

# On the vine

## A Longer Read: Dynamic and Collaborative Leadership

*In our series that explores our 3 new Diocesan priorities for growth that continue to strengthen our vision of 'Renewing Hope: Pray-Serve-Grow', we invite you to read a bit more about the second. This week's Longer Read looks at how dynamic collaborative leadership is being encouraged and supported across our Diocese.*

We are continuing to reflect on our renewed Renewing Hope vision, which was affirmed at the Diocesan Synod on the 29th February.

The second priority area within our renewed vision is Dynamic and Collaborative Leadership.

Little did we know then, that less than a month after re-affirming our commitment to Renewing Hope, our church buildings would be closed, public worship would be suspended, and life as we previously knew it would look - and feel - so very different.

In this new and emerging landscape, many of our familiar ways of working, places and ways of worshipping have changed. For some this is a painful time as familiar anchor points have disappeared, whilst for others it is a time of opportunity and discovering new ways of being, and expressing our faith through connecting with a wider local and global family.

But in this crisis, we are seeing dynamic collaborative leadership coming to the fore, and being mirrored across the Diocese from the Jurassic coast through the Wessex Downs to the M4.

We have the Winterbourne Valley and Milton Abbas Benefice using Lay Worship Leaders and Lay Pastoral Assistants and their Lay Pioneers to share the love of God across their 6 villages during an interregnum. [Read more...](#)

Then there are the 5 churches in Weymouth where a partnership between Community Chaplain Neil Biles and Lay Minister Carl Whitehouse are working alongside the Revd Jo Haine to make sure all members of their congregation and wider community are ministered to during this Crisis. [Read more...](#)

While over at Bemerton Parish, licenced clergy and lay worship leaders collaborated, leading their first online service. [Read more...](#)

Just 3 small examples of the many ways we are collaborating in leadership now, in ways that can project into the future.

These emerging patterns of worship, mission and ministry will require us all to work together, affirming and celebrating the gifts and skills in one another as we seek to serve together.

We recognise that in order to nurture and grow a flourishing Christian presence in every community, we need to further invest in and develop dynamic and collaborative leadership between clergy and laity, churches, schools and the wider community.

While affirming and keeping what is good, we need to look beyond traditional ways of working, releasing each person, child and adult to fulfil their calling and potential as disciples of the Jesus and servants of the Kingdom. Therefore, our focus for dynamic and collaborative leadership will be on:

- Encouraging and enabling people to share their gifts and skills of leadership
- Encouraging and equipping children and young people in our churches and schools to become the leaders of today, as well as the future
- Sharing a common purpose among all God's people, of being Church and of building community
- Increasing the number of curates
- Embedding a genuinely localised strategy in which ministry resources and mission challenges can be mapped and matched
- Developing local hubs that re-imagine clergy and laity ministry and training
- Working in partnership, as the DBF and DBE, supporting the work of churches and schools

We believe that the above are significant ingredients in building and creating a way of life that will further grow the Kingdom of God across the Diocese and beyond. By investing in dynamic collaborative leadership, we are seeking to develop new partnerships, release greater creativity, encourage imagination and innovation, and together step boldly and courageously into the future.

How will we know if we have been successful? We will have:

- Moved away from a clergy-centric model of ministry, to one that affirms the whole people of God and the unique contribution that each one of us is called to make. In the process, releasing the energy of our priests to focus on discipleship, evangelism, fostering vocations, pastoral care and prayer amongst other things
- Found a space where the leadership of children and young people is valued, sought, affirmed and encouraged
- Created a culture of vocation that equally affirms those who are called to lay ministry as well as those called to be ordained
- Strengthened the links between our churches, schools and households, developing their potential not just as worshipping communities, but also missional ones
- Re-defined our Deaneries as centres of mission and outreach, drawing on the wide and diverse skills that already exist within our communities
- Broken away from traditional silo working within the DBF and the DBE, recognising our common strengths, gifts and skills and the positive synergy that is emerging
- Re-imagined the way through which we train and equip clergy and laity to better resource them spiritually, professionally and emotionally (wellbeing)

It is too early to anticipate what the Church will look like post-coronavirus, but I think it is fair to suggest that in many places it won't be the same. Within this, there will be tears shed for what has been, but also hope renewed at what the Holy Spirit is birthing in us and through us as we journey together.