

## **Response from Jill Hopkinson regarding different models of providing support to the rural church**

**(reference action point 5.4 from January 5<sup>th</sup> meeting)**

There are a number of different approaches to providing rural officer type support and input.

For example the diocese of Oxford have deanery-based officers who have different approaches depending upon the needs of the local area. Some act as agricultural chaplains, others as community development workers, others support colleagues. The deanery network is coordinated by the diocesan rural officer, Glyn Evans [glynevans@gmail.com](mailto:glynevans@gmail.com) who holds this role on half-time basis.

The diocese of Leeds are currently recruiting a Rural Mission Enabler as a full-time post as part of the growth team for the diocese. This post has grown out of a part time rural officer role and holds some elements of a rural officer role including partnership working with external organisations as well as working with colleagues in parishes on mission and ministry. The best contact for this post initially is Bishop James Bell, as it is currently vacant. [Bishop.james@leeds.anglican.org](mailto:Bishop.james@leeds.anglican.org)

The diocese Canterbury has quite a unique approach - contact Caroline Pinchbeck in the first instance: [CPinchbeck@diocant.org](mailto:CPinchbeck@diocant.org)

Other dioceses such as Chichester, Coventry, Newcastle and Bath and Wells all have post holders who are involved in strategic work of the diocese as well more local support and partnership working. Rob Walrond in Bath and Wells would be a good place to start. [rob.walrond@hotmail.com](mailto:rob.walrond@hotmail.com)

**Jill also attached an outline role description for a Rural Officer which shows the scope of the role.**

### **RURAL OFFICER – ROLE OUTLINE**

#### **Purpose**

To develop mission and ministry in rural communities to contribute to growth in discipleship, numbers and service.

To encourage and enable the rural church to engage with rural and agricultural issues.

#### **Key Objectives**

The Rural Officer post is a context specific appointment to facilitate mission and ministry in rural communities and thereby contribute to growth. The role also links the Church with the key agricultural and rural organisations in the county and provides advice to parishes and senior staff on rural issues important for both church and community.

#### **Primary Activities**

- Encourage and enable rural churches to understand and engage creatively with their context, providing information and training where necessary to support mission and growth.

- Support the leaders of rural multi-church groups to develop growth in discipleship, numbers and service through rural contextually appropriate methods.
- Work in partnership with other diocesan departments / officers including those for schools, fresh expressions, children and youth, discipleship, continuing ministerial development and buildings to assist churches in rural multi-church groups with mission and ministry.
- Create a network of rural multi-church clergy to develop mutual support and encouragement, offer mentoring and provide training.
- Be responsive and raise awareness of rural social concerns in the region and working with others facilitate any necessary response by the Church.
- Network with partner organisations engaged in rural life, providing a church profile and voice.
- Reflect theologically on rural issues and the church's role in rural life.
- Work with and advise senior diocesan staff on the implications of strategy and policy for rural churches.
- Engage with the wider ecumenical networks of rural practitioners and take up opportunities for further training and personal development.
- Liaise with the National Rural Officer for the Church of England and access and promote the work of the Arthur Rank Centre.

### **Person Specification**

#### **Essential**

- Experience of rural multi-church groups and the needs of communities, congregations and clergy.
- Ability to encourage and enable people from all areas of rural life.
- Commitment to working collaboratively to achieve the primary activities.
- The ability to respond with theological creativity to the issues facing rural ministry.

#### **Desirable**

- Understanding and expertise in rural and agricultural issues.
- Ability to train adults.
- Experience of working with ecumenical, agricultural and rural organisations.

#### **Organisation**

- The role can be carried out by someone who is ordained or lay.
- There must be an agreed job description with appropriate time and financial resources allocated to the role.
- The role should have clear objectives that are reviewed regularly.
- There should be clear lines of accountability and line management.

- The post would benefit from an appropriate support network made up of representatives from key local rural and agricultural organisations and from the church.
- The post should be seen as missional in nature.