



CHURCH NOTICE BOARDS

The church notice board is often the first point of contact that visitors or passers-by will have with a church. The impact it has may be far greater than you think and it is therefore essential that you take advantage of what, in modern times, may be one of the 'prime advertising sites' available to your church.

The notice board is important at the best of times. However, if the church has to be kept locked the board gives the opportunity to provide information on the church and its activities and, thus, the Christian message: it will be doing this twenty-four hours, seven days a week. It is worthwhile, then, spending some time on the serious consideration of the design so that you can ensure that the board will give the message it is intended to impart.

The following notes may be of help when considering this:

- ❖ The board and the lettering on it should be sympathetic to its surroundings, particularly in terms of colour and materials but the most important aspect of this is readability. A notice board is not a poster but is there to convey information with clarity and the contrast between the background colour and the lettering upon it is vital.
- ❖ The passer-by must be able to understand the message it is conveying, and the size of the lettering is important. Many people are not now familiar with 'churchy' language. For example, 'Morning Service' may be more easy to understand than 'Mattins', 'Solemnisation of matrimony' less clear than 'Marriages'.
- ❖ The character of the board should aim to express the character of the church and its worship. Strict formality on the board may suggest to the passer-by formality in worship.
- ❖ Logos and symbols can be helpful and may add to the decorative quality but the meaning must be clearly understood. A shell may be more readily associated with a brand of petrol rather than St James or a pilgrimage. A reproduction of the diocesan coat of arms is available from Diocesan Church House at a nominal charge and is designed specifically for putting onto notice boards.
- ❖ Avoid information that will date. Personnel may change and names need altering but offices are permanent. The use of the words 'Parish Priest' or 'Vicar', instead of the incumbent's name is often sufficient. If a name is considered essential, a Christian name may be more appropriate than including a long list of qualifications.
- ❖ The activities of a church are as important as are the times of the services, but do not confuse regular activities with those of a temporary nature such as a jumble sale. Information about these should be kept separate.

- ❖ Do not forget the effects of exposure to all weathers and to vandals. Careful choice of materials is important. Peeling paint, fading colours and fluttering paper notices always give an impression of neglect.
- ❖ Choose lettering for its legibility rather than for its decorative effect or its association with some 'religious' or historical concept. Arrange the lettering with some suggestion of relative importance and do not forget that the board will probably be prominent in its setting and should be of artistic value to the scene.
- ❖ Consult your inspecting architect about the design of the notice board and do not be afraid to call upon the skills of professional designers. An original design produced specifically for your church is more likely to have an impact and qualities you desire and can express to the world outside a great deal of the atmosphere and character of your church and its membership.
- ❖ Do not forget to inform the public where further information can be found and how access to the church can be obtained.
- ❖ Remember that a notice can offer welcome as well as information. There is no harm of making the point on the board.
- ❖ A cheap job will always look cheap and rarely pays in the long run. Make sure that the board is worthy of your church.

Some local authorities will want to be consulted on the matter of planning permission for notice boards as they are classified as advertisements and to which other regulations refer. The exemption only applies to the inside of churches and you should consult the district council's planning department to ascertain if it would wish to comment on the designs.

Do not be afraid to ask the DAC for informal advice. This may save time and money in the long run and will enable members to give their initial thoughts before you have gone too far down the road in providing a specification.