



CATHEDRAL DEANERY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2024: PASTORAL PLAN UPDATE

On Wednesday 13 March, members of the core teams from our five deanery parishes met with deanery clergy in Arundel, to discuss the future of the Church in this part of the Diocese, in the light of the Pastoral Plan.

Canon Peter Newsam, who will be our parish's Moderator when our five parishes become one, introduced the meeting. After a time of prayer, Fr Chris Bergin talked about the vision of the Pastoral Plan, in particular what "communities of saints" and "schools of discipleship" can mean in our present context. He reminded those gathered that we are all saints in the making - saved, by Christ, but disciples following the Master, not yet at our final destination, and charged with bringing others with us on the journey.

Canon Peter answered questions about the future identity of the parish and the timing of the change, informing those present that:

- The parish's name, at least in the short-medium term, will be the "Cathedral Parish".
- The new parish will be created before the end of the year; there will be an Induction Mass.

The discussion part of the meeting focussed on the hopes and fears of those present and then on what the first priorities in the transition process should be.

These are the themes that emerged:

WHAT DO YOU HOPE FOR IN THE NEW STRUCTURE, IN WHICH THE PARISHES OF THE DEANERY BECOME A SINGLE MODERATED PARISH?

That we will move from managing local habits and expectations towards making disciples: renewal and becoming a Missionary Church that can spread the Good News in our local community and seek and bring home those who have left our church communities. This will involve a change in culture away from the "consumer" mentality so that people come to our churches with a real sense of belonging.

That we will be **welcoming**, especially for families and an exciting place/community for young people, with **attractive liturgy**, and we will build bridges, e.g. with our schools, so our community is as great and supportive as it can be. We hope also that there will be support for older people and also post-sacramental programmes that support the whole journey of faith for young people.

That we will develop a **greater sense of "Parish"** and manage to **unify** what already exists without losing individuals, bringing small communities together to learn from each other and with **vibrant community life** and **individual identity** around each church, so that no-one falls through gaps.

That the Mass time schedule will be worked out soon, and also a greater appreciation of the Eucharist and what the Mass is will be developed.

That there will be a **clear decision-making structure** and that **administrative structures will be improved**, e.g. perhaps with a shared, employed fabric officer.

WHAT ARE YOU ANXIOUS ABOUT?

- Endless meetings but no change
- Losing people
- Ageing priests and succession
- Parish Name
- Losing areas built up in the past
- Distances/transport: not all parishioners are mobile; distances for priests, e.g. for sick calls
- Potential church closures
- Loss of integration between schools and local church communities

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MOST PRESSING PRIORITIES FOR US TO ADDRESS IN THIS DEANERY/NEW PARISH?

Clarity on timing & the structure of the new parish: clear decision-making; how lay people are to be involved, and priests' time freed up; how all the communities of the new parish are to be heard and represented; desire for additional professional support e.g. for administration and buildings; questions around financial structure to be resolved.

Building our new community: publicising events across the parish, developing the ministry of Welcome and offerings of hospitality to others inside and outside the Catholic community.

Good communication across the new parish, informed by a good strategy, with people kept informed at each step of the transition to create the new parish and beyond.

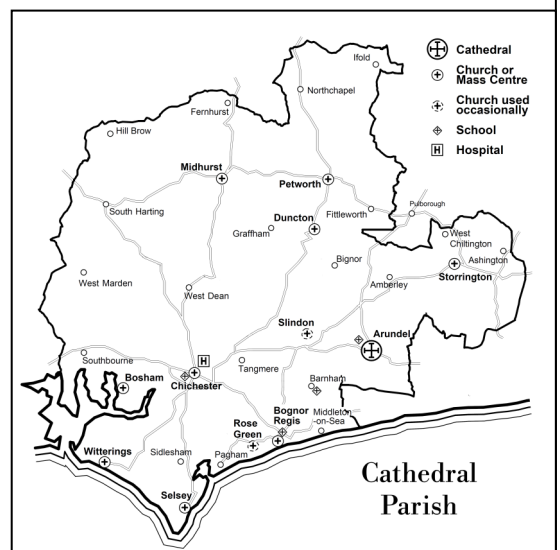
Learning from one another: sharing gifts and experience across the new parish; discussing whether every church needs to do everything.

Building up of lay-led groups and formation for lay people, so that the prayer and community life of church communities is less dependent on the presence of a priest: Ministry of Consolation, prayer groups, retreats, SVP; formation for Formation for Lectio Divina; development of Adoration & the Liturgy of the Hours. .

Support for people of all age: with a focus both on nurturing, engaging and involving young people and families, including via the deanery schools, and also on the needs of older parishioners.

Transport: consideration to be given to the sometimes large distances between our churches and the lack of parking at some.

Looking to the future and whether every existing community will have a local Mass: how can some continuity can be assured and how will the Church stay visible in towns or villages without a Sunday Mass?



NEXT STEPS

The Deanery clergy have an overnight meeting in May, at which they will discuss the issues raised at the meeting on 13 March and begin to formulate a plan to address them. They will also consider the best structures to allow the lay faithful to be involved in the implementation of the move to a single moderated parish, and its future running.

Canon Peter plans to arrange meetings over the summer with some key groups across the deanery parishes (e.g. Finance Committee chairs, admin staff, catechists). If you would like to gather with people across the deanery exercising some particular ministry, please let Louise at the Cathedral know (arundel@abdiocese.org.uk) and we will try to make it happen.

The Diocesan team have asked us to undertake a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and strengths) for each of our communities. If this can be undertaken over the summer, it will enable us to build a clearer picture of how all of our communities can support and assist one another. Further guidance will follow.

A date for the formal combination of the existing parishes into a single parish, and its inauguration at a Mass with the Bishop needs to be considered. Current thinking is that this may be in September or October.

Progress will continue to be reported through the Deanery Newsletter.