

Archdeaonries Review Diocesan Synod Proposal

Saturday 11th March 2023

1. Background – in 2020 the Diocesan Synod agreed to reduce the number of senior clerical posts to four. Following the departure of Bishop Emma in May 2021 there was a debate as to the make-up of these posts. The Rev'd Preb Stephen Lynas was invited by Bishop James to complete and external review and his report was published. The Bishop's Council in January 2022 decided to support Bishop James in appointing a new suffragan bishop in the light of the Lynas report and encouragement from the Dioceses Commission. At the same time the Archdeaonries Review Group (ARG) was appointed to look at the options for reducing the number from three to two. The ARG report was made available in October 2022 and comments were invited, and is Paper A attached to this document. Over twenty written submissions were received but in addition there were many more conversations in various synods, boards and BLT meetings. The varying views were summarised at the Bishop's Council on 21st January 2023, where it was agreed to fulfil the 2020 Diocesan Synod resolution by moving to two archdeaonries and two archdeacons. However it was also agreed to submit a bid for a grant to appoint MC development officers in each archdeaonry to support both the archdeacons, MC leaders and local lay leaders.
2. Following the Bishop's Council discussion on Saturday 21st January Derek Hurton and Bishop Rob met with Rod McPhee from the national church, who is the contact for the diocese with regard to future funding bids appointed by the Archbishop's Council. The meeting was to discuss the possibilities of funding from the national church for the new strategy including reducing the number of archdeaonries.
3. Rod McPhee in conversation made it clear that there should be support not simply for developing MCs but also in assisting with the changes to the archdeaonries and the number of archdeacons.
4. Rod McPhee indicated that a bid from the diocese would be welcomed for both MC development officers in each archdeaonry and also for an interim archdeacon to ease the changeover in the number of archdeacons. In essence it is for Dioceses to make the case for whatever arrangement they think is necessary to implement their vision and strategy. There is no national blueprint.
5. The ARG then met again to review the new advice from the national church and were of the view that the conversation with Rod McPhee didn't change the direction of travel, rather how the diocese arrives at its objective. Having an interim archdeacon would smooth the process and provide capacity to support Mission Community development. It is important though that the Bishop's Council and Diocesan Synod, as well as everyone who took the trouble to respond to the consultation realise that the diocese is still moving to: four senior clergy, that this will not increase the diocesan budget and that within five years there will be two archdeaonries. Within that time period retirements and appointments can be managed to ensure that this end point is achieved.

6. Appointing an archdeacon to fill the Archdeaconry of Carlisle (with a clear requirement to accept a subsequent change of role – to become one of two Archdeacons - and probably to move house once the permanent arrangement was put in place) would enable a managed implementation of the shift to two Archdeaconries and provide continuity through that shift.
7. Church Commissioners' grant funding for this approach would need to be secured for four to five years.
8. In the event that Church Commissioners' funding was not awarded, further work would be needed to plan for and manage a transition to two archdeaconries in the coming months.
9. This strategy was agreed by the Bishop's Council on 28th February and it was agreed that the following proposal should be made to the March Diocesan Synod.

Revised Bishop's Council Proposal for the March Diocesan Synod

10. The Bishop's Council recommend approval of the following proposal to the Diocesan Synod on 11th March:
 - a) that a scheme be developed to create two archdeaconries within five years,
 - b) that a bid to the Church Commissioners be made to enable this process to happen, and to be proactive in developing the missional capacity of the county's MCs,
 - c) that a plan be drawn up with a timeline marking the key stages and supporting the following appointments:
 - i) covering the appointment of specialist development officers to work with the archdeacons in supporting MCs and
 - ii) a new Archdeacon of Carlisle who would be appointed on the basis of the interim fundingAn outline draft timeline with indicative milestones is attached in Paper B attached to this document.
 - d) that the archdeacons to have new job descriptions to be agreed by the September Bishop's Council to be reviewed regularly as these roles change.

2nd March 2023