

HEYWOOD & MIDDLETON DEANERY

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PASTORAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Notes taken at meeting held at 7:30p.m. on 4th Dec 2005 at Middleton Rectory

Present:

Ven John Applegate, Canon Nick Feist, Rev'd Geoff Turner, Rev'd Ian Butterworth, Rev'd Andy Pell, Rev'd Philip Miller, Rev'd Leslie Reading, Mrs Pauline Jones, Dr Marian Corns, Mrs Margaret Shackleton, Mrs Elaine Horrocks, Mr David Hutchfield, Mrs Janine Shaw, Mrs Jean Garlick, Mrs Joan Varley and Mr John Pye.

Apologies:

None were requested.

Proceedings

Nick opened the meeting at 7:35pm by welcoming The Ven John Applegate and followed with a bible reading from Joshua 1 v1-9 and prayers.

Agenda

An agenda was proposed at the start of the meeting as follows:

1. Chairing the meeting

It was agreed that either the Deanery Chair or Lay Chair would chair this and future meetings of the PC

2. Introductions

Everyone introduced themselves briefly in 'Round Robin' fashion

3. Outline of the work to be done

The proposed constitution of the Pastoral Committee (PC) and its Terms of Reference together with printed copies of slides of the first training evening were circulated.

o PC Constitution

Although the proposed constitution indicated 1 representative per Parish, it was agreed that this PC should comprise 1 representative from each church within the Deanery, independent of the Parish or Team they were from. Moreover, each church could, if it so wished, appoint 1 deputy to maximise the opportunity to be represented at each of the forthcoming meetings. Either, or both, would be allowed to attend although only the 'lead' representative would be 'officially' recognised to receive notice of meetings etc.

The question of how any future voting would be conducted was raised but was left unresolved.

Action: Churches should therefore identify which of the reps was their 'lead' rep.

o Points arising from documents

'Minster' style of ministry was explained to be where a pool of clergy are assigned to a single centre of worship and other churches are then 'served' from this pool of clergy, being subtly different from a Team where each church ostensibly has an assigned minister but all work within an overall team structure.

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Some concerns were expressed about how much of the PC deliberations would be merely a 'rubber stamp'. John Applegate assured the PC that the Bishop had told the Diocesan PC (DPC) that whatever the Deanery PC decides, unless legally unsustainable, is what the DPC had to work with for final recommendations to the Bishop, who will be the final arbiter. This process is a genuine attempt to consult and act, as far as possible, to Deanery PC recommendations. The importance of referring back to parishes in formulating any recommendations was emphasised and as particular parishes come under particular scrutiny then greater representation and opinion from that parish should be sought by the PC.

It was again emphasised that 'nothing has been pre-decided'.

Concerns about working in isolation from surrounding Deaneries were dispelled as it was explained that this work was already going on in discussions with other Deaneries as the Chair and Lay Chair meet 3 times/annum to discuss such inter-Deanery issues.

Furthermore, as provided for by the constitution and as discussed at earlier PC meetings, it was the intention of the Deanery to involve other church denominations when appropriate. Nick said that how that would actually happen would need to be decided at a future Deanery Synod.

4. What information do we have?

John Applegate summarised the current situation by saying that we had already had the presentation of the vision, as formulated by the clergy, at the Special Deanery meeting and also set of slides and information pack at the first of the two training evenings.

5. What will be provided'?

On the second of the two training evenings (on Jan 25th) 'Tool Kits' would be provided to assist the information gathering process and to help summarise each parish's position. Suggestions to how this process should be approached would also be given. It was important that everyone was treated fairly.

Figures for the number of stipendiary clergy, for the coming and future years, would be published shortly. These figures will greatly focus the mind on how radical any future proposals would need to be.

We would also need to decide just which church buildings would be needed to support future ministry within the Deanery. This would need to be a consultative process.

This information gathering phase would need to be completed *during* March. The resulting PC recommendations need to start to be received by the Diocese in June 2006, although some slippage would ease 'digestion' at Church House over the ensuing months. Nov 2006 was the latest possible submission date.

6. What information do we need?

Members were requested to feedback any information that was missing from the Tool Kits

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7. Are there any situations that need looking at urgently? — viability triggers

o **Five Questions Sheet**

The key area highlighted was the list of 5 questions to share with each PCC.

o **St Michael's, Tonge**

Rev'd Gordon Joyce's pending departure in April 2006, from St Michael's Tonge, to become Associate Rector at St Mary's, Bury was highlighted as an urgent problem to be addressed. St Michael's is the largest parish and has the largest congregation in the Deanery. His departure was seen to create a significant challenge to the Deanery as to how St Michael's could be supported in its interregnum.

o **Clergy Reduction and Vocation**

Although Gordon's departure had the immediate effect of reducing clergy numbers helping to contribute to meeting the target figure of 9 clergy within the Deanery from the current level of 11, leaving such a 'hole' was said by John Applegate not to be a realistic strategic option. Strategic options are not 'number driven'.

John went on to say that the reduction in clergy was seen to be the biggest issue the Deanery would face. Even if recommendations proposed particular clergy deployments, legally, many clergy could not be forced to move. *It would take time to achieve reductions.* It would be up to each vicar to look at what's best for the future forwarding of God's mission in the Deanery to decide their own future in the light of the consultations and ensuing recommendations.

o **Questions and comments from the floor**

Concern was expressed, that given the limited time and size of the current PC, how the PC should handle the balance between the longer term strategic issues that are the current prime focus of the PC against the short term tactical issues, such as managing Gordon Joyce's pending departure. John indicated that both issues would need to be addressed by the PC, but the Bishop would make the final decisions.

A question was asked about the viability of smaller churches and if it would only be the stronger, larger churches that would ultimately survive. John Applegate responded that it would be exactly such issues that the PC would need to make recommendations about once all the issues were known.

Following a question about understanding Rochdale Council's plans and its building programme, it was indicated that Mr Martin Miller was working closely with regeneration and renewal programmes with all the adjacent Local Authorities.

A question concerning how ministers other than stipendiary, fit into the scheme, brought the response that OLMs are not deployable as a stipendiary cleric would be, as they were limited to serving in the parish to which they are licensed. The hope was that the Deanery would have a pool of clergy, some limited in scope of what they could do, but that they could free up stipendiary clergy to perform those functions which non-stipendiary clergy could not. The main aim was to secure a tenable strategy that would serve for the next 5 to 15 years and at the same time achieve growth within the church.

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A follow-up question asking how the pool of clergy serves a funeral or wedding was seen not to be a problem. It hadn't been and nor should it be in the future. This sort of sharing already occurs and operates well. This process also helped to address the issue of a wedding or a funeral being held an 'unfamiliar' priest as the more sharing occurred the more 'familiar' a priest would become within the Deanery as a whole. Developing a 'buddy' system in this vein was suggested as an appropriate way forward to further strengthen such pastoral relationships.

There was also some concern expressed about how we ensure adequate and proper representation from 'Forward in Faith' Parishes or either thought that 'it won't affect us' or took a *laissez faire* approach. John emphasised the need to try to involve all parishes in the Deanery at all stages in the process.

John also pointed out that there comes a time when a parish is no longer viable, either because it is not looking for spiritual growth and renewal, or can't pay its way. There needs to be an awareness of how that church exists and operates and moreover its total cost. John gave a reassurance that if a strategic decision was to be taken to close a church then the process would involve the parish and Diocesan PC reps.

A further question on costs was raised concerning glebe land and the rent income it generates as there was a perception that the church ought to be able to sustain itself either on the rent or by selling glebe land. John responded by pointing out that without glebe rent the Parish Share would double, and that selling land, although alleviating short term funding problems, would simply create a bigger problem in the future.

Asked if the current problem was affecting other Dioceses, John replied that Derby were working on Mission Areas and were *pairing parishes*. Some Dioceses were not able to respond adequately because of even more difficult financial situations. Support was coming from central funds to support poorer parishes.

It was also pointed out that time would determine some events as many clergy would retire within the next few. These events can be anticipated and so there is time to plan for these events.

It was reported that training was taking place this year about Team Ministries. A word of warning was issued in cases where teams formed across multi-parishes to take care not to cause a duplication of administrative effort.

8. Drawing up a programme for the work

The initial vision had already been presented in Sep 2005 and it was thought that to make progress we should start by working on this proposal rather than 're-inventing the wheel'. Feedback was required from all parties to be able to kick-off the process. All should collate all the material already circulated and use this and the future training material to facilitate a 'common approach'.

John Applegate requested that all this material be brought to the next training evening so that any questions of presentation and approach could be talked through.

Further discussion was deferred until the next meeting.

9. Dates and venues of next meetings

- o 25th Jan 2006 St Saviours, Chadderton

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PASTORAL COMMITTEE MEETING

- 2nd February 2006 St John's, Hopwood
- End of March TBA