

Do we have to report back to synod?

Only by sharing with your facilitators a brief outline of your intentions as identified by the process, your **now/ sooner/ later** categorisation of **next steps** and the **resources** you might need to proceed; (as synod may be able to assist with the resources).

How long does *Inviting Forward* take?

The parts of the process involving the facilitators should be completed within 6 – 9 months of the first meeting. On the other hand the process never really ends as churches are encouraged to hold an event after a year to celebrate progress made and to look to the future – what are the church's intentions and now / sooner / later next steps one year on from the start?

How was *Inviting Forward* developed?

Inviting Forward is the result of a development process which involved a number of churches across the synod. All churches involved were enthusiastic about the process, have found that relationships have been strengthened by the conversations and that people are keen about moving forward with the intentions they have identified.

Who do we contact to find out more or to get involved?

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Drawings provided by Siggy Parratt-Halbert
www.stinkingweasel.co.uk

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Yorkshire Synod

'Inviting Forward': A guide for churches

Considering what's next for your church?

Wondering where God could be leading?

Then '*Inviting Forward*' may be for you!



Inviting Forward is Yorkshire Synod's way of reviewing the life and mission of our churches, so called because churches are *invited* to enter into creative conversations about their ongoing mission, and about the way their church should move *forward*.

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How is it different from other review processes?

Firstly, it's not imposed by synod. Any church wanting to take part invites the synod to help them. Secondly, it starts from where a church is now and what it does well. The heart of the process is conversation with all those linked to the church. It allows everyone's voice to be heard and all ideas, however off-beat at first glance, to be considered.



Does *Inviting Forward* ignore the problems we have?

No. All congregations and churches have different challenges and problems. *Inviting Forward* looks at them from a different viewpoint, encouraging hope and creativity.

What's involved?

Once your church has decided to get involved, two trained facilitators will be identified to work with you.

The facilitators will first meet with the elders/church leaders to brief them on the process, identify potential members of a project group from the church and set dates for both an Introductory Sunday service and a Church Day (see opposite).

After this initial meeting, the facilitators will work with the project group of 3 – 6 members (depending on the size of the church) to agree some questions to help people pinpoint what is important to them about the church.

The participants should cover all parts of your church's life, including any youth and children's organisations, church organisations meeting on your premises and beyond and non-church organisations which use your premises.

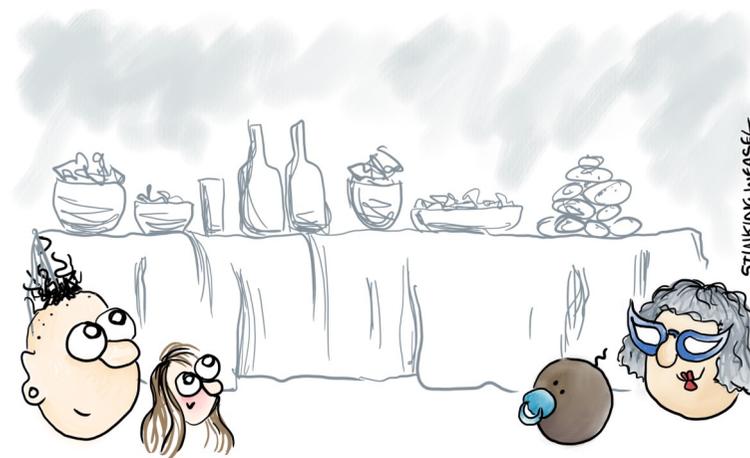
Once the project group members have completed the conversations, they will meet with the facilitators to identify the themes which emerge and to plan the Church day.

As elders we're already overstretched. How do we find time for *Inviting Forward*?

It's preferable for the project group to be representative of the whole church, not composed only of elders. What about including someone relatively new to the church or someone involved with children and young people or with a church organisation?

What does the Church Day involve?

The Church day is for anyone involved with your church in any way. During the day, the facilitators and project group will present the themes emerging from the earlier conversations. Everyone present will then help to identify the strengths of the church, the opportunities open to you, what you hope to achieve and the resources you may need to do so. You will also identify which of your intentions you can work on straight away, which you will be able to do in a while and those you will put on one side for later (Now/Sooner/Later).



An important part of the day is sharing fellowship over a meal.