



The Right Reverend Nicholas Holtam
Bishop of Salisbury

Clergy, Deanery Secretaries and PCC Secretaries, Diocesan Synod Members

13 November 2012

Dear Friends,

One of the best bits of my first year as Bishop of Salisbury was to visit each of the 19 Deaneries for at least a day, meeting those from parishes, schools and community groups. I have always thought that the Church finds it easiest to be herself in the local form of parish churches and congregations. When we gathered together at the Diocesan Synod on 3 November 2012 I invited us to talk about the Personality and Character of the Diocese of Salisbury and especially the personality and character of our local churches. Christianity has deep roots here and our history has shaped us. Do we reflect the life of Christ and like Mary "magnify the Lord"?

There is a great deal to give thanks for within this Diocese of Salisbury. We are the largest voluntary sector organisation and a significant part of the social capital of our communities. Perhaps because of the large number of churches, many of them with quite small congregations, we tend to accept a description of the Church which doesn't fully capture who and what we are. I would very much like your help to find better measures of the quality and impact of church life.

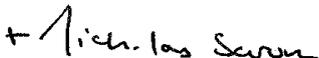
Because mission and ministry are undertaken locally I would be grateful if you could meet as deaneries and benefices to look at the Presentation 'Let Us Talk' which is circulated with this letter and for us to talk, engage, think and articulate our priorities as the local church. At the end of the Presentation you will find some questions. Please let me know your answers and thoughts in response to these by the end of April 2013 by e mail to letustalk@salisbury.anglican.org Or by post to the Bishop of Salisbury, Church House, Crane Street, Salisbury SP1 2QB.

To help you, a PowerPoint version of the 'Let Us Talk' presentation can be found on the Diocesan Website (<http://bit.ly/letustalk>). This is a new way of engaging with one another. It is 'bottom-up' rather than 'top down'. If you want, please make use of your Rural Dean, Lay Chair or Diocesan Synod Members to help your discussions. I very much look forward to your response.

Finally, part of the 'personality and character of the Diocese of Salisbury is to be outward facing. So I am also taking the opportunity of circulating with this letter/email a consultation paper and questionnaire about social responsibility within the diocese entitled 'Christians in the Community'. A Working Group on this, chaired by the Archdeacon of Sherborne, would be grateful if you could reply to this consultation by the middle of January 2013 to inform the debate we will have at Diocesan Synod in February. Your response should be completed on-line if possible or returned by post to the Archdeacon of Sherborne, Church House, Crane Street, Salisbury, SP1 2QB.

With thanks for our partnership in the Gospel.

Yours sincerely



Rt Rev Nicholas Holtam
Bishop of Salisbury

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