings
Youth Group
Scouts/BB/GB etc
3-5 Years activities/group
Sports – Football club etc
After School Club
Holiday Club

Our vision for the future

Youth Work Int
Development of Sunday School Club 11+
Services lead by youth
Sunday School
Games Mornings
Puppets
Outings
After School Club
Youth Alpha
Tots
Selly Tots
Engaging Families
Dads Only
Parents Night Out
Family Days Out
Baby Sitting Service
Community Inv
Define our community
Find out about Area
Define area needs
Consult other churches
Support other churches
Engaging Neighbours
Get to know neighbours / interests etc.
Less activities /more time to meet neighbours.
Neighbourhood Network Praying Scheme
Neighbourhood Watch
Praying with neighbours
Complete Building
Agreed to renovate the old church building
Define purpose of building – Church worship area.
Resources; Cost and Funding – grants \BU\ Members
Appoint responsible person to oversee dev project
Pastoral Care
Develop Pastoral Team
Training for above
Develop outside contacts for specialist areas – eg debt counselling
Small Groups – develop more pastoral care for members