

Marlborough Deanery Strategic Plan

February 2012

Foreword

This document is designed to update the Deanery Strategic Plan agreed in January 2009. The intervening period has seen a number of the aspirations of the earlier plan come to fruition and other aspirations fall by the wayside because a variety of factors.

The Deanery as an institution has, I believe, become stronger and more meaningful in its role in assisting our sixteen parishes with the mission of the Church.

- œ We now have Canon Andrew Studdert-Kennedy as our Rural Dean;
- œ We have a full complement of clergy in all our benefices and have had the pleasure of welcoming Simon, Candice and Maria in their posts;
- œ Three of our stipendiary posts now include a Deanery role that of Rural Dean, Education and Lay Training Officer and Mission and Development Officer;
- œ The Deanery Clergy Chapter is working well for the beneficial support of all our clergy;
- œ Clergy and lay ministers and other workers now assist across benefice boundaries when and where their skills and talents are needed;
- œ The Deanery Synod now has a more meaningful role helping initiate new policies for consideration among the parishes and acting by as a bridge between the parishes and the Diocese voting on policies that will affect the whole Anglican Church;
- œ There have been new joint forms of worship, such as the Healing and Ascension Services, that have been attended by people from across the Deanery;
- œ We have established a close working relationship with Pewsey Deanery with successful joint Chapter and Synod meetings to the benefit of both. The "Bishop's Debates" are a good example of such co-operation and illustration of the way Deaneries have a meaningful role in the wider community.
- œ A record number of Lay Pastoral Assistants have been trained from parishes across the Deanery, organised and delivered at a Deanery level;
- œ Policies on Communion before Confirmation and Communion by Extension have been agreed at Deanery Synod allowing for their adoption at parish level if appropriate;
- œ Through the role of the Deanery Mission and Development Officer, we have established a Chaplaincy presence (one day a week) at St. John's School and Community College in Marlborough – the secondary school that serves most of the Deanery.

- œ All our churches remain open and new forms of worship are being tried to breathe fresh spirit into the Church's role in our communities.

One of the aims of the 2009 plan stated "our vision is one where fragmentation is replaced by consolidation" and I believe in this, at least, we have succeeded.

The Deanery still faces challenges:

- œ The introduction of Common Tenure has meant that fixed term posts envisaged in the earlier plan are no longer an option which in turn makes required reductions in stipendiary clergy by 2016 look difficult to achieve;
- œ Numbers attending traditional worship are falling, but numbers at alternative services appear to be rising;
- œ The burden of Share in these times of financial constraint is increasingly dependent upon fewer individuals and fund-raising stewardship programs need to be revitalised;
- œ We need to attract younger people into the role of Lay leadership.

The plan put forward in this document has been created in discussion with the Clergy and others and will require the approval of the Deanery Synod. Should any PCC want further clarification of the aims and intentions, or want to discuss how in particular the plan may help the Church within their own parish, please feel free to contact me. I am happy to make myself available to attend PCC and Team meetings when possible.

- Richard Irwin
Lay-Chairman Marlborough Deanery Synod

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1) Aim

God's Church is a beacon that shows his love for all mankind. Our vision is one where, through the help the Deanery gives to its Parishes, we support the work of God in its central role in our communities through the love we show our neighbours and through the extension of the resources available for pastoral care. We aim to help with reversal of the trend towards secularisation and materialism by making the Church a rock and a sanctuary for those seeking spiritual fulfilment in their lives.

The aim and objective of this document is to provide a strategic overview of how this might be achieved. The tactical implementation of this strategy will be lead by the Rural Dean through the activities of the Clergy Chapter, ordained and lay, the Deanery Synod, the Parochial Parish Councils and the parishioners who are at the heart of our communities and for whose spiritual benefit and pastoral care the Church exists.

We know we will have succeeded if we see the living presence of Jesus in the lives of others around us increase and a growth in our fellowship. We hope that all our churches continue remain open serving as the symbol of a spiritual centre to each of our communities and we hope we will see our congregations grow in our worship in all its forms.

2) Metrics

The success of any strategy can only be measured on results and we aim to establish metrics by which success can be measured by trends over time. Deanery Synod will agree the metrics and the Deanery Information Officer be asked to coordinate their collection and analysis.

3) The Parish, The Benefice and The Deanery

The Parish is at the very centre of the Church's identity, particularly in rural areas. The combination of several parishes into a Benefice has been, with the decline in the number of stipendiary clergy, a practical necessity for managing resources locally, and is now accepted as such.

For this reason the importance of meeting the needs of the Parish remains central to our strategy as to weaken the Parish would most likely result in decline.

All ministers, ordained and lay, will continue to be licensed to a benefice, recognising their primary role and loyalty. At the same time the Deanery will play a supporting part with the recognition that specialist skills might be made needed in other parishes, they will also continue to be able to practice their ministry within the Deanery as a whole.

Benefices will be encouraged to hold joint PCC meetings to both reduce the burden of administration on incumbents, but also to build the common bonds between the Parishes of the Benefice.

Successful Deanery initiatives need to 'add value' and, as such, they need to do things that can be better done than at Benefice/Parish level on the one hand or at Diocesan level on the other.

The Deanery will seek to put mission at the heart of its activities, modelling Christ as we nurture and care for those already in our fellowships and putting time, energy and

imagination into reaching out to the disenfranchised, the unchurched and those on the fringe:

- ☞ We will seek Diocesan funding for a Lay Youth Worker post who can help with youth mission across the Deanery, but in particular at St John's in Marlborough where they can build upon the work recently started by our Deanery Mission Officer. We will seek to establish new opportunities for Youth Worship.
- ☞ We will commit to the recognition, encouragement and enabling of lay ministry in the parishes of the Deanery through new training initiatives, particularly in creating new leaders in worship to keep the work of God alive in all our parishes.
- ☞ If the effect of the decline in stipendiary ordained clergy (and the general decline in congregations) is to be halted and new ways of being church explored, a coherent and dynamic vision for local lay ministry is essential.
- ☞ We will continue to provide special services such as the Healing Service and Ascension Day Service to provide the opportunity to meet needs that might be difficult to achieve at a more local level and to provide a forum for communal gathering in worship of God for our brothers and sisters from across the Deanery. It will seek to bring together choirs from across the Deanery for joint services.
- ☞ We will provide resources for encouraging and sustaining parishes to follow the Church's Fresh Expressions initiative; which aims to resource mission through encouraging new and different expressions of Church life.
- ☞ We will work to improve ecumenical work and particularly work with the Methodist Section of Circuit on joint services and initiatives.
- ☞ We will create opportunities joint pilgrimages and spiritual retreats.