

Yellow Paper B

BISHOP'S COUNCIL AND STANDING COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Bishop of Carlisle
Secretary: Mr Derek Hurton

Report of the meeting held at Rydal Hall on Wednesday, 11th September 2019

Present:- The Bishop of Carlisle (in the Chair), the Dean, the Archdeacon of Carlisle, the Archdeacon of West Cumberland, the Archdeacon of Westmorland and Furness, the Revd R P Ham, the Revd A B Norman, the Revd S Thompson, Mr A R H Cook, Mrs V Hallard, Mr C Howarth, Mr D Hurton, Mr J A E Johnson.

In attendance:- Mr M Mill, Mr R Jaques, Mr D Roberts, Canon C Butland.

Apologies for absence were received from:- The Bishop of Penrith, the Revd J Maycock, the Revd A Towner, Dr C Angus, Mr M Wilson .

Matters Arising from the Minutes

Other than those on the agenda. Bishop James reported that Laura Peace, the Deputy Diocesan Registrar and Bishop's Legal Officer had been appointed as Diocesan Registrar and Bishop's Legal Officer after an interview. She would take over from Jane Lowdon at Easter 2020 with a managed transition.

Steering Committee Report

The Council received the report of the meeting held on 11th September 2019.

God for All

In the absence the Bishop of Penrith, Derek Hurton introduced this item which was in three parts. The first part addressed the process that was being suggested for the refresh of the God for All vision and strategy. That strategy currently stretched only to the end of 2020. The process was in five parts: a period of prayer; a period of listening – both to God and to each other; time to analyse what came out of the period of listening and to develop initial proposals for the future; consultation on the proposals; and, finally, formal approval of the refreshed vision and strategy. We were coming towards the end of the first element, ie the 100 Days of Prayer and would soon start 100 Days of Listening. The intention was to seek a wide range of views about how the strategy could be improved and enhanced for the coming years. The starting assumption was that the vision and strategy would not change dramatically, but this was obviously dependent upon the outcomes of the 100 Days of Listening. There had been a meeting of ecumenical leaders to develop a set of ideas which would form part of the basis of the listening exercise, but these ideas would not be exclusive and any and all views would be gratefully received. There was a timeline showing when the outcomes from the listening exercise would be considered by different groups within the ecumenical county.

The Council questioned whether the listening exercise was intended to gather views only from within the Church or whether we wanted to hear what our wider communities felt about the future mission of the church. Church members involved in the consultation would be encouraged to engage with their wider communities and to feed back the views expressed in their responses. It was suggested that the timeline should include reference to the planned renewal of the ecumenical covenanted partnership in 2021.

The second part of the item addressed the proposed application for Strategic Development Funding from the Church Commissioners. Mr Hurton reminded the Council that our “stage 1” application had been successful and that we now had to submit a substantial, detailed second stage application. The Council had been provided with the draft application as it currently stood, along with the detailed plan for its submission. Mr Hurton drew the Council’s attention to the report drafted by Chris Angus who was undertaking much of the work to pull the application together.

The process for producing the second stage application had been initiated at a workshop at Kendal facilitated by two of the key members of the Strategic Development Unit from Church House, Westminster. Following the workshop we had drawn up the detailed plan for the submission that had been circulated to the Council). We needed to submit our application by 1 November and would find out in early December if we had been successful. The bid was based on promoting pioneering ministry through the appointment of “Pioneer Practitioner Enabler” posts in Barrow, the west coast and Carlisle along with one to establish a county-wide Outdoors and Education fresh expression of church. A detailed consultation plan for the local designs had been created. The first round of consultation with key people and players in each area had been carried out in August. The feedback had been positive with a number of very sensible suggestions. Once all the feedback had been considered there would be a wider consultation.

Points made in the discussion included:

- The importance of engaging lay people locally so that they could see how they could contribute both to the pioneering work envisaged by the SDF application and to wider areas. This could include roles that were not in ministry, but which would have benefits to the church.
- The need to ensure that the proposals funded by the application were sustainable into the future.
- There was a proposal to think further about the ecclesiology of fresh expressions of church.
- The idea that at some point we would need to decide whether the future of the church lay in fresh expressions or in the more traditional forms of church. This suggestion prompted a discussion about the importance of maintaining the mixed economy of church that the previous Archbishop had spoken about. There was a clear financial contrast between fresh expressions of church, which were typically low cost but had not generated income for the Diocese, and the more traditional forms of church, which were expensive but continued to pay substantial Parish Offer to the Diocese.
- Whether candidates for any new posts would be head-hunted or whether posts would be advertised. The answer was that there would be a mixed approach, with

the norm being to advertise, but with suitable candidates also identified and encouraged to apply.

- The possibilities of learning from the work of the national “estates evangelism” team to inform the work of the new pioneers in the urban areas of Carlisle, the West Coast and Barrow.

Mr Hurton introduced the third item under God for All: potential Strategic Ministry Funding from the Church Commissioners. This was being made available to support Dioceses to train and deploy into curacies the additional clergy resulting from the national initiative to increase ordination numbers by 50% pa. Funding would be available to pay the payroll and housing (but not training) costs of additional stipendiary curates starting in 2020. Further rounds of funding would be available in 2021+ but might be based on a different set of criteria and application process.

In our current 6 year budget period (2015-2020) we had scaled back substantially on the number of stipendiary curates in the Diocese because of financial pressure and the smaller number of vacancies resulting from the overall reduction in clergy numbers. This had resulted in the number of stipendiary curates falling from 16-18 (in 2015 & 2016) to a planned 8 in 2020 (without any additional curacies funded by the SMF) and 11 in 2021. Without the additional SMF funding we had planned to take 3 stipendiary curates in 2020. Following discussions at the Bishop’s Staff meeting we were proposing to apply for funding for three additional curates in 2020. Bishop James felt that in the context of the recent decline in clergy numbers this would be a great encouragement to the local church. If successful, the plan would be to allocate one additional curate to each Archdeaconry. We would need to work hard to ensure that curates remained in the Diocese at the end of their training.

Parish Offer Review

The report on the pilot scheme was introduced by Ric Jaques. Mr Jaques reminded the Council that in March 2018 the Diocesan Synod had approved progressing the Review to a pilot stage with 6 Mission Communities, with a view to setting their 2019/20/21 Offers as part of that year’s process.

The pilot phase had taken longer than anticipated, and had been extended into 2019 with some additional emerging Mission Communities joining the conversations. Based on the knowledge and experience gained in the pilot phase the plan was to proceed with adopting the piloted approach across the Diocese and county as a whole, subject to Synod’s approval in October.

The paper for the item was accompanied by a “guide” which set out how the system would operate in the future. It addressed areas such as the Mission Community basis for future offers, but with full cooperation and agreement of constituent parishes and churches; the continued aspiration for Parish Offer plus parochial fees and rent on vacant parsonages to equate to the costs of local ministry; realism and generosity continuing as key themes underpinning the system; an approach based on conversations between representatives of the Diocese, including Archdeacons, and representatives from a Mission Community;

flexibility over the details of operation so that local contexts and ideas could be respected; an attempt to agree three year aspirations for Mission Communities' Offers; continued communications about the issues and process similar to those adopted in 2019; and the promotion of good stewardship practices in our churches.

Mr Jaques reiterated the fundamental importance of the Parish Offer to our financial sustainability. If the Offer did not keep pace with clergy cost inflation after 2020 and other things remained equal, it was hard to see how the Diocese would remain financially sustainable.

The Council agreed that the proposals should go forward to the DBF Finance Committee and Synod for further discussion and approval. The Venerable Richard Pratt, Archdeacon of West Cumberland, suggested that Mission Communities might be encouraged to set aspirations for the proportion of local ministry costs that their Offers covered. These could help to set a direction of travel even if they could not immediately be achieved. They would also help the DBF get a feel for future affordability. In Derwent Deanery there was an approach that included sharing parishes' plans for mission and their annual reports and accounts as the basis for open and transparent discussions about who could contribute what.

The need to continue to invest time in communications and conversations about the Offer was emphasised strongly. Council members commented on the difficult financial situations in which many parishes found themselves. Where offers were being reduced this was typically because parish income was no longer sufficient to maintain them at their previous levels, never mind increase them. Bishop James commented that many Dioceses were only surviving financially by selling assets and spending the sale proceeds. Deficits of over a million pounds a year were now not uncommon. The Venerable Vernon Ross, Archdeacon of Westmorland and Furness suggested that it was easy to slip from financial viability to bankruptcy as once deficits arose they could grow very quickly.

Board of Education

The DBE's Annual Report was introduced by Mr Michael Mill. The report had a new format in an attempt to make the presentation clearer. Highlights in the report included:

- The Headteachers' Conference
- Work to resource schools
- Addressing viability in the context of historically low birth rates in Cumbria
- Embracing and being at the forefront of new national initiatives including leadership and headteachers' professional qualifications
- Positive news on school performance in the face of the vulnerabilities inherent in small schools
- Progress with developing the Multi Academy Trust and the standards achieved by the schools within it
- Proposals for training for corporate members of stand-alone academy trusts
- The successful annual school leavers' service at the Cathedral

Richard Pratt expressed significant thanks to Mr Mill for his work and that of the Board of Education in challenging times. In the discussion Mr Mill suggested that local communities needed to be open to models of federation and sharing resources if their local schools were to remain open. When a school was under threat, ultimately, the key issue was whether it could provide the quality of education that local children deserved.

Feedback from June Synod

There was no feedback.

New Website

Dave Roberts, the Diocesan Communications Manager, presented the new website. It was the Diocese's most important outward facing communications tool and would be launched at the very beginning of October. The content of the existing site would be archived so that it continued to be available if required, but would not be found by search engines. The Council welcomed the new design and content.

Deanery Synod Elections

The Council approved the following formula for election by parishes in 2020 to go to forward to Diocesan Synod:

<u>Deanery Synod Elections</u>					
Rule 25(1) of the Church Representation Rules is amended so that, in deciding numbers to be elected to deanery synods, a diocesan synod may have regard to the number of parish churches (or districts) in each parish, as well as to electoral roll numbers.					
The formula for the election by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to the House of Laity of the Deanery Synod is as follows:-					
	1	2	3	4	5 or over
Number of ecclesiastical districts or parish churches in the parish (whichever is greater)					
Number on Roll					
1-25	1	1	1	1	1
26 -100	2	2	2	2	2
101 -200	3	4	4	4	two additional members per additional district or parish
201 -300	4	5	5	5	two additional members per additional district or parish

301 -400	5	6	7	8	two additional members per additional district or parish
401 -500	6	7	8	8	two additional members per additional district or parish
501 -750	7	8	9	10	two additional members per additional district or parish
751 – 1000	8	9	10	11	two additional members per additional district or parish
over 1000	9	10	11	12	two additional members per additional district or parish

Vacancy in See Committee

Mr Hurton reported on the outcome of elections to fill casual vacancies on the Committee. The Measure required Dioceses to seek appropriate geographical and gender balance in their committees, but in our case the elections had resulted in continued under representation from the West of the Diocese and of women. Council members were asked to consider who could be co-opting to the Committee to provide the appropriate balance in these respects. Up to 4 people could be co-opted.

Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committees

The draft minutes of the following Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committees were received.

- Archdeaconry of Westmorland and Furness 5th September 2019
- Archdeaconry of West Cumberland 10th September 2019
- Archdeaconry of Carlisle 3rd October 2019

Bishop James reported on the state of play in the Cartmel Peninsula Team Ministry. The Council had previously discussed the approach to be taken to possible pastoral reorganisation of the Team. A draft scheme had been drawn up which would have divided the Team into three new benefices. Informal consultations with the constituent parishes had shown that there were differences of opinion about the way forward, including the arrangements for appointing the first incumbents of new benefices. Legal advice had suggested that if those differences were subsequently submitted as formal objections to the scheme, they were likely to be given considerable weight in its determination. The Bishop had therefore concluded that it would be sensible to reconsider. He was very aware of the wider difficulties in the team and was determined to try to find a solution, but the situation was extremely complicated.

Bishop James reported on correspondence from the Bishop of one of our partner Dioceses, Northern Argentina, Nick Drayson, who was seeking financial support for the refurbishment of their Diocesan retreat house. The Council supported the Bishop approaching parishes to ask if they would consider making a donation towards this very good cause.