**Notes to presentation SMITF and Heart Edge**

**Cover slide**

My name Allyson Hargreaves

A very brief introduction to commerce at St Martin’s and how heart edge might be able to support your commercial ideas through sharing experience.

Exec Dire been at SMITF for 31 years – lived this experience

**St Martin slide**

**Who was Martin?**

Born c316 in Pannonia (today part of Hungary), in the Roman army.  Posted in Amiens, France.  On a bitterly cold night whilst guarding a city gate came across a near naked beggar.  Cut his red Roman cloak in half and gave half to the man

Later in the night Martin had a dream and Christ appeared to him thanking him for what he had done.  Martin felt compelled to leave the army and join the ministry.  He lived in a monastery helping the sick and poor excluded from society.  Later became Bishop of Tours, in France.

His act of sharing underpins St Martin’s ethos of sharing, caring for the poor, vulnerable and excluded from society.

Our brand reflects the torn cloak and reminds us of Martin’s act of kindness.

**Commerce and St Martins**

There has been commerce on the St Martin’s site for many years but the formation of the trading subsidiary St Martin-in-the-Fields Ltd stems the past 31 years and that period is the focus for today.

Why is there a trading subsidiary?

All built on work of Geoffrey Brown

**Canon GB slide**

**Canon Geoffrey Brown**

GB arrived in 1985 and found church on the verge of bankruptcy. He made some bold decisions supported by the CW and PCC of the time.

Raise money for the work of St Martins and the upkeep of the building

Create employment

Engage St Martin’s in the world of work

Created a craft market in the courtyard

And in the crypt a religious bookshop and a Café with waiter service area set aside for evening diners.

We opened for business on 1 December 1987.

Not popular but everything that has happened since them was down to GB’s vision.

**Early structure**

No clear understanding of how to operate a commercial business. Head verger made GM

Craft market – no traders mid-week as they made their wares at home

The stalls that had been designed a great expense were no good for market traders with poor lighting and too high a structure

Café customers were not interested in religious books

30 covers set aside each evening with pristine white cloths while café customers wandered round trying to find a seat

Lots of interference in daily operations but no idea of who our customers were

Very time consuming

Many of congregation were against the development of the business – could not marry making profit whilst wanting to support homeless people.

Profit was a dirty word.

With no business expertise on board the operations haemorrhaged money.

**6 months later**

Commercial Manager brought in when GM left

Swapped craft market for a tourist option

Sent 95% of the books back and introduced items that the Café customers were looking for – cards, stationery, London souvenirs

Turned a corner and started to produce a profit.

Still a very vocal congregation but the Vicar was not in the firing line – as much!

Board structure remains the same today with Vicar and one CW and all other external directors recruited for their expertise

Digital, marketing, finance, catering, retail, etc

**Retail**

Religious bookshop move to gift shop

**Café in the Crypt**

Shows old shop alongside a cramped Café

New space more light and space

**Courtyard**

Can see architect designed market stalls that market traders hated. Craft market gave way to tourist market

Today we have the Cafe in the Courtyard – we are still learning!

**30 years of change**

Not surprising – few places were doing this. We have learnt along the way.

Early development based on what PCC thought would work.

Our congregation form a tiny proportion of our customer base – Sunday is our quietest trading day – so we need to understand who is in the area through the week.

Need to understand who is the customer?

What do they want?

Market research, feedback from our teams

Need to constantly review

Be prepared to adapt and change the offer.

We went through this process again during the Renewal of St Martin in 2007.

**Heart Edge and St Martin’s**

Membership is a two way process – I am really keen to stress this.

We share ideas and talk through issues and we all bring something to the conversation.

Conversations are the key to moving all of this forward.

Happy to share experience – can be quite lonely and overwhelming some can feel they are facing challenges and issues on their own – especially if it is the priest or a volunteer.

Practical – over the years we have developed our contracts, policies – for the most part these can be adapted to suit other locations. Don’t spend hours starting from scratch just ask if we have something you are working on. At the least it provides a starting point.

Today I run a £5m operation. But 31 years ago it was all new and we were all finding our way. The Café took £400 on its first day.

It’s all about scale of operation and everything starts from a small idea