

# Improvements to clergy homes make a real difference to morale

**ONE of the things that makes a big difference to the morale of our clergy is the state of their homes.**

Vicarages and rectories are provided with the job, and they may well be spacious and centrally located. But they are often old buildings which require ongoing maintenance. Clergy families depend on our property team both to get minor repairs fixed and to organise major refurbishment.

Our diocese recognised in 2014 that there had been a historic underspend on clergy housing and allocated an extra £600,000 for major repairs over the next five years.

Libby Norris, **mission and resources** whose husband Andy is rector of Alverstoke, has lived in clergy homes for 30 years. She now serves on our **Property Committee** which decides policy and organises the priority of repairs to our clergy homes. It also oversees our glebe land, and the rental of property during vacancies.

"You can feel guilty about complaining, because these are often lovely homes in great locations, such as ours in Alverstoke," she said. "But it's not just a family home. It's also a workplace, and you share it to a certain extent with your parish, with meetings happening here and the garden being used too."

"You have to ask someone else to do things to it. That can be good, in that in an emergency someone will come out

very quickly to fix things. But it can also mean living with some things not being right for years, because it doesn't happen to be a priority. For instance, the gas bill is 10 per cent of Andy's take-home salary, because it's a big house, but because the boiler works, it's not a top priority to replace it.

"I enjoy being on the Property Committee because it helps me to see the big picture. I can understand the range of what needs to be done and how funding is allocated.

"Having the extra £600,000 to spend over five years is important. We've given each project a red, amber or green priority, so we know what order to tackle the big stuff. It has increased morale, and knowing the diocese is on your side really helps."

Libby is one of the reps on our Property Committee who is available to help clergy spouses. She can help those in the Meon archdeaconry, Clare Kennar is available for those living in Portsdown and the Rev Graham Morris can help those on the Isle of Wight.

In 2015, 60 per cent of our property budget was spent on general repairs, with significant amounts also spent on plumbing, heating, boilers, roof repairs and windows. It was clear that there had been a substantial improvement in the state of clergy houses, as 18 per cent less was spent on reactive repairs.

Property is just one of the areas



Libby Norris, who serves on our Property Committee, at the rectory in Alverstoke

covered by our Mission and Resources team, which also handles clergy stipends, accounts, synodical government, employment and legal matters, and IT.

One significant area is **safeguarding**, and in 2015, we volunteered to be one of four dioceses whose safeguarding practices were audited by an external independent body. It was part of a pilot

scheme which will ultimately see every C of E diocese audited.

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) published its reports in January 2016. It concluded that our diocese was well on the way to developing a robust safeguarding culture to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults. It praised the clear leadership

of the bishop on this issue. The full report can be downloaded from [www.portsmouth.anglican.org/safeguarding](http://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/safeguarding).

During 2015, our safeguarding team processed 1,211 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, and 488 individuals completed online safeguarding training modules.

Our diocesan safeguarding team

also launched a new initiative of parish reviews, in which the safeguarding policies and practices of specific parishes were examined in detail.

Ten parishes were chosen in the first sample. Although there were no serious concerns, there were some common themes that need to be addressed.

The Mission and Resources team also supports the **Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches**, which works with parishes considering alterations to their buildings. It looked at 70 new cases in 2015, and undertook 22 site visits around the diocese.

Among its considerations was how to help parishes in the Listed Places of Worship Grant scheme, and how to prevent metal theft by using alternative materials.

The team supported parishes in completing the **mission statistics and finance returns** via an online system. For the second year in a row, our diocese had the highest proportion of churches submitting their returns of any diocese in the C of E.

These figures are increasingly being used by the national C of E to help them allocate resources to promote mission, outreach and growth. It is therefore vital that they are accurate and up-to-date.

And this team also supported parishes through 12 proposed **pastoral schemes** of reorganisation. The move to one deanery on the Isle of Wight was completed so it could come into effect on January 1, 2016.



Delegates were inspired at the 'Zombies versus Aliens' conference

## We are challenging parishes to rethink how they do mission

**WHAT difference might changes in technology, the environment and demographics have on our ministry and mission?**

**For instance, rather than asking teenagers to turn off their phones during worship, how can we use mobile apps or text messaging to enhance our engagement with God?**

**Those were the kind of questions posed in a ground-breaking session led by futurologist Dr Graeme Codrington at the end of 2015.**

It was called 'Zombies versus Aliens' as a recognition that different generations have different values and sometimes find it hard to relate to each other.

Our diocesan Council for Social Responsibility (CSR) organised the day conference at the headquarters of Ben Ainslie Racing in Old Portsmouth. Around 100 clergy and lay leaders were inspired to think differently back in their parishes.

It's just one of the ways in which our CSR hopes to challenge parishes to think differently.

In 2015, it continued to run its 'rapid development programme' which works with individual parishes on

how to use its finances, property and people better to create new mission opportunities. Enquiries to run some dioceses continue to be received.

The CSR has con-

**mission and society**

tinued to work with the Kaospilots School in Denmark and with staff and students at the University of Portsmouth, both of which can offer inspiration.

Three local parishes received help in the summer of 2015 from 30 Brazilian architecture students. Their proposals aimed to help each parish engage better with their local community.

Our Mission and Society team also work in several other areas.

Our communications team have continued to inspire us with stories shared via the *Pompey Chimes* website, local secular media and social media.

Parishes are also offered full-scale communications audits, where their physical, written and online presence can be examined and suggestions made for improvement.

Our Inter-Diocesan West Africa Link (IDWAL) continues to develop. Our diocese is specifically linked with Ghana, and 2015 saw visits from several Ghanaian bishops, and ongoing relationships with the St Nicholas Seminary in Cape Coast and the Anglican University College of Technology.

The specific links between our deaneries and Ghanaian dioceses, and between individual parishes, flourish where leadership is good.

Five deanery or parish groups visited Ghana during the year, including 11 pupils and two staff from Ryde School.

The new link between Portsmouth deanery and the Diocese of Ho is developing well.

Our urban ministry group explores common issues and offers support to those working in challenging situations.

After a hiatus, we have appointed a diocesan disability adviser, the Rev Robert Sanday, in a one day a week role. He was already our chaplain to the deaf.

And our interfaith adviser, the Rev Andy Marshall, who is university chaplain, continues to build links with those of other faiths.

## Vision for pupils to encounter God drives education team

**THE diocesan vision for education is to enable every child and young person to have a life-enhancing encounter with the Christian faith and the person of Jesus Christ.**

Our Mission and Education team hope to achieve this by supporting church schools in their pursuit of excellence, helping parishes to engage with schools and colleges, and promoting RE, collective worship and spiritual development.

They also aim to network with chaplains in higher and further education, and work with local authorities and other partners.

The team works across both Portsmouth and Winchester dioceses, overseen by the Portsmouth and Winchester Board of Education.

During 2015, the team introduced the idea of 'associate staff' to work alongside the permanent team. There are around 20 experi-

enced volunteers who are enhancing their outreach and training capabilities.

The recruitment of suitably qualified headteachers who are committed to the Christian ethos of our schools remains a significant area of the team's work.

It does represent an investment in an **mission and education** officer's

time – perhaps two full days and three evening meetings – but this can pay off in terms of building relationships and developing governors' understanding.

In 2015, 36 C of E schools across both dioceses received a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspection, which looks at a school's Christian ethos.

Sixty-five per cent of those inspected during 2015 were deemed 'outstanding' overall.

Admissions policies for all our voluntary-aided schools were scrutinised, amended as necessary, and agreed by the Board of Education.

The Mission and Education team sent more information to parishes about the links they could have with their local church and community schools during 2015.

They also promoted their collective worship and spirituality courses more actively to clergy and foundation governors, as well as offering bespoke training for schools.

The spirituality course has been particularly successful – over the past two years, 180 delegates have been trained on eight courses.

And the RE Continuing Professional Development sessions were very successful in

2015, with the majority of diocesan schools having accessed the training.

Follow-up sessions with RE leaders have also taken place in schools to review the RE curriculum. The result is that RE leaders have the confidence and the knowledge to be effective ambassadors for high-quality RE in their schools.

The government's agenda to change the status of schools to academies has continued, and there are a range of different kinds of academies across the two dioceses.

The Portsmouth and Winchester Diocesan Academy Trust has continued to support and challenge the academies it is responsible for.

Academy schools are treated the same way as others in the Anglican family, regardless of their status.



Bishop Christopher visits Hook-with-Warsash C of E Academy