Expert advice on website and social media opportunities was shared during a day of listening and learning at St George’s, Leeds. Organised by the national church’s digital communications team, this was the launch event for a Digital Labs Learning Roadshow, which will now tour other venues around the country.

More than 150 people attended, including church delegates from as far afield as Birmingham, St Albans and Newcastle. Bishop Nick Baines began the day with a keynote speech on the importance of engaging with the secular world through social media, before the CofE’s Head of Digital, Adrian Harris, explained the many merits of A Church Near You’s new free website service.

The day featured workshops and a marketplace of stalls offering advice, including our new community engagement charity, Wellsprings Together and also the diocese’s branch of the Mothers’ Union. Director of Lay Training, Hayley Matthews, spoke during the afternoon session, which ended with questions to a panel that included Philip Lickley, comms and marketing officer for Bradford Cathedral, Paul Magnall from All Hallows, Leeds and Peter Henry of Christ Church, Sowerby Bridge.

Janet Hall, PCC treasurer and comms officer for the Stanwick Group of Churches in the far north east of the diocese, added: “This has been very good and really highlighted some new areas to look at.”

Concerns over a “no-deal Brexit” have prompted a group of 25 Church of England bishops, including Bishop of Leeds Nick Baines, to issue an open letter on the need for national reconciliation.

Bishop Nick helped draw up the statement which highlighted concern about the cost of a no deal Brexit to those least resilient to economic shocks.

“Our main social and political priority must be to leave well, paying particular attention to the impact of political decisions on those most vulnerable,” write the bishops.
Lake baptisms watched by a joyful crowd in stunning Wensleydale

RIPON The first full immersion baptisms in living memory at lake in Upper Wensleydale have taken place watched by a joyful crowd of Christians.

Bathers, sailors, paddle-boarders, bikers and picnickers at stunning Semerwater also watched the wonderful event in bright Bank Holiday sunshine - accompanied by Hawes Silver Band at full throttle.

Revd Dave Clark of the Upper Wensleydale Benefice said it had been a privilege to be involved:

“I am so grateful to the Lord for bringing it all about. Since I first looked out over the wonderful lake, it has been a hope that I might conduct a baptism there.

“We pray that this might be just the start and that we may see many others decide to do the same.”

Building our home together

Bishop Nick Baines

Readers of this leaflet will have very different views on the questions and challenges currently facing the UK. As I am constantly reminded in social media, Christians will have different views on political priorities and actions. That is how it always is, on any matter.

What should be distinctively Christian about it is how we handle it in relationship with one another.

However and whenever the country leaves the European Union, we will still be faced with serious challenges to what it now means to be British together. And, with the different political convictions we might bring to these, we must also pay attention to how we love one another as Christ has loved us.

This demands much. As I attempt to outline in a new book for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany (Freedom is Coming, SPCK), Isaiah’s promises of a return to ‘home’ from exile turned out to be more complicated than at first assumed.

The exiled ‘ex-pats’, with their romanticised memories of

‘home’ might not necessarily be welcomed back by those who had remained in the land. So, the homecoming would be superficially joyful, only then to demand the really hard work of integration and building a new future together.

Not one group integrating with another whose experience and memory are different, but together forming a new common future. This means sacrifice, paying attention to the experience and perspectives of others, listening to the language of loss and hope.

I think this will be our experience in the UK, too. And we can choose whether or not we engage in it or remain in our silo.

For Christians there is only one answer.

+Nick
Bishop of Leeds
Bradford Council back new church in former nightclub

**BRADFORD** Plans to create Fountains Church, a new worship space in a former Bradford city centre nightclub, have been approved. The building - next to the Alhambra and the Bradford Cenotaph, was the home of once popular evening venues and is within the City Centre Conservation Area.

A planning application was submitted to Bradford Council to change the use of the building to a 2,930 square metre place of worship with ancillary uses.

Revd Linda Maslen, Minister at Fountains Church said: “It’s great that we’ve sorted out another piece of this fantastic jigsaw.

“Many thanks to everyone who is working so hard on this exciting project. We look forward to finalising the legal aspects associated with this as soon as possible.”

Cathedral cafe goes green

**WAKEFIELD** Wakefield Cathedral has teamed up with The Real Junk Food Project to use food destined for waste in the Cathedral Kitchen and help alleviate food poverty.

The Cathedral Kitchen now receives deliveries from the Kindness Warehouse – Wakefield’s first social supermarket and the headquarters of TRJFP - which opened its doors to the public last month.

“Everything is made from scratch and it’s great because we’re now using food that would have gone in an incinerator otherwise,” said catering manager Ea Nielsen.

Celebration for 200 years of faith

**HUDDERSFIELD** A weekend-long celebration to toast 200 years of faithful worship at Holy Trinity, Huddersfield, took place last month. Clergy and laity of churches across Huddersfield took part in a special Evensong.

Revd Mike Wilkins and churchwarden Andy Barber hosted the ecumenical event.

“Evensong has not been sung at Holy Trinity for over 30 years, but was once a key element of our church’s musical worship and Holy Trinity was once renowned for its choral singing,” Andy said. “We wished to recognise our musical heritage and recreated something of it to mark our birthday.”

The church also offered guided tours of its crypt and tower, plus lots of fun activities for children and families.

**LEEDS** Prayer, safety and support was provided to those in need, by church volunteers, at this year’s Leeds Festival.

Held at Bramham Park, Leeds Festival is one of the UK’s major music festivals, this year attracting around 80,000 people over the August Bank Holiday weekend to see headline artists such as Foo Fighters, Post Malone and Royal Blood.

170 volunteers, many from churches across our diocese, attended the four day event as Festival Angels.
A pair of new choirs at Minster will help boost church growth

Choral singing is booming at Halifax Minster and to celebrate it is launching two new choirs for children and adults.

The vicar of Halifax Minster, the Revd Canon Hilary Barber is now able to hand over his additional role of Director of Music, after three great years during which the minster choir has gone from strength to strength.

“This is all about church growth – numbers of people worshipping in the Minster are climbing due to the high standard of music from the Minster Choir and Chamber Choir, the weekly organ recitals, and the ever growing concert program of music from many different genres,” Revd Hilary said.

“We are about to launch two new choirs. The first is for five to eight-year-olds on Tuesdays 4.30pm to 5.30pm as a feeder group for the Minster choir. We are also starting a Minster Voluntary Choir for adults who want to sing during the holidays when the Minster Choir is away.

“That will be open to anyone who wants to come and join in,” said Revd Hilary, pictured with the choir on tour at Coventry Cathedral. The junior choir will launch after the October school half term, and the adult choir after Christmas.

Graham Gribbin, the new Director of Music, said;

“The Minster is a very busy place with music at its heart.

“In the next few weeks I aim to strengthen the music department team so we can continue to deliver the current high standards and to form the two new choirs.”

 Builders are in at St Luke’s Holbeck

Builders are in and work is well underway to create a new community hub at St Luke’s Holbeck.

The team of experts have removed partitions, ceilings and floors. Protection has been provided to all areas necessary, including the churchyard trees as specified by an arboriculturist, following a complete photographic survey of the site just before works started. The chancel timber screen has been carefully dismantled and stored to the other end of the church waiting to be set up at the original location.

“Please pray for us in the coming months as we seek as a church to be Good News on our South Leeds estate,” said St Luke’s vicar Revd Alistair Kaye.