

Heywood & Middleton Deanery Synod

26th June 2004

Responses to Questionnaire

Q1 Clergy Numbers & Objectives?

The number of stipendiary clergy we are allocated is reducing.

What should be our main objectives in deploying the clergy we are allowed?

How could we use the number of clergy we are allowed most effectively?

Responses:

- Keep buildings and share clergy
- Conduct a Diocesan Audit to establish viability of each parish
- Strong leadership is fundamental to inspire a parish
- Less paperwork
- Develop a Collaborative Ministry
- Downsize the 'top-tier'
- Role is two-fold: to nurture the congregation
- To empower people to take the church outside the walls of the church building
- (ED: Missed one response)

Q2 The Parish System?

The vast majority of our clergy are deployed in "settled" parochial ministries.

What do you see as the advantages of the parish system?

What are its limitations?

In what ways does the parish system need to be adapted to meet new challenges?

Responses:

- Parish system helps to promote a sense of belonging
- People feel it is their church and they have a presence
- Limitations were seen as a Parish having to be a Jack-of-all-Trades and resources and hence too thinly spread and their combined effect not best utilised.

Q3 Emerging Church?

There is talk about an "emerging church" that focuses on people and networks.

Should we encourage the development of "new ways of being Church" in this diocese?

What sort of resources would "new ways of being Church" need?

How could we provide those resources?

Responses:

- We could take the church into the workplace, Colleges and Universities.

Q4 Criteria for Deployment?

The major factor now for deploying parish clergy is the population size they serve.

What other factors should be considered?

If other factors should be considered, how would you rank them in order of importance?

Deploying clergy into parishes in associate and support roles means increasing the size of the "population per parish priest". How should we tackle issues of workload?

Responses:

- Ranking in terms of – Size, Age of Population and relevance

Q5 Maintaining Current Commitments?

We have 327 churches and centres of worship and spent £15M on buildings in 2002.

How many churches / parishes / benefices can we realistically sustain?

How should we tackle parishes with limited viability and potential for growth?

How should we balance the current structure against new mission opportunities?

Pastoral care of large congregations could occupy more clergy – how do you see this?

Responses:

(Ed: No response minuted)

Q6 Collaboration?

Collaboration is growing in parishes, and between parishes and denominations.

What forms of collaboration should be our priority?

What steps can we take to encourage priests, people and parishes to collaborate?

Ecumenical working may mean "losing" C of E buildings or independence – comments?

Responses:

- All should be welcome; we all believe in the same thing.

Q7 "Home-Grown" Ministry?

Local ministry is growing.

What forms of local ministry should be our priority?

What steps can we take to encourage growth in local ministries?

Should "home-grown" ministries like Readers and OLMs be deployable?

Responses:

- Increasing responsibility of church members to support and be a part of the leading in worship

Q8 Deploying for Growth?

Growing churches may need more ministry.

How should we provide ministry to help churches grow?

What do you see as the most effective ways of promoting church growth?

What sorts of partnerships between parishes could promote growth?

Responses:

- This group thought that there was no need for extra lay ministry
- Consultants could be employed to help failing parishes

Q9 Church Buildings?

Many people say that we have "too many" Church buildings.

Do you think we have too many Church buildings? Why / Why not?

What factors would make you "keep" a Church building?

What factors would lead you to "get rid of" a Church building?

In what ways could Church buildings be better used for mission?

Responses:

- Some parishes were 'stuck' with Listed Buildings. They were always struggling against bureaucracy. There were many blockers to progress and it was expensive to undertake change. (e.g.: £100K for a ramp for the disabled). We should give up 'Museum' pieces.
- There are too many buildings...so long as it is not ours!
- Multi-functional buildings were what was needed for the future.

Q10 Reducing Stipendiary Numbers?

God seems to be calling fewer people into full-time stipendiary ministry.

What do you see as the main implications of this for parishes and deaneries?

What changes in expectation (for clergy and congregations) will this demand?

What practical steps should be taken to help congregations address this situation?

Responses:

- A leaner Diocese
- The expectations are not to 'shrink'
- Encourage Lay Ministry & OLM. Have 'proper' Teams in 1 parish and not across separate parishes. (Ed: please check what was meant here!)

Q11 Lay Leadership?

As the number of stipendiary clergy reduces, the Church is likely to be more lay-led.

What do you see as the main implications for voluntary lay leaders?

What steps should we be taking now to prepare for a more lay-led Church?

What sorts of structures will help lay leadership to flourish?

Responses:

- Encouragement
- A recognition of different talents – lay-care, healing

Q12 Supporting One Another?

Sharing resources so the Church's mission flourishes across the diocese will be crucial.

What sort of resources should be shared to support mission and growth?

What sorts of partnerships between parishes would be most likely to encourage growth?

How do you view the idea of "minster" parishes with extra clergy to support others in difficulty?

How can we best support stipendiary clergy in their current work and through change?

Responses:

- Flexible resources and see answers to question 11
- More support and longer subsidised holidays ✍