

## 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 9<sup>th</sup> November

Present: - The Bishop of Carlisle (in the Chair), The Archdeacon of Westmorland and Furness, the Archdeacon of West Cumberland, the Associate Archdeacon of West Cumberland, the Revd R P Ham, The Revd J Maycock, the Revd A B Norman, the Revd S Thompson, the Revd A Towner, Dr C Angus, Mr A R H Cook, Mr C Howarth, Mr D Hurton, Mr J A E Johnson, Mr N Barrett & Mr M Lawson.

In attendance: - Canon C Butland, Mrs C Bell, Mr R Jaques, Miss K Roughton, Mrs S Hodge, Miss A Newlove.

Devotions were led by Revd Shanthi Thompson.

Apologies for absence: Apologies were received from the Bishop of Penrith and Mrs R Milburn.

The Council approved the minutes of the meeting of Bishop's Council held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

Matters Arising: At the last meeting a member raised the question as to what has been progressed since the last Clergy and Employee survey was conducted in 2021. Derek Hurton gave an update on the approach being taken to providing wellbeing support within the Diocese.

The results and actions from the 2021 survey were discussed at the Bishop's Council Residential meeting in January 2022 and that meeting gave a steer for the next steps of work. There is a steering group that reviews the provision for clergy well-being for the diocese. This draws together strands from across the diocese and reviews and oversees the implementation of the clergy well-being strategy. It comprises Archdeacon Vernon Ross, Revd Nicky Smith, Ali Ng and Alison Fleetwood.

The approach to well-being is both preventative and reactive, including crisis interventions where required. Broadly speaking, Ali Ng heads up the reactive areas and Nicky Smith leads on the preventative measures. There is a wide-ranging suite of resources available, most of which are promoted on the Diocesan website. Specific events forming part of the suite in 2023 include a Sanctuary Day led by Christopher Landau and a Zoom event that tackles a relevant subject such as resilience in ministry. Clergy well-being is always addressed in some form at the CMDD event where all clergy are gathered.

In the discussion the following points/questions were raised:-

- The provision of sanctuary days was generally well received but there was a danger that they included too much content, thereby limiting the extent to which they genuinely allowed participants the time and space needed to engage with the subject. Future

days could include more time and space for individual conversations, personal prayer and reflection.

- Before the pandemic the percentage of the population suffering from mental unhealth of one sort or another, particularly anxiety and depression, was in the region of 8%. During the pandemic and subsequently that figure has gone up to 30%.
- At some stage we could usefully look at wellbeing support for laity in our parishes, on whom we rely to an increasing extent and who fill increasingly pressured roles.
- We adopted nationally the clergy well-being covenant a year or so ago. This included many points that were relevant to the well-being agenda but could easily get lost. Could the covenant be built into the Archdeacons' Visitations to see how parishes were working through its recommendations?
- There was a question as to the extent the range of support available is actually accessed by clergy. In response Bishop James reported that in his experience a significant number of clergy use one or another of the provisions, particularly IDCS, the Inter Diocesan Counselling Service. The Occupational Health services provided by Thrive worldwide were also accessed both for specific cases and as part of clergy recruitment.

Feedback from October Synod: Bishop James invited comment on the October meeting of Diocesan Synod at Newbiggin Village Hall. Jim Johnston commented that there were some very good presentations including the preview of the Bishops' God for All roadshows that have been taking place subsequently. He was surprised how easily the 5 year budget had been accepted as it contains a lot of challenges, but the mood was very positive.

Other comments supported that view, with the sense that both Bishops James and Rob did an excellent job of delivering the God for All presentation. It was clear, thorough and exciting to listen to, showing continuity with the past, but also a renewed hope. Derek Hurton had set out the financial context and approach to the budget in a very compelling fashion.

#### Reports of Other Workstreams:

Carbon Neutral 2030 Annual Report: Anna Newlove introduced the report. The national Routemap to Net Zero was endorsed by General Synod in July. This sets out milestones for Diocese to meet, along with milestones for each building type in scope. One of the big tasks begun in 2022 was to create decarbonization plans setting out how each of the in-scope areas for the 2030 target will get to net zero. The routemap indicates we need these plans to be developed by the end of 2023.

The other major work for 2022 was to calculate the baseline emissions for the diocese. That was done using the Energy Footprint Tool and suggested that our baseline emissions were 8,363 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> which ranks us 23<sup>rd</sup> of 41 diocese nationally. We are expected to make annual reports to Diocesan Synod from 2023 onwards setting how decarbonization plans are progressing and how emissions are reducing and also to report to General Synod in 2025, 2028 and 2031.

For local churches the focus this year has been on increasing engagement with A Rocha UK's Eco Church scheme. In the diocese we now have 53 churches in total who are registered with the scheme in some way. 16 of those have a bronze award, 3 have a silver and two are gold Eco Churches.

Raising awareness of the target and what can be done to achieve it, including drip-feeding resources, has also been a focus for schools for 2022, with a 'Net Zero Corner' being included in weekly emails and changes to the SCA bid template letter to encourage consideration of the use of more environmentally friendly materials. Funding remains a challenge, with a number of Salix Public Sector Decarbonisation funding bids from the Diocese being unsuccessful due to the high level of competition in the application process.

Cumbria Action for Sustainability have undertaken audits of Church House and a cross-section of clergy housing this year. These audits analysed the current energy consumption and provided costed actions to reduce this to reach net zero. There is no one size fits all approach to retrofitting buildings but key recommendations include improving insulation, LED lighting, ensuring all glazing is double glazing, draught proofing, regular maintenance and switching to renewable energy suppliers. Bigger actions, such as solar pv or heat pumps, are context-dependent.

Looking forward to 2023, the national routemap sets the target for every Diocese to share their decarbonisation plan with Diocesan Synod in the coming year. Decarbonisation plans for each in scope area in the Diocese are already in development, so a key action for 2023 will be to finalise these and bring them together into one plan.

As the Energy Footprint Tool returns rate for churches was down in 2022 from 2021, work in 2023 will focus on improving this. Once identified, there will be specific, phased support for the top 20% of energy consuming churches. The plan is to pilot this in one church, providing support to complete the Practical Path to Net Zero document, before developing and rolling it out to other churches. We will also continue to promote Eco Church.

As a way of encouraging net zero actions, the decision has been made to have annual 'quick win' themes. The first theme is LED lighting, as this is one of the most practical and affordable changes to reduce energy use, costs and carbon emissions. The 2023 LED Challenge will cover all in-scope buildings in various ways, including replacing bulbs in vicarages and churches. There are also plans to test out the approach for housing on a pilot property, namely the replacement Grasmere rectory.

Reaching Deeper: Reaching Deeper is approaching the halfway point in the life of the project. Kerry Roughton highlighted that the programme management office will be making a concerted effort over the next few months to work with the individual Reaching Deeper strands of work to assess outcomes and sustainability.

During the discussion the following questions/comments were raised:-

- Two local stipendiary posts advertised recently have a pioneering focus. How do these connect to the Reaching Deeper project and its national funding stream?

Ans: One of these posts was at Westfield, Workington. Richard Passmore, who is Programme Director for Reaching Deeper, has been very involved in helping formulate that role, working closely with the Archdeacon. The role itself is largely being funded by the Church Commissioners as a 'post of first responsibility'. This is in addition to the funding for Reaching Deeper but should be encouraged to make connections to Reaching Deeper.

- With regards to the West Coast resignation, are there any lessons that could be applied more broadly?

Ans: An important piece of learning is about how to scope expected outcomes and targets with the pioneers when their work is by nature quite hard to plan in detail at the outset.

- What are the main learnings so far from the project?

Ans: An important learning point has been around the continued impact of the pandemic in terms of organisations - such as schools – and individuals feeling unready to commit to new activities and initiatives. In terms of what is working well, the overall design of the programme included a strand of Pioneers working with churches and Mission Communities who want to do something new. A learning point in that respect is that where those relationships are strong this strand is doing particularly well, but the relationships don't grow by themselves.

Parish/Mission Community Offer: Sophie Hodge introduced the Parish/Mission Community Offer paper. She remarked that Diocesan Synod have passed a very ambitious budget within which Parish Offer is assumed to increase by 3% in 2024 and 2% from 2025 onwards. This is in the context of a Parish Offer which has fallen in real terms by 40% over the last 10 years and has fallen in cash terms in almost every year in that period. The budget assumptions could therefore be described as cautiously optimistic, with the optimism based on the fact that the Offers for 2023 showed the highest increase in the last 10 years.

As part of efforts to reverse the trend we have introduced the concept of Mission Community Offers whereby churches in a Mission Community come together to collectively discuss the resourcing of mission and ministry in their locality. This addresses both the deployment of ministry and the finances to pay for it. The aim is that Mission Communities will eventually feel able to enter a three year 'covenant' with the Diocese in which each side commits to an agreed level of finance and deployment for the duration of the covenant period. This process has gained traction in the West archdeaconry over the last couple of years and in 2022 it was rolled out to parts of the North and South archdeaconries too. Where we saw a greater degree of engagement with the process in 2022 the Offer increases for 2023 looked to be higher and where Mission Community Offers or covenants were put in place then the increases were on average higher than in those places that just followed the parish by parish offer approach.

The new process aims to increase the sense of partnership between the Diocese and local church, increase levels of accountability between churches and increase a sense of local ownership at Mission Community level. Tentatively, it seems this is an effective strategy.

Given the critical place that the Offer has within the budget and the need for the budget to be realised in order to delivery on the wider Diocesan Vision and Strategy, the Offer will need to be a top priority at all levels of the Diocese in 2023. The Diocesan Finance Team and archdeacons have evaluated the 2022 process from their own experience and have also held two focus groups with Mission Community leaders. The learning from all this is helping to discern how we improve the effectiveness of the process next year and inform the support we are able to offer Mission Communities.

We received very positive feedback from Mission Community leaders on the importance of the meetings that were held between Mission Communities and the Diocese. Mission Community leaders felt these supported them in their role, increased financial understanding across the Mission Community and created a greater sense of partnership between Mission Communities and the Diocese. These meetings were also seen as a good first step in terms of getting parishes to share financial information and beginning to trust one another and build relationships. A couple of Mission Community leaders felt that Offers had been significantly increased as a direct result of these meetings. Given the agreed priority to be given to the Offer in the coming years, we will seek to continue to meet with as many Mission Communities as possible, despite the significant time investment this requires of Archdeacons and Diocesan staff.

In terms of developing and improving the process to be followed in 2023 a number of steps have been identified. The schedule of meetings will be refined to align with the existing church calendar and we will seek to be more flexible in our timings. Some of our communications in 2022 positively challenged and encouraged greater generosity in some contexts, but then discouraged it in other contexts, encouraging instead a 'pay for what you get' mentality. Therefore, we will be more bespoke in the communications we send to Mission Communities in 2023, liaising with Mission Community leaders to ascertain what is useful in their contexts. Some of our more ecumenical Mission Communities found our communications 'muddied the water' or created confusion so we will closely with Mission Community leaders to ensure our communications work for ecumenical contexts. Almost without exception, Mission Community leaders emphasised the importance of seeing this process, and Mission Communities in general, as a way of enabling mission and ministry in local communities and this will be a focus of our communications.

We are committing, as a diocesan team, to try and encourage most Mission Communities to move forward in the process this year, but we will work with Mission Community leaders sense of what is possible and appropriate in each local situation. We will attempt to meet as a Diocesan Team with every Mission Community that is attempting a Mission Community Offer or embarking on a Covenant. We will tailor communications to the specific Mission Community contexts and make our Offers part of our collective worship through the admission of churchwarden's services. We will ensure we follow through on our promise to create greater levels of ownership at Mission Community level by developing episcopal/local church agreements on resourcing Mission Communities in terms of deployment and finance.

The main risks to the Offer and therefore to the Diocesan Budget are that: inflation may end up at a higher level in future years than the budget predicts; that the Offer increase seen in 2023 is more a

'bounce back' from the 12% COVID drop in 2020, rather than a result of this new approach; that Mission Communities are not sufficiently developed to be able to engage meaningfully with the process; and that the Diocese is viewed as lacking credibility and therefore fails to engender a sense of ownership at local level around resourcing and deployment plans.

In light of feedback that was received during the roll out of the Offer this year changes to the terminology 'Parish Offer' and 'Covenant' are recommended. The suggestion is that Ministry Offer will replace Parish Offer, and Mission and Ministry Partnership Agreement will replace Covenant, with this commonly being called simply a Partnership Agreement. Bishop's Council agreed to the changes in the language.

God for All: Kerry Roughton gave a brief update on Mission Community data and the God for All 'Current State Assessment'. The current state assessment was carried out in late spring and early summer of 2022 and was intended to establish baseline information across the county as a whole, built up from data on individual Mission Communities. It would help with developing the strategy and inform work on Mission Community development. The data collected included information on lay and ordained ministry, church officers, buildings, finance, attendance, population, and demographics. Where possible it was collected ecumenically. In the future we want to focus on data that helps us to get a feel for how Mission Communities are developing and the impact that the implementation of the God for All vision and strategy is having.

Stewart Fyfe introduced the Mission Communities Development Working Group paper. The Working Group was set up by the Operations Group in May 2022 to scope, plan and resolve issues and progress tasks surrounding MC development in the Ecumenical County.

The intention is to create three items to help with this work: first, a framework that gives a vision of what Mission Communities are; second, a matrix that can be given to Mission Communities to help them to plan in a way that's consistent with the overall Diocesan Vision and approach to Strategic Planning; and third, a framework by which they will be assessed as a Mission Communities and held to account for their development.

The assessment process will involve 6 essential key tasks: to establish patterns of prayer; to ensure that their whole approach to ministry and mission is collaborative; to make the most of the ministry gifts by which God has endowed his Church; to work together to resource the Church's mission; to encourage the discipleship and spiritual growth of all Christians; to devise effective ways of working together, giving mission communities the structure they need to be able to plan effectively together; and to resource and undertake mission and outreach together.

During the discussion the following comments/questions were made: -

- It is important to shatter the myth that there are no concrete expectations about Mission Communities. This belief has allowed some places to drift. Having the

assessment criteria and tasks described will make a real difference to this and is to be applauded.

- There is a risk that Anglican language dominates the documents and discussion and that this can be off-putting for the other partners.
- Capacity to support mission communities in their development is a gap that needs to be addressed.
- The God for All implementation plan follows on from the vision and strategy work. It sets out the milestones and actions required to implement the different component strategies, identifies the key risks and dependencies and suggests what capacity and resources are needed for implementation. The biggest dependency and risk highlighted is around the capacity to support Mission Community development and the mitigation against that risk is to apply for external funding.

Archdeaconry Review Group: Cameron Butland gave an update including the main themes that are emerging from the review. Several submissions of ideas and reflections have been received and these have prompted conversations within the review group and more widely. He made clear that the customer for the review is the Bishop's Council. The Council will discuss the detail in January at their residential meeting and proposals will then be presented to Diocesan Synod in March.

Bishops James highlighted that the Bishop's Leadership Team discussed the Archdeaconry Review at their residential meeting. Associated work included Bishop Rob and James Tebbutt exploring the scope to simplify structures and free people up at all levels to focus on leading in mission. This will have implications for the sort of leadership required in the future and the sort of role and tasks that can best be undertaken by archdeacons.

It was agreed that the archdeacons should provide written reflections on the issues for the Council's residential discussion.

Steering Committee Report: The Council received the report of the meeting held on 7th September 2022.

To note items covered at recent meetings of the Bishop's Leadership Team: The Council received the paper setting out the items covered at recent meetings of the Bishop's Leadership Team.

Mission and Pastoral Committee Matters: The following draft minutes of the Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committees were received by the Council:

Archdeaconry of Westmorland and Furness	15 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2022
Archdeaconry of West Cumberland	13 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2022
Archdeaconry of Carlisle	22 <sup>nd</sup> Sept 2022

Chris Angus informed the council that he will be the Bishop's Council representative on the selection panel for a new Dean of Carlisle Cathedral. He invited Bishop's Council members to send him any ideas they have about what we should be looking for in a new Dean.