

General

1. In the past Boards were made of either edge glued panels of wood or ply which were prepared with a ground and lettering etc. applied by a Signwriter. This was a very skilled and much admired craft that was relatively cheap to produce.
2. As with many things, with the increasing expense and also rarity of good quality materials and labour, the price of well made hand painted notice boards has become prohibitive in the budget of many of our churches.
3. The PCC may now use composite boards and laser cut vinyl lettering to manufacture notice boards for churches. Experience has shown that such boards used in hostile areas with south facing boards, can be extremely durable.

Design

4. With the advent of computer typefaces there is often a temptation to use as many different styles as you can which usually end up looking muddled. The golden rule is to keep to one or two styles only, and not to choose too ornate a style. Blackhand lettering might work in an old pub but given that it died out because it was difficult to read, might be a good reason not to use it on a notice board. Boards need to be read in variable light by people with variable vision. Besides, what is it saying about the church and the future! There are some very clean modern style typefaces, in both Serif and Sans-Serif, and it would pay PCCs to look at some of these faces where they are already in use.
5. Studies have shown that a serif* typeface, such as Times Roman, carrying the same information as a sans-serif typeface, such as Univers or Helvetica (which is somewhat similar to those used on Motorway type boards), are perceived to be more important. However, a san-serif face will not loose the serifs and angels (sic). Look at some beautifully san-serif cut lettering on a commemorative slate block at the entrance to Falmouth Maritime Museum next time you are there. They have a modern balance which is both graceful and clear and well worth using.

Size of Interface

6. Keep typefaces large enough to read from a reasonable distance, depending on location, and yet small enough not to dominate the board. Leave visual spaces, or visual pauses as they are called, around lines of text. It is far better to design a notice board around the text you want to display than to try to fit text into a board area which is the wrong size, so decide on your size and style of text first. Most signline studios have computer programs that will give you precise visuals of the text layout for a particular size board.

Shape of Boards

7. Notice boards should have just the right amount of permanent information as needed, such as church name and logo, (services and times), and the title of the Priest in Charge etc., with a contact telephone number. Some police forces do not recommend putting addresses on public boards. If the name of the Priest is left off the board it will not need to be altered if they leave the Parish. Service details can be included or printed weekly and inserted into a pocket on the board.

Materials

8. Composite boards come in various thickness, overall sizes and finishes. They may be white or coloured and may also be tinted. They do flex so if it is in an exposed location use a heavier weight or use a backing ply board. Remember that they are more easy to vandalise without a backing.
9. Vinyl peel back self-adhesive lettering also comes in a good range of colours. A roll of say 1 metre width by 5 metres of the selected colour is fed onto a drum or flatbed and is then cut by either a laser or fine knife controlled by a computer. The letters are cut so that they stay on the backing sheet whilst the surrounding vinyl is peeled away leaving just the required text.
10. It is a good idea to get a household paint swatch, with say some BS4800 colours, and select some of the colours you would like and compare them with what is available from the vinyl lettering range. Many shops use either a Coates or Pantone colour system which is standard in the printing industry and which can help if you have a 'House Colour' for your church.
11. If you are laying lettering down yourself, get some good quality Daler type board and cut it into accurate parallel strips of the width that you require between the lines of text, sometimes known as the leading. Laser cut lettering comes as words or sentences with a carrier strip, which means it is already proportionally spaced ready to be rubbed down.
12. It is far easier to use masking tape to hold both your blocks of text and spacing guide on the board until you have positioned it satisfactorily. Be cautious as the adhesive is extremely good and you will ruin the letters if you allow them to stick together!
13. If needed, vinyl lettering can be removed either with a domestic hair dryer played over it until the backing is moist and it lifts, or gently edge-lifted by a person with good nails, cigarette lighter fluid will help it dissolve and will clean the area!
14. Try and avoid some blues and greens if the board is going to be sited in the full glare of a Cornish summer sun as they are vulnerable to UV light, which causes rapid fading, also, blacks tend to sink and is funereal for use on a notice board!
15. The background finish can be either neutral, if the print is dominant, or strong if you want the print to look reversed. For example, cream print on a mid green background can look very effective, or, as the National Trust have done at Glendurgan, a white print on a burgundy background, which looks very clean, is easy to read and looks attractive, which at the end of the day is the object of the exercise. A lustre finish is good as it is discreet and will not hold grime too quickly

and is smooth enough to wash clean.

16. If wood trim is used as an edging it is often better to use a microporous finish to protect it, which is easy and quick to use and feeds the wood.