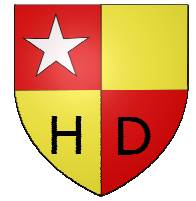


2009 Vision Plan; A proposal from the Deanery Synod Standing Committee.

To be discussed at the February synod and following necessary revisions voted on at the May meeting.



- 1 Our vision is for both the physical church buildings and the church community.

Church buildings

- 2 We look for our church buildings to provide physical, sociological, and spiritual centres within the community of North of Essex.
 - Physically for our church buildings to serve local communities as centres for worship, discipleship and care.
 - Spiritually for our buildings to be places where the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed and lived out; where experience of God's love can be shared and built upon; where questions can be asked and understanding sort.
 - Sociologically for our buildings to serve the breadth of the community in practical ways: in education, entertainment, service, etc.
 - 3 For the church as members of Christ's family to fulfil the commission of Jesus to
 - (a) "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
- 4 Matthew 28
- 5 To achieve this we work to ensure that our buildings are well maintained and have the facilities to provide safe, warm, clean, welcoming space for all and that they have the necessary physical facilities to achieve this. To this aim many churches are, or have already installed new heating systems, toilets, PA systems, induction loops, access ramps, tea and coffee points etc. Others are in the process of re-ordering and repairing the church building to achieve this task.
 - 6 Alongside there is the recognition that some of our church buildings do not serve the local communities effectively. Indeed that they do not enable the overall mission of the church but hinder it. This may be due to size of the worshipping community within or the overall decayed state of the building. Where this is the case the viability, and future, of such building as ongoing centres for worship needs to be considered. In some cases serious thought has to be given to the future of such buildings.

Church community:

- 7 We look for the community of the church to be at the centre of the life our towns and villages. Working by example to fulfil the 5 points of mission recognised by the Diocese of Chelmsford and the Anglican Communion [To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom; To teach, baptise and nurture new believers; To respond to human need by loving service; To seek to transform the unjust structures of society; To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.]
- 8 We recognise that whilst the local community will be the focus for each parish and church, the nature of 21st century living means that the work of the church will continue to extend across traditional geographic boundaries.
- 9 This assumes a calling to work not just within the church buildings but across the structures and organisations of our community. This engagement with the broader community, for example in school, shops, hospitals, youth organisations, within care provision, the workplace, those in

financial difficulties, the homeless, has often been the hidden work of the Church. The need here is not only one for maintenance but for extension and deepening.

Resources:

- 10 Traditionally the Church of England has worked on a mixed economy model. By far the majority of tasks have been completed by unpaid volunteers from the church membership. This can be seen in all aspect of church life: PCC members, Treasurers, Secretaries, Youth Workers, Sacristans, Sidespeople, Bible Study Leaders, Cleaners, Bell Ringers, Organists, Church wardens etc. The list is too long to be able to complete.
- 11 Alongside this there has been a core or individuals called into leadership and released from the need of other paid employment. Often these have been Stipendiary Priests. Sometimes it has been Youth Workers, Paid Secretaries, Hall Managers or other lay persons again the pattern is varied and cannot be easily defined. All of these roles can exist as both paid and unpaid responsibilities.
- 12 It is within this mixed economy model that resources need to be found to achieve the vision of a thriving and growing Christian community which benefits the Church family and the wider community. And it is within this framework that there are concerns linked with finance and manpower.
- 13 Resulting from high levels of retirement, by 2016 there will be a significant reduction in the number of stipendiary priests. To ensure fair shares across the country there will need to be a reduction in the number of stipendiary posts in this deanery.
- 14 Alongside this the cost of each stipendiary post or equivalent is increasing. For the year 2010 the diocese recognises that this cost is in the region of £55 000¹. In 2009 the deanery share expects to raise £337 400² from the parishes, using 2010 cost this equates as 6.1 clergy persons [We currently have 10 posts within the deanery]. In 2008 we raised £318 000, the equivalent of 5.8 clergy persons. In practice in the year 2008 of the 36 parishes 9 did not pay their full parish share, a sum of £31 180, or 8.9%. It is hoped that a smaller default sum will be generated in 2009.
- 15 Our plan for resourcing our vision needs to consider an achievable model: One which can be both resourced by the national stipendiary clergy level predictions and the finances of local churches. In this environment it would seem reasonable that we should be look to reduce stipendiary staffing equivalents from 10 to 8.5. Alongside full tome posts this might include: House for duty posts [Sunday plus 2 full days] currently counting as 0.2 of a post and a half time post [Sundays and 3 full days] counting as 0.5 of a post.

¹ From budget forecasts for 2010 circulated in July 2009 .

² From published parish share figure for 2009

Resourcing a growing vision:

- 16 Each Benefice is already staffed by a skilled Priesthood and by skilled Laity. This as a pattern will not change. These, alongside outside agencies (inside and outside diocesan structures), can provide the resources necessary for training and support.
- 17 Every benefice has its own strengths and weaknesses. Whilst one may have a strong choral tradition another may excel in contemporary worship. Whilst one may have strength in evangelism, another may have strength in pastoral care, or continuing Christian education. None of the Benefices have all the tools for all the tasks we are called to fulfil.

‘Lead Benefices’:

- 18 Strength can be developed if each benefice takes a lead within the deanery in one aspect of Christian life. This does not mean that they will ignore other areas of essential ministry but strive annually to provide an opportunity for Christian growth and support across the deanery in their ‘Lead Area’. It does not mean that a Lead Benefice will necessarily start as a ‘House of Excellence’, but that they will commit some of their scarce resource of time and energy to strengthening themselves and other within the deanery within this ‘Lead Area’. If all Benefices lead in one or more areas of Christian life an overall strengthening of the Christian community will occur.

The Church in the Community:

- 19 Every Community contains individuals who are known to represent the church. Where a Priest is resident the focus is often on the Priest. Where a Priest is not resident it may be a Reader, Churchwarden or other individual or individuals. The deanery recognises these as key people and should look to further develop this role. A useful record of the ‘God People’ for each Community could be stored centrally. Where there is no natural God Person the benefice could look to develop such a role.

Ministry Teams:

- 20 The emphasis in this deanery plan is for clergy (stipendiary and self-supporting), to work with lay members of the congregations (licensed and not), to fulfil God’s calling. This requires clergy, Readers and other to work as a ‘Team’. It is envisaged that each benefice should develop a ministry team, using the past to inform the future, not to support the vicar but to work together in: pastoral care, administration, care of buildings, leading worship, preparation for key moments in life. Churchwardens, PCC members, Readers, clergy and the congregation all have a role to fulfil. The exact nature of each Ministry Team will be dependent on the location and circumstances of the benefice.

Administration

- 21 For each benefice it is envisaged that the ministry team should address ‘administration’. Historically this has often fallen on the shoulders of the stipendiary clergy. As benefice responsibilities increase this function needs to be reclaimed by the broader church by either volunteers or paid secretarial staff.

Cross Deanery activities:

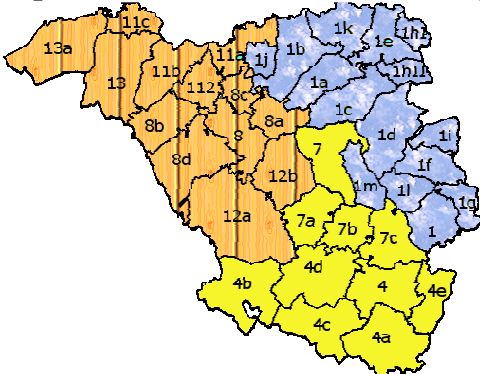
- 22 Already we share Confirmation Services and a Marriage Preparation Day. Clergy meet together in Chapter; we have several Deanery Synods each year. We are looking to get involved in a cross deanery youth project. All this shows that, when the time and conditions are right, there is a heart for working together across the deanery. Further opportunities need to be looked for.

A Discipleship Model

- 23 We have talked of a skilled Priesthood and skilled Laity. If this body is to exist in future years and to grow in size we need to ensure that an environment of discernment, training and encouragement is in place. Each Benefice needs to look carefully at its membership to discover

and utilise the gifts that are already present. Future leaders and skilled church members are needed. We need to make provision for it today by discipling others into the roles that are required. This in itself requires benefices to: discern individual's gifts, help individuals to recognise God's call, provide training by working alongside those already exercising a gift so as to build up confidence and skills. This leads all of us into taking responsibility for the future by encouraging and discipling those around us today.

A possible structure for the deanery:



- 24 Key issues for the deanery plan are that structures;
- Provide a supportive structure where Clergy and Laity will not find themselves isolated.
 - Are sustainable
 - Reduce to a maximum of 8.5 [or equivalent] Stipendiary Clergy posts.

- 25 It is suggested that 3 large teams or groups be formed;
- The North Hinckford Team remain in it's current form. This would retain the current allocation of stipendiary posts but look to extend the resource of self supporting clergy and licensed lay personnel.
 - The Knight's Hospitallers Parish develop links with the Halstead Area Team of Churches and look join that team at either the next change of incumbent, or an earlier date if appropriate. It would be staffed with the 3.5 [equivalent] stipendiary clergy posts made up of Team Rector, 1 fulltime Team Vicar, 2 part time Team Vicars, and a Curates post, but look to extend the resource of self supporting clergy and licensed lay personnel.
 - The Hedinghams, Upper Colne parishes (Tibury-Juxta-Clare, Toppesfield, Stambourne, Little Yeldham, Great Yeldham), Bumpsteads and Birdbrook, Sturmer, Ashen and Ridgewell benefice, work towards becoming a team. Either progressively as Stipendiary posts fall vacant or sooner if appropriate. It would be staffed with the Equivalent of 3 Stipendiary posts 2 full time and 2 part time, but look to extend the resource of self supporting clergy and licensed lay personnel.

Proposed framework to move forward:

- 26 Emphasis that this is a discussion document not a fully devised plan.
- 27 Circulate for comments and suggestions. What is realistic about this? Why? What is unrealistic? Why. What other thoughts have individuals as to things we should include (has been happening).
- 28 Request feed back for the standing committee on Thursday Jan 7th (Standing committee considered the feed back on Thursday 21st Jan)
- 29 The Standing committee will put together a formal proposal for presentation at the Synod to be held at the Community House 24/2/2009. This to be discussed at this meeting no vote on the proposal to be taken.
- 30 Further developed proposal to be voted on at the following Synod.