

Paper 3

Live|Pray|Serve: Holding the Space well.

We have talked for some time now of how we hold space well. The two key spaces we need to hold are now, with our current challenges and opportunities as we await the arrival of Bishop Jonathan, and the space between Bishop Jonathan arriving and what we ultimately do in order to become a thriving diocese. There are many uncertainties around this, but we do know Bishop Jonathan will not be with us until early spring 2022 at the earliest and that it will be at least a year until we might be in a position to apply for additional funding to help us with any transformation process in the diocese.

This paper is offered as a means of helping identify where we are and what we are doing as well as encouraging ongoing conversations across the diocese.

Medium Term Challenges

- Mission – to grow in depth, impact, and number.
- Finances – to become more financially sustainable. We can hold the current position for 2022 and into 2023 before we would need to consider further property sales.

Short Term Challenges

- Immediate cash flow and current budgeted deficit.
- Time needed for Bishop Jonathan to settle and pick up the strategic lead.
- The need to hold stipendiary vacancies across the diocese so that we are able to be able to make strategic appointments as we seek to become a thriving diocese. This therefore requires principles upon which recruitment decisions will be made (see below).
- Support for already busy and tired lay and ordained leaders in parishes particularly considering the vacancy rate necessary.
- Managing the workload of the central staff team for whom the same responsibilities, expectation and workload exists but who are fewer in number.
- The need for ongoing conversations about the future direction of the diocese and addressing the medium-term challenges.

Current Opportunities

- We have a vision of what a thriving diocese might look like.
- Every single deanery plan submitted as part of the conversation process proposes collaborative working.
- Action is already being taken across parishes from both a missional and financial perspective.

Next steps

- Ongoing prayer – locally and diocese wide, corporately and individually
- We ask deaneries to form the mission hubs/partnerships/collaborative way of working which they identified in their plans working with their archdeacons to agree exactly how these will work.
- Those mission groupings will then need to work together to see how they can best deliver mission and ministry across their churches and hold the necessary vacancies well. Archdeacons will support these conversations and plans.
- Facilitated conversations will need to continue in parishes and deaneries to assist with collaborative working but also the ongoing conversations about the future direction of the diocese. The senior leadership team and members of the diocesan team will continue to work with deaneries, PCCs and emerging groupings to support these conversations and planning.
- Some areas where an investigation of more formal collaboration has begun, such as Northeast Wight, should continue. The process and learning can be shared.
- The presumptive pause on recruitment must remain in place This is so that conversations at local level can continue and strategic appointments can be made. Appointments which simply maintain the status quo are unlikely. The possibility of recruitment in a place, needs to be discussed with some principles in place to determine if recruitment should take place and if so, to assist prioritisation of posts (see below)
- A detailed plan for addressing the financial challenges can only come once we have considered the missional challenges and how we will work to grow in depth, impact and number. This will inform where reduction is needed and also where we can submit bids to support the work of lay and ordained members of the diocese.

Bishop's Council has discussed this approach and unanimously agreed it.

Motion for Diocesan Synod:- Synod acknowledges the current challenges and opportunities and agrees the next steps outlined above.

Recruitment Principles.

As already highlighted, there is a need to hold clergy vacancies across the diocese to enable strategic decisions to be made and to help us move forward to become a thriving diocese. But this needs to be managed so that our purpose to grow in depth, impact and number is not undermined. Each new vacancy which arises will enable a discussion to take place about a new recruitment These principles are suggested to help the Commissary Bishop with prioritising vacant posts:

- The post fits with the current strategic direction of the diocese to grow in depth, impact and number. This means that:
 - The parish/benefice concerned is working collaboratively which at this stage means as a minimum: -

courageous | collaborative | generous | resourceful | pioneering

- looking at what missional activity can be undertaken together to meet the needs of a wider community.
- exploring sharing administrative functions and utilising skills in a wider area.
- There is a Mission Action Plan with clear aims and outcomes linked to community demographics and needs,
- Plans are emerging for growth in lay leadership
- Key offices are filled ie Churchwardens, Treasurer and PCC secretary and not by the same person/people simply holding multiple roles.
- The post is one which the deanery agrees is a priority.
- The post is clearly identified and is not likely to change in the near future.

If the Commissary Bishop and the Archdeacon deem these criteria are met, then recruitment will be considered.

Bishop's Council agreed these principles by majority.

Motion for Diocesan Synod: Diocesan Synod agrees these recruitment principles to act as a guide for the Commissary Bishop when considering any recruitment process.

**Bishop's Senior Leadership Team
28 October 2021**