

CATHEDRAL DEANERY CLERGY & LAY TEAM

Notes from Meeting on 13th June 2023 Deanery Core Teams (or equivalent) & Clergy

Present: The Dean - Canon Peter Newsam

Arundel: Canon David Parmiter, Phil Morison, Bee Nicholson-Lepine, Miles Leeson, Betsy Vernon

Petworth/Midhurst: Sr Paula Thomas, Paul Mellings, Charles Sommer

Bognor: Pauline Webber Margaret Fraher, Fr Chris Bergin, Jacqueline Humphreys

Chichester: Becky Sleven, Tina Darby, Amy Owen, Fr David Murphy, Deacon Jon Harman, Canon Tom Treherne, Joe Farrell, Erna Shaw, Zina Neagle, Jan Turney, Tim Feast, Niki Harman, Giovanna Grabowski, Ray McGlone

Storrington: John Hills, Carla Fitzpatrick, Tim Hyde, Graham Turner, Fr Charles Howell
Minutes: Louise Sharp

Canon Peter introduced the evening and welcomed everyone.

Fr Chris led us in a time of prayer.

Canon Peter introduced the context of where we are in the church locally.

Quoted from the Vatican Document – “The Pastoral Conversion of The Parish Community” & from the book: “From Christendom to Apostolic Mission”.

He noted that we need to co-operate more fully, share experience. From time to time we will travel further in order to do things. People are beginning to understand this. We can look at the losses and feel sad, but we need to move forward.

There are more Christian Communities now than clergy, so they become places where the community is looking after itself and one another, share experience and share expertise.

PN acknowledged that Mass times and finance is not the place to start, they will need addressing but not to start.

What do vibrant apostolic communities look like – if we deal with that, the number of clergy serving them is not defining.

He hopes this evening to have a conversation/discussion to make a start, to work out how the church in this deanery will operate. To listen to one another. It is a challenge for all of us – what is God asking us to do for the re-evangelisation of our communities, are we going to be builders, build community/hope? Where do we find hope?

PN asked people to sit with people not from their own parish. Think about what would a vibrant lively Christian community look like? What are the characteristics, what is happening there.

Feedback from break-out groups:

Mass & the Eucharist is the foundation on which to build. A frequent word used was 'a welcoming community to everyone'.

What have we done well recently? There are shoots in all the parishes – where it can be said yes, that's a good role model, to build on and share.

Joyful community, to have dialogue not just agreeing with Father. To know our own charisms – we all have gifts and need to be aware of them and how to use them.

Welcome people who are outside the church. Taize services are good as they are very accessible. We all should have a charism of welcome, some noted that GDPR is a stumbling block sometimes.

Alpha is key as there has been great success with this.

Learning about the situation in Peru where Mass might be celebrated once a year in a community, so people lead the community. Welcoming is key – speaking to people, engaging with newcomers. And following up the welcome.

Structure – in what communities have to offer. What needs to be done within the community? People may want to take part in building up the community, but unless someone guides them about what roles and tasks need fulfilling, they don't know where to start. People need guidance about where their involvement is needed. Need to understand the structure to enable greater participation in those things.

As there are fewer priests, we're all expected to do more – who will watch and ensure people and priests can off load and not burn out. Kindness.

Community led. Where is the expectation with the priests? Who is checking in.

Inclusive – about the process of change, ensuring everybody in the parish community is brought along with the change – not isolated. There will be members of community who will struggle with not having a shepherd/flock structure and will need help to see a different structure.

To welcome you have to have some knowledge about people – curiosity.

How do we know this person bossing us about has authority?

Margaret F – many have mentioned welcoming and she noted that there is a deanery day on Saturday this weekend for those interested/involved in the welcome ministry.

PN – before we go our separate ways – discuss what we need to make all of this happen? A church community confident/alive able to cope with or without a priest.

Feedback from this discussion:

Conversion – constant humility to see ourselves as disciples for God in need of/on the constant journey to serve God.

Creativity to enable people to get on with things and training to get on with these things.

Formation to enable us to proclaim our faith.

Working together - identify leadership types/charisms

What makes a catholic community – the relationship with Christ especially in the sacraments, conversion of heart everything else will follow. The sending out after Mass.

Networks across the deanery to find out what people do.

“Unlocking Your Parish, making disciples, Raising up leaders with Alpha” by Ron Huntley and Fr James Mallon, a book to help raise leaders and confidence.

Practical – divide up the tasks into more mundane – fabric, H & S, things more easily given to lay defined roles, analogy of the dart board – as you get closer to the bullseye you need more formation and clergy guidance. Sharing resources across the deanery, share knowledge and training, difficulties with GDPR and how we can get over that. Perhaps there might be a model of more paid staff – someone in a central office can link people up to overcome this.

Training and formation.

Red tape and GDPR and what needs to come from the top down and where the freedom is to go from bottom up – a database of expertise in parishes, to share in the deanery.

PN noted that we could get advice on what is and is not possible.

Empty seats since covid – where are those people, how to reach out to them. We know they're still about but they haven't come back.

PN asked if group was happy to meet again? Agreement in the room.

Betsy – we need to take action ourselves – what will we do before the next meeting?
People are really wanting to support this/the priests/our faith and we need to facilitate it.
What can we do?
Is there a timeline?
PN No, but we need to keep moving.

PN ended by reading part of Bishop Richard's Pastoral Plan, section 1.3:

I therefore take this opportunity to invite everyone in the Diocese – lay faithful and religious, deacons and priests – to join with me in forging our parishes into communities of saints, into strong, lively and welcoming schools of discipleship. May they be communities where the Lord is known and loved; where the liturgy is experienced as an encounter with the wonder of heaven; where daily prayer is a natural part of life; where all are welcomed and their dignity as children of God always recognized; where young people grow in deep love for the Gospel, for the sacramental life of the Church and for prayer; where all know the riches of the faith and seek to share it with others.

PN noted we would circulate the minutes and encouraged those present to talk about this meeting and process in your parishes.