

HEYWOOD & MIDDLETON DEANERY

PASTORAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Notes taken at meeting held at 7:30p.m. on Monday, 21st July 2005 at Middleton Rectory

Present:

Canon Nick Feist, Rev'd Ian Butterworth, Rev'd Chris Fallone, Mrs Pauline Jones, Mrs Sylvia Thompson, Mr Robert Lundy, Mr Lee Seville and Mr John Pye.

Apologies:

Rev'd Geoff Turner

Nick opened the meeting with the reading of Psalm 65 which shows God's desire to be good to His people.

Nick summarised the task before us as not being one of reorganising decline but rather one of **discovering a vision for the future** to grow and strengthen in a new way.

Prayers and the Lord's Prayer followed.

1. Deanery Pastoral Committee Constitution

Discussion followed concerning the composition of the Deanery Pastoral Committee in the light of the DS103/04, and it was agreed that St James, Heywood needs to be represented. It was also thought that it would not necessarily be the case that para3(b) would need to apply: that a member would need to be elected by the Parish P.C.C. It was also recognised that the deadline for finalising the Constitution was Jan 1st 2006.

There was a short discussion concerning what would be the appropriate Ecumenical membership of the Committee, particularly from the Methodist Church, as the Deanery covered two Methodist Districts, Manchester and Bolton. Nick was meeting with Rev'd Malcolm Wetherby and three others to further discuss the matter. In the meanwhile, cognisant of the need to avoid wasting people's time unnecessarily, it was agreed that a Methodist representation would be requested, as and when the Pastoral Committee judged it to be helpful and appropriate, It was recognised that there were likely to be issues in the future with respect to the sharing of buildings and in order to promote the strengthening of ecumenical links in response to the Anglican/Methodist covenant.

2. Discussion and Background Statistics

The norm for the population/stipendiary ratio was 11,500 (approx mid-point from a 9,500 to 13,000 band). The Sheffield Quota determined the number of stipendiary priests a Diocese can have. The Deanery clergy had already analysed the figures and the Deanery average over 12 stipendiary clergy came to 9,000 each.

Heywood's population of 27,000 with only 3 clergy, now that Rev'd Mary Dicker has left, meant that Heywood was 'on target'. However, Middleton, with 8 Stipendiary clergy and a population of 54,000, meant they were 2 clergy 'over-budget'.

The age profile was a cause for concern, with 2 clergy already over 60 and 1 nearly 60, with a similar lay ministry age profile.

The main issues were seen to be Parish viability and need for buildings.

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3. The Way Forward

We are all charged with finding a way forward.

The clergy had previously met in May 2005 to reflect on all the issues and the following had emerged:

- ? Avoid 'lumping' parishes together as this often led to resentment with one parish feeling they had 'lost' their vicar, where the other felt they had 'kept' theirs.
- ? Encourage congregations to consider themselves as a larger group, whilst still having a vicar, and before clergy reductions started. We should be looking for a model now to be prepared in 5 year's time. That new model would expect a greater level of laity involvement

Other comments made during the meeting:

- ? It was noted that there was a lack of younger people joining the church and was greater than the numbers leaving.
- ? Within the reducing stipendiary clergy numbers, there was an implied assumption that the number of OLMs, NSMs, Readers and lay participants would remain at the current levels.
- ? To achieve mission and growth, radical change would need to happen, even greater than that experienced in the 'Heywood Model' which used 'rotating vicars' within a set of churches.
- ? Where is the wider Community? At St Michael's, they were working alongside Catholics and Methodists and were 'rotating pulpits' amongst themselves. St Michael's Men's Group was also involved in the work.
- ? Clergy will need to change. There is a willingness to change.
- ? There is a need to involve and engage with the wider community
- ? The process needs to be shaped to encourage growth
- ? St Gabriel's would need to be accommodated within any future proposals.
- ? Although the Deanery of Middleton and Heywood, we should not restrict our thinking to evolving a solution for Middleton and a solution for Heywood. The final solution should be in terms of the whole Deanery.

A number of questions were raised:

- ? How do we achieve a sense of 'sharing a vicar' when the vicar may live alongside a particular church?
- ? How would sharing of funerals be achieved? This is already done to some measure and it can work if done sensitively.
- ? How do we cope with when clergy are not available? This raises issues of administering the sacraments.
- ? How do PCCs take responsibility for discerning the vision for their church? Whatever is decided needs to be sustained by the people.
- ? St Leonard's is already reassessing how everything is done: witness, growth, evangelism, is already in the people's hands, not the clergy's.
- ? How do we achieve outreach to 'non-church' people?

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4. Discovering the vision

It was suggested that for this to happen we would need a mechanism for doing it. The following ideas were proposed:

- ? Conduct a Parish Audit to identify needs, available resources, and difficulties being faced, and to assess the vision and commitment for outreach of each parish.
- ? Evolve an agreed definition of what made a 'viable' Parish.
- ? We would need to come up with proposals for buildings, boundaries as well as addressing the 'magic figure' of population/vicar.
- ? We should ask each church the question: "Why should we not close you down?"

5. Future Timetable

In order to maintain momentum and provide further input, it was suggested that Rod and Anita Broome be invited to a future Pastoral Committee meeting to tell of their work and vision for Brimrod Methodist church, where the church has adopted and is working through the 'Faithworks' strategy, developed by Steve Chalke, which has proved to be very successful elsewhere. The 'Faithworks' vision seeks to involve the community, Local Authorities and the Police in the total vision for the Church of the future.

6. Date of next Meetings

- ? Pastoral Committee: 4th August 7:30pm at Middleton Rectory
- ? Pastoral Committee: 6th September 7:30pm at Middleton Rectory
- ? SPECIAL MEETING : 26th September 7:30pm at St Martin, Castleton

It was agreed that in order to formulate an initial proposal that could be presented and then discussed at the Special Meeting, the reflections and proposals already formulated by the clergy should be brought to the Sept 6th meeting as a 'starter for 10'.