

8 November 2021

To: The Venerable Peter Leonard, The Venerable Jenny Rowley, The Reverend Canon Will Hughes, Jenny Hollingsworth, Simon Whitbread

Copy to: The Reverend Ian Snares, The Reverend Andrew Sheard, Deborah Henning-Vears, The Reverend Sarah Baker

## **AFFIRMING LAY LEADERSHIP IN HAVANT DEANERY AND PORTSMOUTH DIOCESE**

1. This short note recommends a wider range of methods for affirming lay leadership, across a range of ministries, than currently exists with Portsmouth Diocese. Following a survey of different Diocese approaches it suggests that we be adventurous in releasing lay ministry, through a blend of licensing, authorizing / commissioning (Bishop and more local), and local permissions. It has been written as part of a suite of documents considering Leadership Development as part of the Havant Deanery Mission Action Plan.

### Introduction

2. In the development of the Mission Action Plan for Havant Deanery over the past months, four key threads of activity have been identified. The focus of these areas is: Growth and Mission; Leadership; Working Together – Parish Structures; and Working Together – Sharing Skill and Experience. These activity threads each has an implementation team associated with it, noting that the third area (Working Together – Parish Structures) is deferred following Diocesan decisions on time scales.

3. Within the Leadership implementation thread, four sub-areas have been identified to take forwards: Common Teaching; Understanding Ministries, Skills and Gifts; Leadership Development; and Affirming Lay Leadership. This short note speaks to the latter of these sub-areas.

### Background

4. As members of the Havant Deanery Strategy group worked through the questions placed by the Diocese<sup>1</sup>, four areas of focus emerged, outlined above. Once Havant Deanery Synod had given their general agreement to the Mission Action Plan, implementation teams were established to take these areas forwards<sup>2</sup>.

5. The Leadership Implementation team was established under the leadership of the Reverend Sarah Baker. The team discerned four main strands to take forwards – with the intent of galvanising the people of the church in Havant Deanery to active, servant discipleship in the form of every person ministry. The starting point is to develop a consistent teaching package for delivery in our Parish Churches. Alongside this is the creation of tools to help discern individual vocations and ministries at all levels in the deanery, and ministry areas that these can be aligned to. Neither of these initiatives will deliver fruit without a strong leadership development programme locally, to equip people in vocation at any level of ministry; nor will they deliver unless there are appropriate ways of affirming and commissioning lay leaders, that match the level and scope of ministry without being overly burdensome.

6. This note focusses on the affirmation of lay leadership. It states the current position in Portsmouth Diocese, outlines the results of a partial survey of approaches taken in other Church of England Diocese, and recommends the development of a new approach for Havant Deanery (and hopefully Portsmouth Diocese as a whole).

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<sup>1</sup> Email Andrew Sheard to Havant Deanery Strategy Group 7 November 2020@21:25 – ‘What makes a thriving Church?’ and ‘How would we structure ourselves if we had 20% (50%) less finance available?’

<sup>2</sup> Email Havant Deanery Secretary to Havant Deanery Synod 29 March 2021@12:40 – including attachment Deanery MAP Projects for Implementation.docx

7. Recognising that much of what is outlined here is in the gift of the new, very recently announced Bishop of Portsmouth and that the underpinning decisions here may not be the foremost priority for Bishop Jonathan, nevertheless a general agreement in principle to the recommended way ahead from the Diocese leadership team would be beneficial at this point. Time and space at Diocesan Synod dedicated to this issue would allow this thinking to be exposed to critique and debate. In particular, an agreed framework for local level authorisation would promote consistency and transparency in affirming lay ministries.

### The survey

8. The table at the Annex outlines the results of the survey undertaken to date – this will continue to mature as the approach of a wider selection of Diocese is included. From the Portsmouth Diocese website, three key forms of lay ministry can be identified: Reader, Lay Pastoral Assistant and Lay Worship Leader. The authorisation route for the latter two ministries isn't clear – hence their inclusion in the "Other" category. Added to this is Occasional Preaching Ministry, which was not found on the website and is understood to authorise a preaching ministry perhaps 3 to 4 times per year.

9. The Portsmouth Diocese approach is quite limited in scope, but does not seem to be uncommon, being comparable with the exercised in Norwich, Truro and Oxford (of those Diocese surveyed). There are many other areas of lay ministry as shown by the breadth of categories in the survey. Either these are being conducted without a clear mechanism for affirmation, commissioning and authorisation – or they are being stifled as there is no way of releasing people in Portsmouth Diocese into them. The reality is probably a mix of the two situations.

10. It is interesting to note that only one Diocese (Chelmsford) includes Spiritual Direction with the categories of lay ministry and vocation. Spiritual Direction is offered within Portsmouth Diocese yet there is no clear authorisation route for this one-to-one ministry.

11. Winchester and St Asaph Dioceses seem to offer the greatest range of options for affirming lay ministry, combining an effective blend of Licensing and Commissioning/Authorising lay ministry, with appropriate "hurdles" to clear to achieve the requisite level of affirmation. Training is part of the journey to achieve this, tailored in breadth and depth to the task at hand<sup>3</sup>. This is a pattern repeated in York Diocese, where the authorisation of ministries in parishes seems to be pushed to the lowest possible level, supported by a modular training programme; the Recognised Parish Assistant scheme.

12. In support of the Live!Pray!Serve vision it seems essential that the example of the more flexible approaches used in other Diocese is followed here in Portsmouth. Delegation of authorisation should be pushed to the lowest level possible – this is good leadership practice and gives a sense of ownership and empowerment that is otherwise compromised.

### Recommendation

13. It is recommended that a new framework of Licensing and Commissioning (by the Bishop) and commissioning/authorising at local level (Incumbent and PCC) be introduced in Portsmouth Diocese based on the following principles:

- Licensing would remain appropriate for those going forward for focal church leadership.
- Commissioning fits well for people that are responsible for whole ministries in a locality or need higher level oversight.

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<sup>3</sup> An aside of interest – for someone to preach a few times a year (having modest impact), or to offer pastoral care and communion by extension at home, or to lead a few worship services we demand a high degree of training. Yet we entrust teaching our children the basics of faith to dedicated people, for whom we are grateful, but who likely have no theological or teaching background and who are authorised through volunteering (and necessary safeguarding checks) rather than through a formal recognition process. This seems to be an almost negligent approach to the introduction of young minds to the Christian faith and spirituality – particularly when we have made the Diocesan post in this area redundant.

- A common framework of local recognition should be adopted as widely as possible for areas like Worship Leaders, Pastoral Assistants, Preaching, and other contextual activities – supported by a range of training programmes for initial stages and for continued ministry development at all levels.

14. A level of Bishop's Commission below formal Licensing should be a priority, to enable and equip lay ministry in local contexts more effectively.

15. The Diocese of York model of Recognised Parish Assistants<sup>4</sup> and Equipping God's People<sup>5</sup> seem to provide a good model framework for enabling lay ministry at the lowest level – and the modular training approach appears likely to give a flexible, adaptable and dynamic framework.

#### Next steps

16. Brief +Jonathan and the Diocesan Senior Leadership on these proposals and recommendations, seeking endorsement to develop lay leadership affirmation in the Diocese of Portsmouth as a priority item.

17. Deanery Synod to commend this paper to Diocesan Synod for presentation and debate at Diocesan Synod provided the approach has been endorsed by the Senior Leadership Team.

18. Once (and if) the approach is endorsed, develop training materials for common mission module of local training course for recognised parish assistants (or equivalent) – or negotiate with another Diocese to use existing materials. Decide priority areas for second stage training courses (a Diocese workshop may be an appropriate vehicle) and develop the necessary materials.

*Note prepared by RFH*

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ysom.org.uk/rpas.html> (last accessed 18 October 2021)

<sup>5</sup> <https://dioceseofyork.org.uk/developing-ministry/training/for-lay-people/equipping-gods-people/> (last accessed 18 October 2021)

## ANNEX SUMMARY TABLE OF LAY MINISTRY ROUTES

	Licensed					Commissioned / Authorised								Other							
	Reader / Lay Minister	Lay Worker	Evangelist / Pioneer	Pastoral Chaplain	Children, Youth & Family Chaplain	Worship	Youth & Children and/or Family	Prayer Champion	Creation Care	Pastoral Assistant	Evangelism	Teacher / Catechist	Authorised Worship Assistant	Permission to Preach	Lay Funeral Ministry	Lay Pastoral Assistant	Lay Worship Leader	Authorised Lay Ministry	Locally Recognised Lay Ministry	Childrens' Work	Spiritual Direction
<b>Diocese</b>																					
Portsmouth																					
Norwich																					
Winchester		2				1	1	1	1												
St Asaph																					
Carlisle																					
Truro																					
Oxford																			3		
Bath & Wells			4	4																	
Coventry	5																				
Chelmsford										6											
Ely <sup>7</sup>																					
York															8/9	8/9		8/9	8/9		

### Notes:

1. Winchester – Bishop’s Commission for Mission
2. Winchester – includes evangelism, leading worship, pastoral care, teaching (can include preaching and funerals)
3. Oxford – described as “...most work with children and young people, much pastoral work, leading home groups, running the choir or music group, and many other things. It is up to the local church and person concerned whether any training is undertaken.”
4. Bath & Wells – not clear from website whether these are actually licensed ministries, rather than some other framework of authorisation.
5. Coventry – little information about what is available on website.
6. Chelmsford – not clear what the licensing/commissioning/authorising route for Evangelism Enabler is from website.
7. Ely – website mentions Authorized Lay Ministry but does not detail areas covered – “Authorized Lay Ministers (ALMs) are trained lay people, active in church life, who have a particular vocation, special interest or skill that can be an integral part of their church’s ministry. They are highly valued in the Diocese of Ely and have a crucial part in the success of the diocesan strategy. ALMs are nominated by their incumbent and Parochial Church Council (PCC) to be trained and equipped in preparation for being ‘commissioned’ by the Bishop. After this service, they will carry out an agreed ministry role within their local parish context.”
8. York – run a Recognised Parish Assistant scheme where the commissioning is at an appropriate level to the role (typically parish level). Training comprises a two part course with an initial 8 week common module for all, regardless of eventual ministry focus, centred around mission. This is followed by an 8-week tailored module to the specific discipline and vocation.
9. York – offer Equipping God’s People courses of 4 to 6 sessions each covering a wide range of topic; ministry is locally affirmed/commissioned in parish and attendees are recommended to training by incumbent and PCC