

# Chester

## Diocesan News

November 2019

Growing  
stronger  
parishes

## Six people elected to the CNC

The diocesan Vacancy in See Committee has elected six people to represent the diocese on the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC), the body that will interview candidates and ultimately nominate someone to be the next Bishop of Chester. The election took place on Tuesday 24 September.

### The six diocesan representatives are:

The Ven Ian Bishop  
Mr John Mason  
The Revd Rob Munro  
Mrs Elizabeth Renshaw  
Mrs Deborah Woods  
The Revd Peter Froggatt

They will join others from the Church of England as a whole, including the Archbishops, to form the CNC. It is due to meet for the first time on 03 February and then again on the 16 and 17 March.

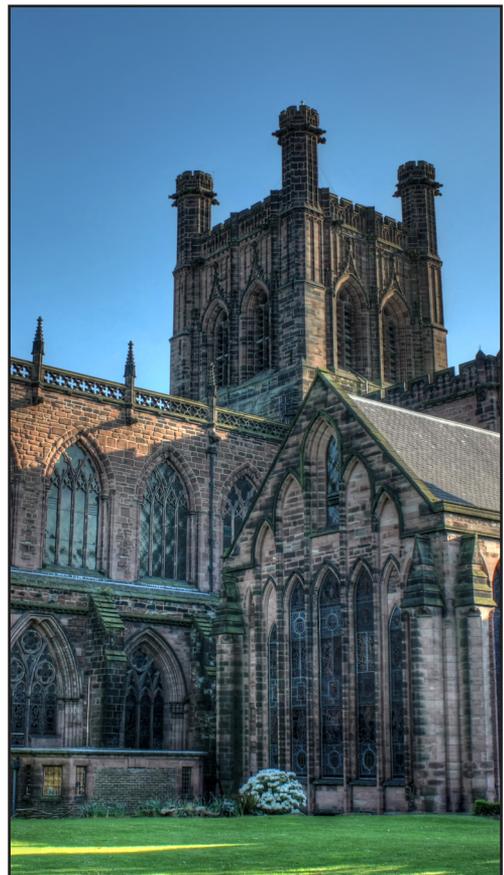
An announcement on who has been nominated to be the next Bishop of Chester is expected around Easter time.

The diocesan Vacancy in See Committee is currently writing its Statement of Needs - a brief description of the diocese and statement setting out the desired profile of the next bishop. The document will help inform the CNC as to the qualities the diocese hopes to see in the next Bishop of Chester.

The document follows a diocesan-wide consultation that asked people to share their views on who should be the next Bishop of Chester and

what qualities he or she should have. Over 430 individuals, groups and PCCs responded.

The Statement of Needs for the Diocese of Chester is available to view on the diocese website.



## Sarah Fenby appointed Diocesan Director



The Diocese of Chester is delighted to announce that the Revd Sarah Fenby has been appointed to the newly created joint role of Diocesan Director of Vocations and Residentiary Canon. Starting on 14 October, Sarah will divide her busy six-day working week between Church House, Daresbury, and Chester Cathedral.

Sarah's duties in her new role will be many and varied but will largely involve the development of a recruitment strategy for vocations as well as working with staff and 250 volunteers at the Cathedral.

The Dean of Chester, the Very Revd Tim Stratford said: "We are delighted to welcome Sarah as a canon at the

Cathedral with significant diocesan responsibility to serve those exploring their Christian vocation. I hope this will help us build relationships and fellowship between Cathedral and parishes. Sarah will also be leading the Cathedral's work with its volunteers, developing discipleship."

Sarah is making the move from the Diocese of Worcester where she is currently Vocations and Training Officer. She previously spent over 17 years in parish ministry, working in urban, suburban and rural town contexts.

The Bishop of Worcester, Dr John Inge, said: "All of us in the Diocese of Worcester offer Sarah our

## Director of Vocations and Residency Canon



**Sarah Fenby**

congratulations on this appointment. We are grateful for all she has given during her short time here and pray that God's rich blessing will be on her and her family in the future."

Sarah says: "I'm very excited to be joining the Diocese of Chester at a time of transition and opportunity. Vocations are in good health in the diocese and I'm looking forward to building on the good work that has gone before, working with the excellent vocations team, and getting to know the many committed and faithful volunteers at Chester Cathedral.

"As a keen walker, I'm also looking forward to seeing what this beautiful and dynamic part of the country has to

offer and exploring the historic city of Chester."

When Sarah manages to get time to herself, she enjoys walking, playing tennis and good conversation.

**Are you being called to serve?**

Why not come to our event on 25 January 2020  
**See page 8**

# Jane Holland – Pastoral Worker



*Jane Holland with her son Ben and late husband Julian*

**On October 12 at Chester Cathedral a cohort of Readers and Pastoral Workers were licensed into their ministry by the Bishop of Birkenhead. Reader and Pastoral Workers play an important ministerial role across the Diocese of Chester and are a key complementary ministry to priests in our parishes.**

Jane Holland is a part time primary school teacher in Wilmslow. She was licensed as a Pastoral Worker and will take up her ministry at Emanuel Church, Cheadle Hulme.

Despite a personal tragedy some years ago, she says God has always had a plan for her life, which eventually led her to follow his call to licensed ministry.

Jane didn't have a Christian upbringing at home. Her mother was Catholic but didn't practice. Whilst at Boarding School Jane enjoyed going to church on Sundays and chose to be confirmed.

"I wasn't from a family that went to church. Mum was Catholic and had some remnant of the faith and would talk vaguely about saying prayers if I had exams, but she wasn't a practicing Christian.

"Whilst away at Boarding School I attended Christian assemblies and went to church on Sundays and I enjoyed it."

By the time she had finished high school however, Jane was no longer attending church. It wasn't until later at university, that her dormant interest took her slowly back to faith.

"I came back to Manchester for university and had a friend whose Dad had been ordained. I would sometimes go along with her to a service and I found that background interest bubble up again."

Jane continued through life but didn't take her emerging faith seriously. She married and gave birth to her son in 1996. Jane and her husband moved to Cheadle Hulme and settled down to life as a happy family.

"We moved to Cheadle Hulme and I began to think about going to church again. I went to Emmanuel and felt at home straight away."

"I had one child at the time, and I began going reasonably regularly at that point. A daughter followed in 1999 and that's when life took a turn. Shortly after I gave birth, my husband

was diagnosed with cancer. It was really quite quick, and he passed away when my daughter was just seven months old."

The personal tragedy caused Jane to really think about what it was that she believed.

"I think those life events hit people one way or the other. I had a seven-month-old daughter and my son was only three. I was aware that I was saying to my son that Daddy was in heaven, but I didn't really know what it was I was saying and what I believed."

Jane had been going to church for just 18 months when her husband died. Already her faith journey was being seriously tested and she found herself at a fork in the road.

"Some evenings when I was alone at home I was in pieces, ranting and railing to God; at other times I was a bit more rational. My husband's passing really made me question things. Some people may have gone the other way but for me my developing faith was important to me.

"I had only been going to church for 18 months but the people there were such a huge support. Looking back, it didn't happen by coincidence that I went to Emanuel. God knew I would need the support and he put me in a place knowing that that's where I would get it."

Thanks to God and the support of her Church, Jane's faith only grew stronger, eventually leading to her exploring a call to licensed Pastoral Worker ministry.

"The minister at the time was fantastic; he was very good at guiding me and exploring my faith through an Alpha Course. He suggested that I host it at my house, so I didn't have to worry about childcare. Building up my faith gradually and having gone through the Alpha Course, he then encouraged me to have house groups at home and get involved in other ways. My faith grew

and grew to the point where I was reading the diocesan newsletter and I noticed information about the diocesan event Called to Serve. That's where the journey to Pastoral Worker ministry began.

"The Pastoral Worker course has been brilliant and challenging in ways I didn't expect. It's made me think more deeply about things. My church is my family; I've known people along time, and I want to give something back to them through Pastoral Worker ministry."

Jane was licensed by Bishop Keith Sinclair on 12 October at Chester Cathedral. Jane will take up her ministry at Emanuel, Cheadle Hulme where she will continue to lead Messy Church and some of the family services. She will also visit people who may not be able to attend church due to ill health.

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Like what you read? Are you sensing God's call on your own life? Follow Jane's lead and join us to explore your calling at Called to Serve, an event for all those interested in exploring a licensed ministry in the Diocese of Chester.



**Jane Holland with her son Ben and daughter Kathryn**

## Fire at Beechmere retirement complex



*Credit: Cheshire Fire Service*

**Hundreds of residents of a care home in Crewe were made homeless when a fire took hold in dramatic fashion. Thankfully no one was seriously hurt. Members of the Church in Crewe were some of the first to respond to the tragedy. Here, the Revd Catherine Cleghorne, Curate, reflects on the events as they unfolded and the response that followed.**

“On Thursday 08 August a devastating fire swept through Beechmere, a large residential complex in Crewe. Miraculously no-one was seriously injured at the time, as the 150 residents were evacuated quickly, but they had to leave behind all their possessions; these were engulfed in flames as the home completely burned down.

Most of the residents lost not only their homes but also nearly everything that they owned. This included clothes, treasured personal belongings, and even pets. Many of the residents are elderly, and they had seen Beechmere

as their final home. To have this peace and security taken from them in this way was extremely difficult and the emotional healing process will understandably take a long time.

The remarkable response from the people of Crewe began as soon as news of the fire started to spread. JustGiving funds were set up – around £60,000 has been raised – and donations of clothing, bedding, food, toiletries and mobility aids started to pour into various collection points. The Lifestyle Centre was a hub for donations which were really well coordinated by members of Cheshire East and Crewe Town Council, who worked incredibly long hours. They were aided by over 100 volunteers, many of whom were members of the local churches; others were involved in the immediate response at the site, providing pastoral support and refreshments for the members of the emergency services who worked so hard to stop the fire and to make the site safe.

The residents were initially evacuated into the Lifestyle Centre, then quickly moved to other homes or to families and to friends' houses, around Crewe and beyond. The residents coming to collect donated possessions were completely shell-shocked. Emotions were running high and some were unwilling to receive donations because they felt as they were unworthy of the overwhelming generosity shown to them by the wonderful people of Crewe.

For volunteers coming into the Lifestyle Centre, seeing the sheer scale of the donations was also an emotional experience. We heard the words: "It restores your faith in humanity" repeated over and over again. The response to the tragedy proved again what Benn Minshull, Crewe Town Council Mayor, often says about Crewe: "The best thing about Crewe is its people."

After the weekend the clothing and toiletries were taken to the old Library and the bedding and some food was moved to St Peter's Church. For the next three weeks we opened the church daily for Beechmere residents to collect whatever they needed and to meet

up. This was only possible because our churchwardens and volunteers, and people from other churches, gave hours of their time. Cheshire East coordinators were also there every day, as were NHS counsellors.

The way that this multi-agency approach was able to make a difference was demonstrated beautifully when a gentleman in his late 80s came into church. He entered angry and emotional and we provided initial support and refreshments. He then collected what he needed and sat down to have a long chat with the counsellors and then a very sensitive BBC reporter. He left smiling and laughing, after hugging us all and swapping numbers with the reporter so that she could WhatsApp him some photos.

Having his story heard was part of a process of restoring dignity; this is about far more than having somewhere to live and having clothes to wear and, for many residents will take a long time. We feel very privileged to have been able to proclaim the love of Christ by sharing our church, by praying, and by working together with other community organisations to provide support and care.



**Left to right: Churchwarden Joan, Revd Catherine Cleghorne, Reader Jim, Hannah Marr from Crewe Town Council and Mayor Benn Minshull help to coordinate donations for Beechmere residents**

# Events

To book and view other events, visit:  
[www.chester.anglican.org/events](http://www.chester.anglican.org/events)



## **Connecting with Poetry: With John Lindley**

**14 November 2019 - Frodsham**

A day of poetry workshops that will be stimulating, non-intimidating and fun. John Lindley is a freelance poet, songwriter and creative writing tutor. An experienced performer, he has read at Ledbury Poetry Festival and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.



## **24 hours with a theologian: Al Barrett**

**20 November 2019 - Frodsham**

This is a 24 hour event and open to anyone interested in theology and keen to deepen their knowledge and understanding. The event is part of the Diocese of Chester's popular lecture series exploring theology with different academics and thinkers.



## **Traditional Plough Service**

**12 January 2020 - Chester Cathedral**

Plough services date back to Medieval times when the village church kept the plough for the community. We will bless a plough and pray for favourable weather upon the land in 2020 and thank our farmers and their staff for all that they do to work the land and produce the food we eat.



## **Called to Serve**

**25 January 2020 - Frodsham**

An opportunity for all Christians in the Diocese of Chester to explore their potential future vocation. We will focus on four licensed ministries found in this diocese: Pastoral Worker, Reader, Priest and ministry with the Church Army.