

Peninsular House Team Update

The update in relation to the Peninsular House would normally be delivered through a presentation rather than a paper but online nature of Synod in June means a paper is the appropriate approach.

Changes in Staff

Since the Diocesan Synod in February there have been a small number of staff changes:-

1. The role of Project Account became vacant in January but that job description was reshaped into a 12 month fixed term project role. This is to help implement the new Finance system which will bring efficiencies into the finance team's daily function. The role will also look at some specific additional tasks in each diocese, including but not limited to some work on Trusts and Custodian Trustee records. Lyn Madondo took this role in March.
2. Valerie Agnew retired on 17th March 2020 after long service to the Diocese most recently as PA to the Archdeacon of the Meon and to the Diocesan Director of Vocations and Ordinands. This role remains vacant and is being reconfigured.
3. The PA to the Head of Mission Discipleship and Ministry retired in October 2019 and that role was held vacant until the end of February this year when we recruited Bev Hughes into this role and Bev has also taken on the role of PA to the Diocesan Director of Vocations and Ordinands.
4. Rev Dr Ruth Tuschling will be leaving the Diocese in June 2020 and returning to live in Germany. This will leave a vacancy in the Spirituality Adviser role within the Mission Discipleship and Ministry Team.

Furlough

As a diocese we have been making use of the Furlough Scheme within the Peninsular House team. We have had just under half the staff on Furlough since April. Heads of Department have been managing this process effectively and ensuring this has been implemented based on immediate work needs and essential tasks. It is kept under constant review and there are Furlough rotas being exercised in Teams with different individuals coming on and off Furlough.

We will be using Furlough in its current form until the end of July but reviewing with individuals on a regular basis. In August the rules change but at the time of writing, we do not have the full detail as to what the next phase of the job retention scheme will offer to us.

Some employees have also agreed to reduced hours.

The staff team have been incredibly understanding, patient and generous in their response to our current circumstances and they are to be commended for that. I and senior colleagues are indeed very grateful and are blessed to have such a great team.

Working Practice

The entire team has been working from home since the end of March and this has proved successful. We are fortunate in that the work on the IT system last year introduced new tools, such as Microsoft Teams, into our working life; without this we would have struggled to function in the way we have since moving to remote working.

The Team have reacted well to this significant and rapid change. We currently only have access to the building on two mornings per week when we can open and then distribute post. This will continue to be the case for some weeks yet.

We are currently in the process of exploring how we will shape our working practices moving forward as there are aspects of our previous working routines which we would not want to lose but equally, there are benefits to remote working which we want to preserve. There are many aspects to this analysis from a strategic and operational needs perspective, but we are holding this in balance with wider issues such as mental well-being and our environmental impact.

The nature of our working environment in Peninsular House means that our return to the office is not straight forward. Our paramount concern is the health and wellbeing of the staff team and as such we anticipate not returning full time to Peninsular House for some months.

Victoria James

Diocesan Secretary