

Ministry and Mission Plan 2006

The Deanery wishes to pay tribute to the hard work and commitment shown by many of our parishes, Clergy and PCC's in the provision of Parish Plans, which formed the basis of the Deanery Plan accepted by Synod in 2005, and this Ministry and Mission Plan 2006.

The salient facts about our Deanery have not changed since the Plans 2000 and 2005: that we are primarily rural, traditional parishes within a very large area geographically, having only one main population centre in Amesbury, and with a large military presence throughout. The concept of a 'super garrison' at Tidworth seems likely to be more important as time goes by. We need to develop links with the military at a higher level than the resident Padre, as personalities constantly change, frustrating long-term planning.

Ministry Teams The move from looking simply at what Stipendiary Clergy we have ('our Vicar'), to looking at 'Ministry Teams', seems well under way. With the advent of OLM and NSM Ministry, and greater numbers of Readers and LPA's, we have an increased number of 'Ministers' now than we have had for a long time. Every parish is involved in the continuing process of discernment of Vocations, and ongoing training is in place. There is a feeling of the 'people of God' working and taking responsibility together. Help with the development of voluntary ministry would be appreciated, as there is a projected growth of numbers by 2010 indicated in figures from parish plans.

Ecumenism There are few other Denominations with churches in our Deanery (see Plan 2000). Ecumenical work is therefore not prominent in project terms within the official 'Churches Together'. On the other hand, it is recognized that since the Church of England is alone in having a centre of worship in many of our villages, so Christians of other denominations regularly work and worship with us in a natural ecumenism - 'People Together' - which is very positive. Many areas of our teaching, our events and our courses are supported by these others.

Mission & Evangelism

There is much going on both formally and informally within parishes and Teams, both structured (Alpha, Emmaus) and informal (endless contacts within the community). We are particularly concerned with issues of Christian education, and these are being met in many areas. We recognize as a key need the importance of communication (via websites) and need a discussion about a deanery website or making use of this facility on the Diocesan Website.

Buildings

On the one hand parishes all too readily identify the cost and burden of their church building, and yet on the other, see it as vital to the identity of the village, and as a positive part of mission. No parish recommends the closure of its building. Re-ordering not just for worship, but for a multiplicity of different uses, to enhance community life and the value of the church, is in process in a number of churches, and much more could and perhaps should be done. This is seen as a vital way forward.

Children & Young people

Throughout the Deanery in parishes small and large, efforts are being made to relate to, and include, children and young people in the life of the Church. There are many examples of good practice in schools, Sunday schools, youth clubs and a variety of contacts, as well as outreach to other groups not necessarily connected directly to the church through informal and formal contacts

Stipendiary Clergy

It is noteworthy that all of the recommendations of the Plan 2000 with regard to the number and location of Stipendiary Clergy, and the organisation of the individual parishes in Teams or groups, have been carried out by 2006. We wish to go a step further now and make four recommendations as a result of our parish plans, so that our ministry and mission can go forward effectively as described briefly here, and more fully in our Plan 2005.

1. We believe that Durrington and the Avon Valley should become a Team Ministry as soon as the first of the current Stipendiary Clergy ceases in their post. Work should begin immediately towards this between all parties, so that the transition may come into effect as smoothly as possible. We believe that even a loose grouping of the parishes would be better than nothing. Eventually, Tidworth (and possibly Ludgershall) should be involved in this group/Team. We see benefits for all concerned. In this future group/Team, there would be 3 Stipendiary Ministers.
2. We recognize the consistent plea from the Woodford Valley Benefice that they remain as one parish with 3 worship centres, unattached to Amesbury or elsewhere. They see a .5 post, attached to some other .5 post as being the best way forward, as at present, and the Deanery supports that proposal.
3. We recognize the obvious training potential of Amesbury, and see it as a good training parish. We therefore support the plea of the Amesbury Plan to continue to receive a Curate in training. We note, too, the huge population growth in Amesbury, and believe consideration should be given to a Stipendiary post for the Boscombe Down area.
4. We note the intense discussions in the Wylve and Till Valley Team concerning the way forward following the resignation of the current Team Rector. We recognize the need to reduce the number of Stipendiary Clergy from 3 to 2, either immediately or later. 8 parishes (Berwick, Orcheston, South Newton, Winterbourne Stoke, Wylve, Shrewton, Stapleford and Tilshead) believe that the reduction should take place immediately, whilst 4 (Chitterne, Stockton, Wishford Magna and the Langfords) believe the reduction should be considered at the next vacancy rather than immediately. We feel that the parishes themselves are the best placed to assist with that decision, and wish simply to record their decision, leaving the Bishop and Senior Staff to respond. Since the resignation of the current Team Rector is imminent, we urge a rapid response.

Help needed

We would appreciate help with

- Re-ordering church buildings for alternative use and community activities.
- Links with army at an Archdeacon/Senior Chaplain level.
- the development of Voluntary Ministry
- Effective communication within the Deanery – particularly to help with lay learning.