

HEYWOOD & MIDDLETON DEANERY

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PASTORAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Notes taken at the Meeting of the Pastoral Committee of Heywood and Middleton Deanery on Saturday 4th April 2009, 9.30am at St Martin, Castleton Moor.

Present: Rev'd Ian Butterworth, Area Dean, and 18 members: C. Almond, D. Brennan, M. Carlisle, M. Corns, N. Feist, J. Horrocks, S. King, P. Miller, F. Platt, L. Reading, J. Roebuck, M. Shackleton, J. Shaw, M. Thorp, G. Turner, and J. Varley and J. Pye (late arrival)

The Venerable Cherry Vann, Archdeacon of Rochdale, was in attendance.

Apologies were received from G. Barr, J. Ford and J. Garlick.

Minutes of the last meeting were accepted as accurate proposed M. Thorp seconded S. King.

Matters Arising:

1. Apologies that no Deanery prayer leaflets had been produced. There is a need for a contact from each Church.
2. A meeting for Lay Assistants in the Deanery was booked for 01.09.09 venue to be arranged, possibly St Michael's, Tonge cum Alkington.
3. A meeting for Church Wardens was arranged for 29.06.09, 7.30pm at St Martin's.

Main Item

Ian introduced Archdeacon Cherry and welcomed her to her first meeting of the Deanery Pastoral Committee.

Archdeacon Cherry addressed the meeting inviting questions.

'There is a need to paint a bigger picture and to realise that wherever we are now is not what we should aim at, because we are in a continually moving picture. Stipendiary Clergy will gradually be reducing in numbers for the next 10-15 years with the expectation that in 2025 the numbers of stipendiary priests will be 150 for the whole of the Diocese. This is largely due to finances as costs are rising and parishes are struggling to meet the increasing parish share.

We must plan not for 2-3 years but for 10-15 years and accept the reality that parishes will have to share clergy. If the Diocese is to plan strategically they need to start now paying attention to how to manage the change and how people of faith are to recognise that God is in all of this.

Implications of this are that congregations must look carefully at ministry and mission, and raise up accredited ministries from within congregations and that clergy and laity must work closer together so that ministry in the Church can continue. We must emphasise that God is challenging us and that this is a real opportunity for change. There are already many lay people involved who release clergy to do what they were ordained to do.'

Responses:-

The representatives from All Saints Rhodes stated that they have had no vicar for two and a half years and are looking forward to joining with Holy Trinity, Parkfield. It

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would be nice to have more help. To begin with they had felt in a rut but now they can see the light at the end of the tunnel and are looking forward to the change.

N. Feist reported that a lot of thought has gone into the Middleton part of the Deanery, identifying the key issues and looking for the way forward. He spoke about the work at St Leonard's combined with that at St Anne's Academy and said that we must not underestimate the 'day job' of clergy but rather face up to the work load on all clergy. He also stated that the Middleton clergy are working well together.

M. Carlisle spoke about the need to look at the need for all the church building noting that in the Book of Acts there were no church buildings but he acknowledged that people love the Church they belong to.

The example of Long Street Methodists was mentioned. The building is by the famous Architect Edgar Wood and therefore listed, but the church had run out of money, had a dwindling congregation and looked for ways to dispose of the building. Solution: The building has been sold to N.W. Building Trust but the Church rents the worship area. P. Miller stated that Methodists from Langley were bussed down on Sundays to join in worship with Long Street.

Members from The Heywood Team stated that there had been several very positive meetings with all the churches particularly between St Margaret's and St George's Heap Bridge. It was hoped that after the Diocesan Pastoral Committee meeting the legal side of things could be put in motion.

The plans include: A single parish comprising St Margaret's and St George's: All Souls' and St Aidan Sudden to form a single Parish: Some streets to be transferred from St James' to St Margaret's and then St James', St Luke's and St John's to form a single Parish.

There is a lot of work to be done sorting out the finances and the Charity Shop and naming the new parishes but it was hoped that this could be a legal reality before the summer of 2009. St Margaret's and St George's are already meeting socially and the Heywood clergy are meeting together. Because of difficulties with the building and the heating St Luke's will have to make some difficult decisions about whether to stay in a very cold building or share worship elsewhere.

Responses from Middleton included: St Gabriel's to stay as a separate unit as a Forward in Faith Parish: St Michael's, St Leonard's and All Saints and Martyrs are big parishes with large congregations. All Saints Rhodes and Holy Trinity Parkfield will join together and a part time priest appointed to serve in both. St John's continues to be with St Leonard's and therefore not considered to be in interregnum. Archdeacon Cherry thanked the PCC of St John's for their recent letter regarding their future.

It was noted that it would be helpful for Cherry to visit the Middleton Churches before the Diocesan Pastoral Committee meeting in June.

The members broke into two groups for Heywood and Middleton for general discussion and mutual support after which the meeting closed with prayer.