



Latest! – January 20th 2016

Introduction and Context

The danger of putting a plan into print is that we argue about the details and avoid the principles. At the heart of the IW Plan is the desire to work together as we engage with community; to live, pray and serve as we make the prayer 'Thy Kingdom come.'

Because we need something written down and to work from this is it! It has draft written all through it so that we can continue to discuss, change and amend as we journey on but what it does is to lay down the themes that mark out where we are heading over the next few years.

Since 2012 we have looked at ourselves in the context of the IoW and in the light of issues shared with the national Church. These include: declining and aging congregations; the struggle to meet Parish Share; the large number of Church buildings; vocations to ministry not keeping up with retirements and difficulty of bringing ministers to the IW alongside the isolation sometimes experienced by parishes and ministers.

We are making significant progress with Parish Share and with the support of the Victoria James, Diocesan Stewardship Adviser, many parishes that have struggled are working hard to meet their annual allocation and to reduce their shortfall. Participation in the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) and an Island-wide Stewardship Programme (*Building a Sustainable Self-Sufficient Future*) in 2016 will further enable progress in this area.

We will need to identify, train and form Vocations from and for the Island and in the appointment of Revd Dr Amanda Bloor at Bembridge and as Associate Diocesan Director of Ordinands we look forward to the development of a vocations strategy. Alongside vocations to ordained ministry and Readers, we are developing training under the leadership of the Revd Dr Nigel Porter, Lay Development Officer, to commission Lay Pastoral Assistants (LPAs), Lay Worship Leaders (LWLs) and possibly Lay Preachers (LPs).

Working together is an essential feature of the IW Deanery Plan and this will be achieved through developing the six Island Clusters, which are not mini-deaneries, but mission areas in which Christians work together.

The Diocesan strategic purpose is focused in the phrase **Live, Pray, Serve** and the specific objectives which seek to focus our engagement with the context in which we exercise our ministry are fourfold.

They are: **Making Disciples, Growing Churches, Learning for Life** and **Transforming Society**.

Within the context of the Isle of Wight we are working:

- to be a Church which is **open** both in terms of our buildings but more importantly in terms of our readiness to connect with and serve our parish communities; to be a Church that prays for and with our communities as well as being a place to which those around us naturally come to seek God's presence in their lives; to be a Church which enables all to thrive as human beings – the glory of God is a human being fully alive! – and this is as much about the Christian community going out as about enquirers coming in.
- to be a **pilgrim** Church that recognises that we are on a journey and that we journey not in isolation but together as fellow pilgrims.
- to be a Church of prayer in which we develop as **disciples** and **servants** of the living Christ.
- to be a Church engaged through service with God's **mission** for the world.

Any good plan is not set in stone but is rather a rolling process that requires regular review. The following paragraphs indicate aims for the next two years.

IW Plan Proposals 2016-2017

❖ Structure

A single Deanery will oversee and develop the IW Plan. The Synod meets three times per year guided by its Standing Committee known as Deanery Council which also acts as the Deanery Mission & Pastoral Committee and Finance Committee. A separate Finance Group will advise Deanery Council. In the coming months the Deanery Council will present to Synod details of its constitution and membership.

It will be the norm in clergy appointments for a post to include either a cluster or Island-wide responsibility.

In addition to those already appointed, i.e., Nigel Porter Lay Development Officer; Amanda Bloor Associate Diocesan Director of Ordinands; Sue Theobald - Ministry to the Elderly; Allie Kerr & Veronica Brown – Young Vocations

The Archdeacon invites others to take responsibility for:

Parish Liaison with the Prison Chaplaincy; Parish Liaison with the Hospital Chaplaincy; Communications; Schools and Education; Children and Young People; Tourism and Second Home Owners; Festivals; Stewardship of Resources; Spirituality; Pilgrimage - and other areas of ministry as appropriate.

Ongoing meetings of Deanery Chapter and Synod will provide opportunity for specific areas to be discussed and to develop in terms of our strategic vision.

The role of the Archdeacon is to help develop strategy and to support clergy, lay ministers, churchwardens and parishes in their work. The role of the Area Dean is to help develop and deliver the plans that we make and to be a further interface between the Bishop, the clergy, lay ministers and parishes.

The well-being, nurturing and development of those in authorised forms of ministry will be important as a Church reshaping itself develops in the coming years. Clergy Chapter will help form the common vision and shape the programmes that bring vision to reality. There will be opportunities for training, learning and study as Chapter and clusters meet in different forms to enable fellowship and development.

❖ Clusters

Clusters are mission areas, bringing together locally the people engaged in sharing God's mission. Clusters will in 2016 have development days to consider how ministry and mission is shared and ensuring that all expressions of Anglicanism can thrive without excessive local duplication.

In 2016 the Archdeacon and Area Dean will facilitate cluster development meetings and will identify a co-ordinator for each cluster.

By 2017 each cluster will have been invited to identify one cluster mission priority for the next 3 years.

❖ Parishes

Parishes are the front line of ministry and represent the area where people live, where prayer is a reality and where we as disciples serve Christ in our daily lives. Parishes will be asked to consider their priorities and in particular with relation to how they may have been designated in the *Living Together* discussion paper. Churches have been identified in terms of opportunities for radical development, as festival or pilgrimage churches; others to have a focus as churches to concentrate on areas of healing, tourism or ministry to second home owners.

In 2017 each parish will be invited to identify one mission priority for the next 3 years.

The great challenge, of course, is meeting Parish Share and the management of resources. In addition to the 2016 Stewardship Programme, the Finance Group and Deanery Synod will discuss different ways in which the work of Parish Treasurers can be undertaken.

❖ **The Minister**

The Bishop has initiated a review into the role of the Minister which will take place in 2016 and undertaken by the Very Revd Jane Hedges, Dean of Norwich Cathedral and Canon Peter Leonard, Residentiary Canon of Portsmouth Cathedral. This will enable both the Minister and the IW Deanery to identify more clearly the Minister's role and purpose.

❖ **Vocations and Ministry**

As the number of stipendiary clergy reduces we will need a Ministry and Vocations Strategy for the IW which complements that of the Diocese. There will be a Vocations Sunday each year and parishes will be encouraged to support Diocesan events including the Ordinations and Admission of new Readers.

In 2016 and by 2017 the Associate Diocesan Director of Ordinands will devise this strategy.

We will continue to run courses for Lay Pastoral Assistants and begin new and continuing courses for Lay Worship Leaders and Lay Preachers as well as the Exploring Christianity Course.

In 2016 and 2017 the Lay Ministry Officer will facilitate two courses each year for LPAs and according to demand courses for LWLs and LPs.

Within the process of gradually reducing the numbers of stipendiary clergy new patterns of ministry will continue and develop. These include Local Ministers and we hope in due course to have Pioneer Ministers as well.

The Archdeacon and Lay Ministry Officer will arrange for continuing development and training of LPAs.

There will be annual courses for those who intercede and read in Church.

As clergy vacancies allow the possibilities for pastoral re-organisation, these will be considered at Deanery Council in its role as Deanery Pastoral Committee. A key part of the IW Plan is for each parish that does not have a resident stipendiary priest to have a Local Minister commissioned by the Archdeacon.

❖ **Mission**

We will continue to formulate a strategy for mission on the Island through the work of the Deanery Synod. The Deanery Synod will evaluate the effectiveness of our mission through analysis of mission statistics and other data. As parishes identify their mission priority the Archdeacon and Area Dean will co-ordinate training opportunities to help parishes in their work.

In 2016 and 2017 the Archdeacon and Area Dean will nominate parishes to participate in the Leading Your Church into Growth (LYCIG) programme supported by the Diocesan Mission, Discipleship and Ministry Team.

❖ **Open Churches**

'A' boards/swing boards will be made available to all churches in January 2016 to mark the inauguration of the new Deanery. A very 'outward and visible sign' of an inward intention to open both our buildings and ourselves more effectively to the communities in which we live and seek to serve. A common design for these will say something of how we as Anglicans are working together in this mission.

❖ Discipleship

As we seek to make new disciples and ourselves grow in depth as disciples of the living Christ, the Deanery Synod will be formative in establishing what is needed and how. With the help of Diocesan officers from the Mission, Ministry and Discipleship Team we can enable this growth.

In 2016 there is a Lent Course to help parishes further tackle issues raised by the IW Deanery Plan called 'Five Words: Open, Pilgrim, Disciple, Servant and Mission.'

❖ Pilgrimage

We are all pilgrims on a journey of faith and many of our Churches are ideally built and located to help us make sense of our journey.

In 2016 we will introduce a number of Pilgrimage Trails incorporating Churches that have been designated as Pilgrimage Churches. Bishop Christopher will launch the first of these trails on Sunday 31st July 2016.

In March (8th – 15th) 2017 the Archdeacon will lead an IW Pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

❖ Service

We need as an Island Church to consider how we can effectively serve and transform our communities through our ministry and with our buildings. Parishes designated as potential locations for radical development will be invited to come together for a day of exploration at Aspire in Ryde. All parishes will be invited to consider what role they may have in supporting the food banks, credit unions, street and school pastors.

In 2016 and 2017 the Archdeacon will bring together parishes identified in Living Together as having potential for radical development.

❖ Education

All parishes have links with at least one school and many have close links with particular schools through governance, collective worship and Open Book projects etc. To maintain and develop our relationship with both Church and other schools is essential that we develop this over the next two years.

From 2016 with the help of the Diocesan Education Team we will seek to develop parish links with schools.

Conclusion

It is difficult to imagine quite what the Church will look like in the years to come and this plan includes short term measures that will impact significantly upon the longer term. Mindful that the parish will remain where we as Christians need to be ever present and active, the nature of ministry will change as we become less dependent upon stipendiary clergy. The Church seeks to simplify the ways in which work is done and decisions made. . In 2018 we will review the Mission Priorities of Parishes and Clusters. What is critical to the development of the Church on the Island is the commitment to collaborative working and engagement with community as we seek to **live, pray and serve**.