

## ROMSEY DEANERY CONSULTATION 3<sup>rd</sup> MEETING AT BRAISHFIELD VILLAGE HALL ON 16<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017

The Lay Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, stating it was positive to see representation from across the Deanery.

The Area Dean informed the meeting that it was the feast day of St. Ninian, the Papal missionary to Northumberland and lowland Scotland, and that this was a reminder that our mission today is to advance the gospel, not to rearrange the church. He then opened the meeting in prayer.

### Feedback from the Deanery Survey

Chris Thompson presented the results of the Deanery Survey. He stated that out of a total Deanery Population of 42,500 and a worshipping community of 1,325 there had been a total of 371 responses. This is statistically significant if considered against the worshipping community [~25%]. The most total responses came from St. Peter's Stockbridge, the most responses as a proportion of the community from Farley Chamberlayne and the most responses as a proportion of the worshipping community from St. Nicholas Leckford.

More than half of the respondents stated they attend church more than once a month. The majority of views came from people who *do* come to church rather than do not. A quarter of respondents only came for festival services, and around 10% were non church-goers.

There was a split of responses between faith based and community based. The responses showed that the life of church and community is inextricably bound up.

"What is the most important thing about the local church?"

The responses indicated that community concerns came ahead of faith concerns.

"What would we miss without the local church?"

The greatest response was shared fellowship, friendship, care.

The Church of England is the only denomination seeking to have churches all around the country. How do we organise this in the light of the current economic situation?

The next section examined our effectiveness – what we do well, what we could do better and what we do not do now. There was a key focus on our work with young people (all age/ children/ family/ youth/ schools), with 71 saying we do it well, 69 saying it could be better and 59 saying it is not done now. It was also recognised that there was some pain in parts of the Deanery at the lack of a vicar, due to retirement, vacancy or other reasons.

"What makes church more relevant?"

49 replied that "it's ok as it is", but 43 replied that it needs to be more varied.

Key issues: there was a huge diversity of responses with over 60 different areas of concern. The biggest one was related to young people and families; the second was loneliness. There was a recognition that in each parish there is a small core team of people who make things happen and get things done.

### Closing thoughts – four areas for discussion

1. How do we balance Christian activities with community activities?
2. How do we balance the feeding of our existing flock (our own needs) with attracting new sheep (the needs of others)?
3. How do we balance the vicar with team leadership? The vicar can be seen as a "local superhero", but what do we do as a community to support them? The Diocese has allocated 8 permanent stipendiary posts. Only one church justifies having at least one clergy allocated to it and that is Romsey Abbey. This means that there are 7 other permanent stipendiary posts for all the other parishes/benefices to share across the Deanery.
4. How do we organise ourselves? This is not just about boundaries, but the effective use of all resources. What do we want to do:
  - In each church?

- In one church for the benefit of others?
- In the Deanery?
- In the Diocese?

The example was given of having a Deanery contact list for musicians who can offer different services/styles across the Deanery.

The Area Dean thanked Chris warmly for his hard work. The meeting then broke into small group discussion.

### Comments and Q&A

C: It was understood that the questionnaire was meant for those *outside* the worshipping community.

A: it was designed for all – both inside and outside the worshipping community and people were encouraged to take it to non-attendees via e.g. local pubs

C: One of the downsides of the questionnaire was that the first question related to the building rather than the organisation.

A: The first question could be interpreted as either a building or a worshipping community.

Q: Why were PCCs, Church Schools and LLMs not mentioned or picked up on in the survey?

A: [LLMs were defined as not all attendees knew: Licensed Lay Minister] Church Schools were explicitly picked up and commented upon – PCCs and LLMs were not explicitly commented upon – but there was a reference to core teams of hard workers who keep churches going.

Q: What percentage of replies were online?

A: 234 of the 371 responses were online [63%] – the balance (137) were hand written 37%

Q: Is it possible to look at the answers of the 31 non-church attendees and correlate them with the results?

A: This can be done, however most were anti-Christian. It was disappointing that we did not get responses from those people who were open to persuasion – although it could be argued that the 26.1% attending planning to attend 1-4 times per year are those open to persuasion.

Q: Those people who are ‘festival’ attendees (1-4 times per year): how do we develop these responses?

A: Some more analysis can be done on these answers.

**Action: Chris Thompson**

Q: Can each church see ‘their’ data?

A: Yes, but be careful of small numbers and statistical significance.

C: The bridging points of the River Test affect attendance. It is easier to travel North-South than East-West.

Q: There is a balance between those wanting change and those wanting things to stay the same. Are those wanting to stay the same regulars and those who want change non-regulars?

A: Don’t know, this can be looked at, however this is not to force a debate between either/or but to see how we can do both/and.

C: Communication in the Deanery is still not good. One has to visit each church to find out what is going on.

A: The Deanery website has links to *all* parish websites. There is also the ‘a church near you’ website.

The Deanery is not a business. Much is done at a local level by volunteers. We need to consider what we want to do at local, parish/benefice and Deanery levels.

### Pastoral reorganisation in the Romsey Deanery

Tim Sledge and James Pitkin introduced this paper (attached) and subject. There will be imminently three vacancies in the Deanery: the old “Test Valley Benefice”; the Broughton Benefice; Romsey. The pastoral plan needs to consider the needs of the Deanery over the next decade. The Deanery is well supplied with the proportion of living souls to full time stipendiary clergy: 42,500 to 8 or roughly 5,300 to 1. We are shaping

ourselves for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. There are many permutations, however all options are open and vacancies should be seen as opportunities. We can be parochial and protective, but we need to understand that we are part of a wider community. This is the opportunity to think creatively, e.g. what about a half time Children and families/ elderly/ isolated person's enabler?

The options for Kings Somborne and Romsey were raised, with the caveat that there are many nuances and there will be no result today. It was suggested that Kings Somborne becomes a House for Duty that is linked to the Braishfield benefice. A House for Duty was defined as a clergy person living without a stipend in the parish house who works Sunday and two or three other days of the week.

Q: How do we focus on reorganisation when we have not yet defined our purpose?

A: All parishes have a Mission Action Plan, which should define the purpose of each parish.

There was discussion in small groups. Responses to each of the options and variances on these were posted on sticky notes on flip chart paper and are transcribed below.

**Option 1** (Broughton et al stays as it is. Test Valley becomes a benefice once more – status quo)

- Leckford definitely don't want to go back with Somborne as relationships are difficult
- Status quo until the future of the parishes is determined
- "Houghton" likes option one or to Stockbridge
- As PCCs of Broughton, Houghton, Bossington and Mottisfont we favour status quo for our benefice. We have already argued this course in our position paper. Option 1 or 2.
- NOT maintaining TVB, relationships will not work
- Need strong leadership to make any benefice work
- Option 1 isn't "status quo" for Stockbridge as not currently operating with Somborne
- A split post for Kings Somborne based on geography will not work!
- Yes to option 1 for Kings Somborne and Romsey
- (Broughton, Houghton, Mottisfont) Leaving Romsey aside the mean average per stipendiary minister is 4 churches/3 PCCs. More than that is an unreasonable burden and disincentive to rural ministry.
- As a benefice in interregnum we are very concerned about any possible delay to a new appointment as a result of the Deanery pastoral consultation.

**Option 2** (Leave Broughton as is and put Stockbridge/Longstock/Leckford together and leave Kings Somborne separate)

- Stockbridge want House for Duty priest please!
- Leckford needs to stay in Stockbridge as get a lot of support from Stockbridge residents
- Option 2 plus House for Duty good solution for Stockbridge. Better one? Stockbridge plus Leckford!
- Leckford/Longstock/Stockbridge remain with House for Duty
- Leckford/Longstock/Stockbridge House for Duty; Somborne with Ashley House for Duty; Romsey Abbey has extra stipendiary.

**Option 3** (Stockbridge, Broughton, Houghton and Bossington, Longstock and Leckford become a single benefice – with one stipendiary living in Stockbridge or Broughton; and Mottisfont becomes part of the Lockerley Benefice)

- Moving Mottisfont into Lockerley benefice is a good idea
- Change of Mottisfont to Lockerley benefice makes sense both geographically and socially
- Mottisfont fits in well with Lockerley benefice geographically and socially
- It makes sense for Stockbridge, Broughton, Houghton and Bossington, Longstock and Leckford to be a benefice
- Probably would not work – no history and potential for squabbles over resources
- If Mottisfont would like to be part of Lockerley they would be most welcome
- Geographically appropriate, size of benefice at 2,600 – RURAL
- This would work well
- Based on how communities work and geographical links

## Variations

- Somborne with Ashley joining with current Braishfield benefice could be explored but would need HfD support in KS or too much for one person
- Need to drill down on the survey results – especially to reflect non-Church members and age demographic
- Deanery musical resource
- Like the idea of a ½ time post working for Kings Somborne for whole Deanery – youth?
- Could Longstock fit with Houghton and Broughton? Broughton is growing with new housing. Stockbridge, Somborne and Leckford to be a new team. *Related note:* a possibility? But would need a lot of goodwill and compromise.
- Kings Somborne House for Duty
- Romsey Abbey needs more stipendiary resource
- Surely Abbotswood is more naturally linked to Braishfield than Romsey
- As parishes we need to be producing LLMs. We have none at the moment.
- Romsey, additional F/T stipendiary priest at Romsey in light of existing and growing population
- ½ time shared with Romsey Abbey and older people's ministry and support
- Like idea of ½ time worker in Deanery who is a resource for us all
- Kings Somborne to be a House for Duty within the benefice of Braishfield, Awbridge, etc.
- How about a Team Ministry?
- Romsey linked with Timsbury, Lockerley linked with Awbridge, Sherfield English, Mottisfont
- I think Kings Somborne should go with the churches in Braishfield – as a House for Duty
- Recognition that Young People live in K with A [Kings Somborne with Ashley] (70% of children in old T.V. [Test Valley]). It is LARGEST RURAL population and has a higher number of poorer people. It should be the centre of a rural population. Benefice has a church school and would love to share
- Kings Somborne ½ time resident vicar ½ time post strategically employed to develop youth/children's ministry across the Deanery
- Somborne with Ashley: 'Young' Full time post then linked with smaller parishes e.g. Michelmersh, Farley, Braishfield. Not Northern area they are not rural. Somborne is of comparable size to Romsey. It should have its own Vicar/leader and then link smaller rural parishes to it.
- Option Three modified to put Houghton with Stockbridge et al and Broughton with Lockerley and Tytherley
- Kings Somborne to be integrated with Braishfield with a House for Duty priest
- Romsey to have an additional full-time post. Kings Somborne to have a House for Duty priest.
- Somborne with Ashley, essential resident vicar with perhaps other youth responsibilities.
- Need to remember history and traditional lines of communication/travel.
- Kings Somborne: to have a resident full-time vicar splitting time between us and another option specialising in something else.
- Suggest Stockbridge, Longstock and Leckford are joined by/with Broughton with Bossington and Houghton and Mottisfont – geographically sensible

## Next steps

Q: Who makes the final decision?

A: It is made by the Southern Area Mission and Pastoral Committee. This consists of: Area Deans; Assistant Area Deans; Lay Chairs of Deanery Synods; the Archdeacon; Bishop Jonathan. Today's discussions will go to November's meeting and a clearer proposition will be taken in January.

All of today's discussions need to be shared with and owned by PCCs as it affects all members of the Deanery family. All PCCs are encouraged to meet to discuss this. All feedback needs to be with the Lay Chair by the end of October. The Deanery Standing Committee will sharpen up the responses to go to the Mission and Pastoral Committee.

## And finally...

The Lay Chair paid tribute to Ron Corne and Tim Sledge, who are both leaving their posts on 17.09.2017. A presentation was made to Tim Sledge with the good wishes and prayers of the Deanery. The Lay Chair announced that James Pitkin will be the Acting Area Dean from 17.09.2017.

The meeting ended with the Grace.