

Canterbury Deanery – sustainable and flourishing

Better Together!

In 2020 we adopted the Canterbury Deanery Mission Plan, created and owned by Deanery Synod. The plan includes grouping, flourishing and sharing, drawing us into a future that commits us to working together, building up links between parishes and across the Canterbury Deanery.

Even in this difficult year of a national pandemic, we have seen parts of the mission plan being put into action. The document is dynamic and sustainable, being implemented and refined at every stage.

Throughout the creation process, there has been the desire to share resources and to support each other prayerfully and practically, working together and yet recognising the strength in our diversity.

We have seen the Mission Plan coming alive in:

- A Deanery Lent course, which has over seventy participants from all parishes and other denominations, overseen by Deanery Readers and Curates
- A joint Deanery confirmation planned for October 2021
- The beginnings of a community wardrobe for school uniform in conjunction with local branches of the Mother's Union and our community partners
- Bringing together eco champions from each parish to encourage us all to be good stewards of God's creation in Canterbury
- The first meeting of Deanery PTO clergy and readers with 26 participants
- A successful initiative to appoint a mission priest for the Deanery and Thanington parish This is a major step forward in working together as a Deanery and alongside the Archdeacon to resource our future
- Deanery Churchwardens meeting together (by Zoom) to share knowledge and resources

We are working on the next steps:

- To improve Deanery communications by appointing an identified talented volunteer to co-ordinate our output in consultation with the Deanery Leadership Team
- Plans for shared training on practical matters, like first aid and food hygiene, to safeguard the people to whom we minister
- In the light of our experience during the pandemic to enhance our online presence
- Pulpit swap to share ministry

All are called!

PCC responses to the Mission Plan endorse a ministry that underlines a call to use our God-given gifts in our whole lives as Christians.

The Deanery Lent course is the pioneer event of many to equip the people of God. Vocation events in the deanery are planned to enable discipleship and to embed our beliefs into our daily lives.

PCC responses welcomed lay participation in its widest sense, drawing people into service and commitment, as well as promoting more formal lay leadership and lay ministry across the deanery, especially Reader and ALM ministry.

All PCCs affirmed the place of ordained ministry in the church as part of the people of God and journeying together. This year has seen the Clergy Chapter working together more closely. We are looking to support each other in curate and lay minister training. While rooted in their own parish, opportunities are available for individual curates to broaden their experience in different contexts and different traditions across the Deanery.

Buildings

DMMC felt that our current number of buildings were largely sustainable and many were very widely used by church groups and the wider communities.

The PCC responses included some particular comments, almost entirely by those who had more than one building:

- St Peter's highlighted the potential development of their church building in its unique location in the city centre for multi-purpose use, transforming it into a community hub on the busy central thoroughfare of Canterbury.
- St Martin's and St Dunstan's both talked of mission through heritage and the international reach of their buildings.
- St Paul's identified the use of their church and church-centre as a hub for the Deanery.

Finances

The finances of our Deanery are influenced by monetary contributions from partner organisations and these need to be acknowledged. We are currently supported by the Methodist Church and Junior King's School in the LEP in Sturry. Archbishop's School pay 20% of the incumbent's stipend as their Chaplain, thus reducing the share for St Stephen's. Diocesan funding of the University of Kent chaplaincy allows the Chaplain to be a 10% minister for Blean Parish. All Saints receive Church Lowest Income Communities Funding for their Mission Priest.

Currently, Deanery finances show that two parishes are in arrears (Sturry and Harbledown), two parishes are significantly subsidised (All Saints and Thanington (planned)), two parishes are supported by chaplaincy income (St Stephen's and Blean), three parishes are currently paying their way (the two parishes in the benefice of St Dunstan, St Mildred and St Peter and the parish of St Martin and St Paul) and one parish is noticeably more secure (St Mary Bredin).

The future

The creation of the Mission Plan is acknowledged to be the initial phase of Deanery development and this document is phase two, drawing on the plan and PCC responses.

It is recognised that stipendiary ordained ministry is becoming less sustainable, requiring the growth of new lay ministries and the drawing of others into leadership roles in any new groupings:

Harbledown

Harbledown is currently a resolution parish under the House of Bishops Declaration 2014. In their response to our options of grouping with St Stephen's and Blean, they emphasised their wish to remain a resolution parish and not to group with others. DMMC are keen to work with Harbledown PCC and the incumbent to ensure that the parish is flourishing and sustainable and commit ourselves as a deanery to support the ongoing development of their Parish Mission Action Plan.

North Canterbury Grouping

Blean and St Stephen's were keen to group with each other, although both expressed reservations about joining with Harbledown.

The current provision of ordained ministry at Blean is entirely dependent on the Diocese funding the University Chaplaincy, which allows the parish to have a 0.1 appointment.

DMMC support the grouping of Blean and St Stephen's. The University Chaplaincy is discussed further below but it should be noted that if the income were to be lost the preferred option would be that St Stephen's and Blean become one parish with one priest.

East Canterbury Grouping

The DMMC preferred option in East Canterbury is that, on the retirement of the Rector of Sturry in May 2021, Sturry and All Saints be grouped under one priest. This is seen as being sustainable in the short term and gives the two parishes the best opportunity to flourish as a grouping in the longer term as the Lowest Income

Communities Funding, supporting one stipend for All Saints is likely to end in 2025 enabling both parishes to contribute an equal share to support one full time Priest.

The dialogue with the Methodist church about the LEP should continue but from an Anglican perspective, the current situation, and therefore the LEP, appears unsustainable after May 2021. Part of the dialogue will be about how the potential ending of the LEP could be resolved, as new arrangements are implemented. The new incumbent should be protected from being over-stretched and be given space to draw the two parishes together allowing opportunities for mission and ministry to grow. Attempting to achieve realism, the interregnum offers an opportunity to have a period of reflection that looks into the long term for the sustainability and flourishing of Sturry, All Saints and Canterbury Deanery. This needs to happen first with Sturry and then with Sturry and All Saints together.

DMMC understand the pain that this will cause especially as the Parish response from Sturry spoke of the desire to remain in an LEP. We also acknowledge the concerns felt by the All Saints PCC about protecting the parish's commitment to mission, as well as potentially spreading ministry too thin. We believe that, with the right support for the new incumbent and the two parishes, this grouping could work well.

Other Groupings

St Dunstan's, St Mildred's and St Peter's (DMP) formally came together in 2018 on the appointment of the present Rector, as a benefice grouping. This is working well and could offer support to other groupings in how to flourish together. The establishment of this Benefice has shown a commitment to new arrangements and being open to change within the Deanery.

St Martin's and St Paul's PCC acknowledged that it could group in the longer term with the East Canterbury Grouping or with DMP in the future. Scope was identified for loose partnerships in the immediate future. The large estates in the parish link ministry requirements to All Saints and Sturry, while heritage opportunities offered partnerships with the DMP Benefice. A successful holiday club organised by three parishes (DMP, All Saints and St Martin's and St Paul's) in 2019 shows an enthusiasm for partnerships in mission and a keenness to build on that.

The PCC of St Mary Bredin supported the option that the parish would continue in its present form and not be part of a grouping. As seen in the appendix to this paper SMB have significant mission plans for their parish and seek partnerships with the wider deanery in our mutual flourishing.

Mission Priest post

Recently, a bid for five-year funding for a mission priest in a Deanery post based at Thanington was accepted, supporting cross-Deanery mission. In responses to our

consultation both St Mary Bredin and St Martin's and St Paul's welcomed the appointment and saw opportunities for partnerships, support and sharing experience. The DMMC see the Deanery part of the mission priest's role as supporting work on the London Road estate.

Although the appointment has not yet been made to this post, there is need to look to the end of the five years of agreed funding and create sustainable options for developing ongoing mission in the Deanery

Options for the post and for Thanington are:

- Option A - Find new funding to continue with the role, especially if the mission part is successfully embedded.
- Option B - Draw the post into SMB but with agreement on the retention of St Nicholas Church.
- Option C - A new mission post based on Mountfield Park but incorporating the work in Thanington.

(Mountfield Park is potentially a 4500 new housing development, currently going through the planning process. This would straddle two deaneries as it covers part of the Lower Hardres end of the Parish of Bridge in East Bridge Deanery, and St Martin's and St Paul's Parish in this deanery. The planning process is continuing, within the next few years we should know if it will happen and if it does, the shape of the development.)

Education post

The DMMC values links with local schools and seeks further Deanery co-operation, as stated in the Mission Plan, as a way of working in the secondary and primary schools of Canterbury, better using the giftings of lay and ordained ministers.

It is proposed that the priest in the North Canterbury Grouping holds, as part of their role, an education portfolio for the Deanery and that on the retirement of the current incumbent in 2023 that would form part of the parish recruitment profile. This role would support schools work and encourage lay and ordained ministers to work more closely together across our schools in the Deanery. The role assumes that parishes continue to build up their own relationships with schools but are better able to find support and economies of scale in working with the post holder.

The incumbent of St Stephen's is the Chaplain of Archbishop's School and the school pays part of his stipend. If the Archbishop's School funding were reduced or withdrawn it would be possible to build on the current support to the school from St Stephen's and from Clergy, Readers and other ministers to provide chaplaincy, co-ordinated by the holder of the Education post.

Chaplaincy

DMMC endorsed the importance of chaplaincy in schools, further and higher education in our Deanery. We support the continuation of the funding of the University of Kent chaplaincy by Communities and Partnership as a vital part of the mission of the Deanery to the university and its wider community. We acknowledge the benefits, which come to the Deanery and Diocese, through our stake in the world of education given by the chaplaincies. We would look in future to work more closely with the university chaplaincies at the University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University, offering resources and pastoral support. The work of parishes across the deanery in ministering to the student population that live throughout the city is acknowledged and is seen as a gifting distinct from the gifting of chaplaincy ministry. Support to the Independent School chaplaincies at St Edmund's and the King's School (especially supporting involvement at Junior King's in Sturry) should continue. The St Edmund's post is currently vacant.

The Cathedral

In many ways the role of the Cathedral is beyond the remit of the DMMC. However, the Cathedral has played an important part in the Deanery through Deanery Synod and through the role of the Canon Missioner. The Dean and Chapter corporately and individually have offered support in the life of the Deanery, and the DMMC feels a shared sense of partnership. There have been some questions from the parishes about the Cathedral and its place (or lack of it) in what has been described as a "doughnut deanery". It was noted in responses that the Cathedral's regular congregation is a gathered community of people mostly from within our parishes, some of whom also take an active part in our parish communities. It is recognised that there is a wealth of experience in the Cathedral Chapter of parochial ministry and of specific gifts and a willingness to share that experience with the Deanery.

The DMMC seeks to explore further partnerships between the parishes of the Deanery and the Cathedral, to share resources and to be creative in mission. We see that as an opportunity to work together in specific areas of overlap (e.g. pilgrimage/heritage) but also to build further collegiality and mutual support between the Cathedral and lay and ordained ministers in the Deanery.

This document was approved by Canterbury DMMC and issued on 23rd March 2021. It replaces all previous versions.

Appendix: Flourishing in Mission

As a deanery is the sum of its parishes, we asked PCCs to respond to the Consultation paper and Mission Plan and to outline their own visions especially with new partnerships.

St Mary, Bredin

- The re-establishment of a CAP (Christians Against Poverty) Debt Centre
- To continue to grow the reach and influence of their anti-slavery ministry 'Stop the Traffik'
- A partnership between their New Wine Discipleship Year Hub with the Diocese and the national Ministry Experience Scheme for more 18-24 year olds to give a year to grow in discipleship and experience ministry through a local church
- Their commitment to the Church of England's Growing Faith agenda, becoming a Growing Faith resource church
- Responding to the Church of England's challenge set out in 'Setting God's people free', in training and resourcing lay leaders from across their congregation. The Growing Leaders course will again be running from late Summer 2021 in partnership with the Diocese. This will be their third cohort. As before, other churches will be invited to send participants

St Dunstan's, St Mildred's and St Peter's

- Partnership with Catching Lives as part of the ecumenical/deanery ministry to the homeless
- Mission to pilgrimages and visitors through heritage especially at St Dunstan's
- Mission to the city centre through chaplaincy to the Marlowe Theatre, links to Business Improvement District (BID) and their work with the shops and businesses in the city centre
- St Peter's continues to host the Romanian Orthodox Church and occasionally the Greek Orthodox community.
- Potential development of St Peter's and use as a hub for welcome and an oasis of calm!
- The Churches are part of Inclusive Church and the Eco Church Movement
- Strong and growing Friends organisations in both parishes

St Martin's and St Paul's

- Estate Ministry, partnering with others in the community, especially residents groups, the city council and holding events/messy church in the community not on church premises
- Partnership in the World Heritage Site (with Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey and other stakeholders) telling the Christian story afresh
- Hope to work with parishes across the Deanery to resource each other in care home ministry and working with the older members of our community

- Planning joint musical events across the Deanery enabling others to sing together

Blean

- Partnering with others to care for the older members of society, particularly the active older
- Working with other churches to foster community engagement in environmental matters
- Improving the small Church room, to make it more suitable for community activities, and to be an asset to the Deanery
- Fostering previous good relations with the local (non-church) primary school with several outreach activities

All Saints

- All Saints joined the A Rocha UK Eco Church initiative towards the end of 2020. Their church is currently below Bronze standard, and they are identifying areas they can improve, both short and long-term. Their current aim is to become a Bronze standard church. They have recently started a monthly eco church meeting
- As part of their ongoing building project plans (needed to replace end-of-life roof tiling), they are studying feasibility of energy efficiency installations, such as heat pumps or solar panels. They will also substantially improve much needed church insulation
- They would be happy to host any shared training in their building, and benefit from the neighbouring Council office car park available for use in evenings and weekends. They do have several people who offer professional training (in other topics) as part of their day-job; they may be able to offer help with delivery if there were 'off the shelf' resources available.
- They would be keen to continue collaborative ministry with teenagers, as they have done in the past with some churches in the Deanery and across the Diocese. An All Saints churchwarden and church member are willing to take this work forward with a team from other churches and the appropriate member of the DMMC.
- We have long standing good relationships with the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Evangelical Orthodox church and the Brazilian Church who meet to worship in our building.
- The Curate welcomes involvement in her wider interfaith partnerships project

-