

ALDRIDGE PARISH CHURCH AGM SUPPORTING MARRIAGES

1. INTRODUCTION

- a. Last year Richard asked us to commence a ministry for supporting marriages in the Parish
- b. Investigation concluded that the training being provided by Holy Trinity Brompton was ideal for our church and we went there to be trained in the autumn for two courses, one to prepare couples for Marriage and the other to help improve existing marriages.

2. THE MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSE

- a. The marriage preparation course uses a DVD which is played after a meal. Support couples from the church sit with the engaged couples for the meal and during the DVD, leaving individual couples to discuss alone during several breaks in the evening.
- b. Before the course starts, the engaged couples are invited as individuals to complete a web based questionnaire, the analysis of which becomes available later for the support couples. The Support couples then invite the engaged couples to their homes after the course is completed for a one to one chat about those results. This has resulted in really good relationships being developed, which is hoped will allow future mentoring.
- c. Clearly, given the above it was necessary for the support couples to be trained and this was started in November 2009, when 9 couples from this church completed the 8 week Marriage course.
- d. The 5 week Marriage Preparation course started in February and was completed before Easter. 13 couples took part. Some couples could not make evening meetings and a second 2 day Saturday course in June is being offered for this years forthcoming marriages.
- e. It is intended that a new course for the marriages of 2011 will commence in November, and that the Marriage Preparation course be run in the autumn each year thereafter.
- f. Experience in HTB has been that the quality of the course has not only attracted over a wide area but also that a proportion go on to do Alpha afterwards.
- g. It is disappointing that it looks like the training will only be accepted by 60% of those getting married this year. It is hoped that a higher percentage will be achieved in November through: 1) the good experience being communicated by those this spring, and: 2) it being further from the pressure leading up to their summer 2011 marriages
- h. As with Alpha the course involves a considerable effort from a wide range of members of the congregation. Thanks are due to all those who helped but especially Colin and Frances Tyne, for Colin administered the course and Frances led the catering team.
- i. Its appropriate to also thank Ann Harrison who continues to undertake the administrative work for the marriages themselves

3. THE MARRIAGE COURSE

- a. The 8 support couples for marriage preparation have undertaken this course and found it most helpful even for those whose marriage is in a good place
- b. Because of the emphasis on Marriage Preparation in 2010 the first course for all comers will be in the spring of 2011. It is intended to make this available across the parish and also to advertise it in clinics, community centre etc.. HTB experience suggests that there is demand in the community at large for courses such as this.