

Improvements to clergy homes will make a difference

WE'VE recognised that clergy are happier and more effective if their homes are looked after well.

So in September 2014, our Bishop's Council agreed to spend £600,000 over five years to improve the clergy homes we own. The figure was drawn up to make up for a perceived underspend on our houses over the previous seven years, compared to neighbouring dioceses.

It was an important milestone in the work of our property department, who maintain our parsonages, freehold and glebe properties.

During 2014, a total of 659 separate items of work were carried out, and an increase in funding allowed a crucial amount of essential repairs to take place.

The biggest spend, £214,000, was on roof repairs, and a further £143,000 was spent on general building works, £54,000 on heating and energy efficiency and £46,000 on window repairs.

Maintaining and repairing homes for clergy and their families is just one of the roles of our Mission and Resources section, which also looks after pastoral reorganisation, diocesan budgets and the support for PCC treasurers, safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults, IT, synodical government and employment matters.

The team also supports the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC), which assists parishes with alterations to church buildings.

It met 10 times in 2014, and saw 95 new cases, of which 23 were approved without a



Our DAC has advised on alterations and repairs to churches, such as Wroxall



Jenny Hollingsworth (right) explains more about the work of her section

faculty. The chair and secretary of the DAC are beginning to imple-

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ment changes from the national Church's simplification process, to make it easier for parishes to get approval for changes to their buildings.

The introduction of a diocesan safeguarding training policy now means we have an effective framework in place for the delivery and organisation of safeguarding training throughout the diocese.

During 2014, 308 delegates attended 23 training workshops, with a further 262 completing online training.

A strategy to support the survivors of abuse within the church community was devised and accepted during 2014.

Our safeguarding team has developed an effective partnership with a local counselling service to signpost victims for further support.

Our Mission and Resources team also helped a number of parishes in 2014 that needed help with possible pastoral reorganisation of parish boundaries.

We're supporting our academies in new education landscape

AMONG the biggest changes to the education landscape in recent years is the growth in academies – schools that operate independently of their local authorities.

When Church of England schools become academies, some of the roles that would have been performed by local authorities fall on the C of E diocese.

Our education team made two appointments in 2014 to help academies in this way. Lynne Govus became academies finance manager in August, making a significant impact on work that was previously outsourced to a consultant.

And Amanda Johnson, previously headteacher of Brighstone C of E Primary and then Pilgrims' Cross C of E Primary Schools, was appointed academies officer in December.

A Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust was also created to support academies in both Portsmouth and Winchester dioceses. During 2014, the government also broadened the academies agenda, encouraging 'good' and 'outstanding' schools to convert, as well as those that are 'failing'. There was also a new phase of government engagement with and monitoring of academies.

During 2014, Bishop Christopher formally opened St Blasius C of E Academy in Ventnor, one of the new academies in our diocese.

Supporting academies was just one of



Bishop Christopher opened a garden of peace at St John's C of E Primary, Rowlands Castle

the challenges faced by our Mission and Education team, who serve more than 30,000 children in 143 C of E schools in both Portsmouth and Winchester dioceses.

Among their work was help in recruiting new leaders for the 19 C of E schools that changed headteachers,

advice on Christian spirituality for headteachers, support for governors, and the preparation and support for 28 church school inspections during the year.

Our education team also secured £2.25m of government funding for building projects in voluntary-aided

schools across both dioceses. Our diocese was also involved with the proposed new church school at Oakfield on the Isle of Wight.

Admissions policies for all voluntary-aided schools were scrutinised and amended as necessary, and advice was given to all schools, each of which

Interfaith relationships have proved useful over years



Dr Helene Egnell led our ordination retreat

IT was 20 years ago that worshippers from our cathedral and the Wessex Jamaat community near Wickham first met for a joint Muslim-Christian evening.

They've met every year since then for food and conversation, often around Christmastime.

It's a way of building relationships that have subsequently proved to be useful – not least at times of crisis, such as the July 2005 London bombings or the Iraq conflict. This joint celebration now also involves representatives from other mosques in Portsmouth.

Our interfaith adviser, the Rev Andy Marshall, who is also the university

chaplain, has the role of liaising with those of other faiths.

Relationships with Muslim students in the University of Portsmouth are also good, and the chaplaincy was involved in securing larger prayer rooms for them.

Support was also given to the university to design a garden of remembrance for students and staff of all faiths and none. The garden is now being completed and the chaplaincy will continue to support its maintenance and use.

Interfaith issues is just one of the areas covered by our Mission and Society section – the area of our diocese's work that tries to engage with the wider

world.

Some elements of its work – the Rapid Development Programme for parishes, Good Neighbours Support Service and Mind the Gap video training on generational differences – are run by the Council for Social Responsibility, which operates as a separate charity.

Communications is an integral part of our engagement with the rest of society. In 2014, this involved

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the production of 10 issues of Pompey Chimes, which are distributed in parishes, schools and libraries; the diocesan website; liaison with local, Church and

national media; and the use of social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter.

One area in which clergy are helped is in the production of regular 350-word columns in Portsmouth's local paper, *The News*, each Thursday.

Our communications team co-ordinate the production of four separate 'church columns' each week, one for each of the Portsmouth, Havant, Fareham and Gosport editions. It's just one way of parishes getting the message out about the valuable work they do.

The group that deals with urban ministry has met regularly, discerning common trends or problems, as



The bishop opened the new St Blasius C of E Academy in Shanklin in 2014

had to re-constitute their governing bodies.

Our team were also involved in encouraging non-church schools to become

affiliated schools, with looser links to the C of E than church schools. There are now 12 affiliated schools across both dioceses.

There was training in Religious Education, collective worship and spiritual development for teachers in C of E schools, with seven development groups meeting each term across both dioceses. And there has been a constant drive to increase the number of C of E

schools taking up the offer of continuing professional development of RE through the dioceses. A new collective worship course was introduced in the autumn

and proved to be popular. The impact of these sessions is now being felt in schools.

And around 1,500-2,000 children attended school leavers' services at Portsmouth and Winchester Cathedrals to mark the end of their time in their current schools. These services were supported by bishops, archdeacons and clergy, and strengthened the links between dioceses and schools.

mission and education