

‘Renewing Hope’ Consultation Report by +John Gladwin: the next steps

Please find attached to this paper the report from +John following his recent consultation in the Diocese. Thank you if you were part of the process - either in completing an online questionnaire, or through joining one of the many conversations +John undertook during his week with us in March.

Where will the paper be discussed, and when?

An initial discussion has already taken place at Bishops Staff meeting, which has led to this circulation.

This paper will be on the agenda of the Rural Deans Residential on May 7th and at Bishops Council on May 22nd at which point the Council will also consider how it might inform a future Diocesan Synod and other meetings on future priorities and direction.

Please feel free to place this report on the agenda of meetings of councils, committees and deanery synods if you think this would be useful. Please note the format for feedback suggested below.

How does this paper relate to the Reviews already commissioned by Bishops Council?

A series of reviews have already been discussed and agreed upon by the Council and Finance committee covering: Mission and Ministry, Church and School towards 2030; Property and Glebe; Diocesan Offices; IT and Communications; Fairer Share and other fundraising options.

The Core Group overseeing the Reviews (including Council members: Richard Chitty, +Karen and Andy Perry) will discuss the report at its first meeting on April 30th and agree how it will inform the Reviews process.

The report will contribute to discussion regarding future diocesan priorities, including with regard to resources deployment. Options will be generated by the reviews, and decisions will finally be made by the Bishops Council and ultimately Diocesan Synod in November 2019. These decisions will inform the financial framework for the Diocese for 2021-23. There may be aspects of +John’s Report which we will want to respond to beyond the scope of these reviews. Bishops Council will be invited to comment on this.

How will your responses be fed in to future decisions?

Your prayerful response to the Report is welcomed. It can be used to stimulate further discussion and encourage us all to seek the next steps in Renewing Hope. The Report highlights the changing context in which we are all working, and therefore an enquiring response (exploring and asking questions) is likely to be useful- there is an opportunity to learn from each other and the report, to open discussion.

Your feedback is invited by July 5th

Please share your feedback (personal, or that of meetings you convene) with me:

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1. What do you particularly affirm in the report?
2. What do you consider to be the priorities for follow up action by Bishop’s Council, and why?
3. What action can you take in your own sphere to implement changes/where do you need the involvement of others?

Renewing Hope

Interim Review of the vision and programme of the Diocese of Salisbury

Conducted by The Rt. Revd John Gladwin in March 2019

Terms of Reference

The Bishop of Salisbury asked me to conduct a review of the Renewing Hope vision and work in the Diocese of Salisbury. The Review was established to be:-

- Independent and carried out by someone outside the diocese
- Establish how well the strategy is embedded in local churches
- Provide a report of analysis and recommendations to inform future direction

In January 2019 I agreed to undertake this task and to report by Easter 2019.

It was suggested that the process of the review should include:-

- Document review
- Focus Groups
- Interviews with key stakeholders
- Analysis
- Findings and recommendations

My Report arises out of these processes

I put on record my thanks to so many who both supplied me with important documentation and gave me their time both individually and in groups. The whole of the week March 11-15 was spent in the diocese and devoted to the Renewing Hope programme and its impact upon the work and ministry at all levels in the diocese.

The character of the Vision

The Renewing Hope vision and programme is deeply rooted in our Christian faith and experience. **Pray, serve, grow**, is dynamic, relational, spiritual and journeying in character and culture. From the beginning I sensed that my task was to see how much that character and culture had impacted the life and order of the diocese and its ministry and what further journeying needs to be undertaken to strengthen its roots in the work of the diocese.

Affirming Renewing Hope

Let me be clear at the outset. I have not heard anything to suggest that **Renewing Hope – pray, serve, grow** should be abandoned or changed. Whilst not everybody has fully engaged with it, there is an almost universal desire not only to press on with this but to make it work as well as we can.

Refreshing the programme

There has been widespread agreement that the programme needs refreshing. Many commented favourably upon the original questions that accompanied **pray, serve and grow**. The Diocese also needs to recognise that there have been significant changes in personnel in the parishes and in the diocese. It must not be assumed that people coming into the diocese in the last 3 years understand the reasoning behind the programme and what it requires of them. New clergy, school teams, lay ministers and members need to be drawn into the understanding of what this is all about. **There is an important and ongoing communications task that needs to be undertaken**

The diocesan context.

This is an important and appropriate time to address this task

- Not only is it three years since the programme was launched but there have been important changes of personnel in the diocese and the Bishop's immediate team. New bishops, a new dean, diocesan secretary and archdeacons – to name but a few.
- The diocese is facing unavoidable challenges this year about how budgets are both assessed and balanced.
- The task is being undertaken at a time when, I discern, the diocese is in both good heart and good shape. It is always better to face the tough questions from a position of strength than one of crisis.
- The issues may not be easy but the diocese is capable of facing them

Salisbury Diocese is predominantly rural and traditional in its culture. The temptation which it faces is to think that a few more clergy and members and all will be well. That might be seen as a way of avoiding the challenges of our changing culture. I believe the programme requires addressing change and moving the culture and character of the diocese forward -

The great strength it brings – which it should not underestimate – is presence, ministry, buildings, schools and above all people right across the two counties of Dorset and Wiltshire. No other agency can match this history and character.

The wider context

Across our country and the wider world, communities and people are experiencing change, uncertainty and the struggle to maintain the structures and policies from the past which were designed to protect and nurture human dignity and equality. Some of these inheritances are crumbling. Government both national and local, public services – NHS, education and social care -and the hard-pressed voluntary sector are all facing serious challenges about how they are both funded and organised. They too are being called to resist the temptation of thinking a little more money and people and all will be well. The church is not alone in facing these issues.

The culture is moving on. It is more mobile, less deferential, open and questioning, experiencing the impact of contemporary technology and media, and growing in its diversity. That is as true in small rural communities as in urban ones. Nostalgia for the past maybe widespread and understandable in this uncertain age but we have to come to terms

with the present if we are to face the future. The Renewing Hope programme touches an important spiritual note – not only for the church - but for the whole human community.

The impact upon the church of the shifts in our context and culture is deep. On the negative side are falling numbers in the historic and traditional mode of recording them – numbers of communicants and electoral rolls. That is affecting our ability to maintain the life of the church in our communities. **Our ministry is going to have to be lighter and more flexible and even conducted on the basis of less traditional resources of ministry.**

Achievement

Renewing hope has already opened many doors into new areas of life and ministry. The Rural Hope programme is a direct outcome of this vision. It is not only achieving its targets but having a notable impact on rural benefices through its programmes. Lay and ordained people are enjoying the Training Pathway programme at Sarum College. Good use is made of the CPAS THRIVE programme. The Rural Field Officer only works with mixed groups of lay and clergy people. And in addition the programme is working in close collaboration with the schools programme. An example not only of good practice but of what is possible in the years to come. On the ground, in the benefices, there are many initiatives of service and care into local communities – café's, foodbanks, after school clubs to name but a few.

We need to recognise that we have over 40,000 children and young people in church schools let alone other schools with whom parishes have good and creative relationships. In our mind set we have to include these communities and ministries in how we see the life of the church for the future.

All of these are wholesome signs of ministry for our time and what lies ahead.

Basic values

They may be simply stated.

- Deepening spirituality
- Going local
- Travelling light
- Working collaboratively
- Learning on the road
- Widening vision and service

Deepening Spirituality

The journey of our life of prayer opens the door to our understanding both of God and of ourselves. We know that many more people pray than attend church. How does the church become a community of help and support to all of us in our need for and struggle with prayer? The Renewing Hope programme has set the diocese on this road of understanding.

- **The Bishop and his team need to provide accessible and imaginative resources and support for both individuals and groups in the experience of prayer within and beyond the churches.**

Prayer leads to reflection. People of all back grounds and cultures, carry in their hearts and minds questions and explorations of the meaning of God and of the faith. Encouraging this reflective work is crucial to growth. Behind the work of learning to pray lies a theological task which is potentially for everyone. What good resources the diocese has to enable such creative reflection across the church and into the wider community. Sarum College, the Cathedral, DBE, The Bishop and his team, and skilled lay and ordained people across the diocese – to name but a few! We need to talk less about running the institution and more about the faith! **That is surely implicit in Renewing Hope.**

Going Local

In a diocese made up of two different counties with their own history and culture and spread out at some distance across rural landscapes it is vital that the roots of ministry in local communities become the focus of how we work. I will tread on eggshells in saying that does not mean setting up new structures and schemes! It means seeing things differently.

If the benefices are to be supported then deaneries have to be effective. Rural Deans, Lay Chairs and the networks of churchwardens and worshipping communities become central. The Bishop and the diocese' conversation partners are here.

Resources, training and support need to be focused on helping make these crucial units lively and effective. That will be as much in the networking going on within local communities as in formal meetings. There is plenty of good practice going on at this level within the church. It needs sharing, learning from and communicating.

The Bishops, the Social Responsibility Officer and DBE are already using their skills to gather local leaders and key people into conversation and building relationships that have the potential of opening doors for the local church.

Accountability and support (two sides of the same coin), reflection and training, and the pastoral care of clergy and laity are critical to the journeys being made in our local churches and communities.

Feeling on your own and at a distance from support is a killer of ministry.

Deaneries, if they are to be living centres for mission, need to be places where clergy and laity together can share, reflect, pray and grow in confidence and understanding.

Travelling Light

One persistent voice in my meetings with people in the diocese is a plea to reduce the demands of the institution on the local church – its clergy and laity. That raises the question as to whether the institution is too heavy and too rigid. That is not to criticise anyone's hard work but to look at where we are and where we need to move towards.

At the level of the diocese, people have raised the question as to how and who makes decisions. Clarity is needed as to who is responsible for what decisions and efficiency and transparency in making them. It is better to run the risks of decision making and to be open to learn from what worked and what did not than to fail to decide because it might not work.

The Bishop and his team, the bridge into the Synodical structure through the Bishop's Council and the Synodical structure, together with DBF and DBE the Diocesan Secretary and his team, all carry crucial responsibilities. The Cathedral is separately governed. Clarity about where responsibility lies enables good and transparent decision making.

The danger in the Church of England is that everybody wants a say in everything. Arriving at decisions often means going round a number of circles. Good levels of trust in the diocese mean this a good moment to gain some greater clarity and confidence on decision making.

In addition, the opportunity exists for the DBF and DBE to build a deeper partnership, and for Bishop, Diocesan Organisation, Cathedral and Sarum College to look at how they may be more effective in their contribution to the ministry.

The arrival of a new diocesan secretary provides the opportunity for a fundamental review of the diocesan administration, offices and order so that the team is better able to respond to the needs from a local perspective. He will need help and support in carrying this through.

I will not get into the debate about whether a good decision was made to leave the Diocesan Office where it is rather than build one next to the new DBE offices. I will comment, however, that the present offices are not conducive to flexible, light and collaborative working. The Diocesan Secretary will have the good will and wise advice of his colleagues and of the team he works with. All need to face this challenge and be creative in supporting this task.

- **Important things have been raised with me from the local perspective.**
- Multi parish benefices – vital to the presence of the church locally – need a clear and easy structure. All should move quickly to having one PCC in the benefice and one pair of churchwardens and treasurers.
- Schools need to be, as far as can be achieved, within multi academy trusts.
- Is it possible to make the faculty process easier and more friendly to what the local church wants to achieve?
- Help, training and support for clergy and laity in the conduct of business. People leaving meetings need to feel they have achieved and spent their time constructively.

- Encouragement, support and training for local initiatives in ministry and service to the community. Sharing good practice and lessons gained from things that work and things that do not.
- The need for good communication systems and structures of help and support which serve to remove isolation in ministry

Numbers!

It is clear to me from all my conversations that the demand to grow the numbers around traditional church life is a growing burden on clergy and laity alike. We need to move away from judging our mission on an increasingly narrow method of counting of numbers and focus on our impact in ministry and mission, engaging with both the church and the wider community.

Clergy can feel that if the numbers are not rising they are failing in their ministry.

If the numbers do increase the threat is that so will the demand of the diocese through Parish Share.

The DBF needs, with the support of the diocese, to think how, if at all, it uses these historic numbers for the Parish Share. I understand it is thinking of getting out to all the deaneries to talk through finance and to be open to hear what the parishes experience is like today.

Everybody needs to come to terms with the need for the DBF and the DBE to balance the budget. A tough but crucial conversation for the future well being of the church's God given mission must be had.

A fresh look, in partnership with the parishes, at how Share is calculated would strengthen the understanding and commitment locally to the need to resource the ministry of the diocese at all levels.

The problem is that the areas of growth in our ministry in the community do not immediately produce church membership or increased resources for ministry.

There will always be places where clergy and people have lost the plot and are close to giving up. Special resources are sometimes needed to turn things round.

Most places are not like this. There is innovative and imaginative ministry and life right across our rural areas. It needs affirming and recognising. It also needs to sense that this is what God is calling us to be and to do.

We need to talk and share on how our service of the community can enable God the Holy Spirit to bring people into a life of discipleship. That surely is crucial to understanding the meaning of our commitment to grow.

Pray and Serve are the vehicles of the Holy Spirit to grow faith in the hearts and lives of the people we are called to care for.

Working Collaboratively

I have been impressed and helped by the way different groups and individuals have shared with me and worked together to reflect on this programme. It was a privilege to meet with Rural Deans and Lay leaders and ministers from across the diocese. There is a strong commitment from the Bishop through all levels of work and ministry to work together, to debate the issues and seek decisive and creative ways forward.

Collaboration touches on an issue many have raised with me – the way clergy and lay people work together and the implication of this for a future where traditional resources may be at standstill as population and demands continue to grow.

All ministry authorised by the Bishop is rooted in the common Christian life of the whole baptised community and is the servant of all in the cure of souls – the care of all people irrespective.

There is a difference between a variety of ministries and hierarchical cultures. We are called to respect and support one another in the ministries entrusted to us and live a common life in Christ. In this age of anxiety and division the church needs to be a beacon of shared life across the beautiful diversity of our human experience.

A relational journeying vision leads to the common life of the people of God.

Learning as we travel

If this church is on a journey of the deepening of its spirituality as hope is renewed through **prayer, service and growth** is it also a church that is openly learning through its experience and reflection upon it? People do want to share, talk, to think and learn. We meet the face of God as we pray, in the lives of those we serve and deeply in our souls as we grow in understanding.

Is the church building bridges into the community which make it easier for people to reflect on the great challenges of faith in our time? This for all ages and classes of people.

All the agencies of the diocese – College, Cathedral, Ministry, Education, Communication – need to ask, ‘what can we do that we alone can do or are best fitted to do to give people that liberating experience of encounter with the faith?’

Widening the Vision

The most creative things going on today in the life and ministry of the church are those that push the boundaries. The future is often shaped from the boundaries and the fringes rather than from the centre.

The Diocesan Vision, stirred up in the heart of the diocese by the Bishop, is a timely and godly initiative for stirring the diocese forward in its mission.

Recommendations

Renewing Hope requires addressing change and moving the culture and character of the diocese forward

1. Shape and deliver ongoing communication of Renewing Hope: Pray, Serve, Grow so that all in the diocese and joining it from elsewhere are engaged with the programme and participate in the ongoing conversation and widening vision.
2. Develop the approach to ministry and mission which is lighter and more flexible and even conducted on the basis of less traditional resources of ministry
3. Include schools, café's, foodbanks and other new initiatives in our communities and ministries in how we see the life of the church for the future
4. Encourage deeper reflection on faith and life – crucial to growth. The Bishop and his team need to provide accessible and imaginative resources and support to both individuals and groups in this critical aspect of Christian ministry in our time.
5. Go local by developing the deaneries as living centres for mission: the future is often shaped from the boundaries and the fringes rather than from the centre. Create places where clergy and laity together can see things differently – share, reflect, pray and grow in confidence and understanding. Focus resources, training and support on helping make the deaneries lively and effective, based on sharing, learning from experience and communicating this.
6. Travel light by reviewing governance and management arrangements so that there is clarity regarding who is responsible for what decisions and efficiency and transparency in making them.
7. Travel light by building a deeper partnership between the DBF and DBE, and for the Bishop, Diocesan Organisation, Cathedral and Sarum College to consider how they might be more effective in their contribution to the vision and the ministry.
8. Travel light by the Diocesan Secretary reshaping diocesan administration to better respond to the local perspective through a fundamental review of the diocesan administration and order. He will need help and support in carrying this through.
 - reconsider the needs for diocesan offices. The present offices are not conducive to flexible, light and collaborative working.
 - Support all multi parish benefices to move quickly to having one PCC, one pair of Churchwardens and treasurer.
 - Review the faculty process to make it easier and more friendly to what parishes would like to achieve

- Help, training and support for clergy and laity in the conduct of business. People leaving meetings need to feel they have achieved and spent their time constructively
 - Encourage, support and train local initiatives in ministry and service to the community. Sharing good practice and lessons gained from things that work and things that do not.
 - Develop good communication systems and structures of help and support which serve to remove isolation in ministry.
9. Balance the budget and review Parish Share to strengthen the understanding and commitment locally to the need to resource the ministry of the diocese at all levels.
10. Shift the approach to numbers, focusing on measures of impact.
11. Renew our journey of faith. We need to talk and share on how our service to the community can enable God the Holy Spirit to bring people into a life of discipleship. All the agencies in the diocese - need to ask, 'what can we do that we alone can do or are best fitted to do to give people that liberating experience of encounter with God?'

John Gladwin

Lent 2019