

growing  
church  
bringing  
hope



# Diocese of Newcastle Annual Reports 2017



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## Bishop's Council and Standing Committee

It gives me real joy to introduce the reports which follow and which demonstrate passion and service to mission and ministry across our Diocese through a varied selection of work carried out in 2017.

In March 2017 we held an Open Synod Forum to launch the Diocesan vision for **growing church bringing hope**. The atmosphere at the Dr Thomlinson Church of England Middle School, Rothbury was buzzing and well over two hundred people had travelled from across the Diocese to celebrate the launch. The Diocesan Synod met a further four times, in May and September for a formal meeting, in July to open a consultation about our budget and in November we were blessed as we welcomed Dr Paula Gooder to lead an Open Synod Forum on Discipleship. Again, we exceeded two hundred people who gathered at the Northumberland Church of England Academy to listen to Paula as she led an inspiring Open Synod Forum.

The Bishop's Council met six times in 2017 including a residential meeting at Shepherds Dene. Topics covered by the Council have included the shaping of the Diocesan Ministry Council which, following the appointment of the Director for Discipleship and Ministry for Mission, held its inaugural meeting in December 2017. Ian Flintoft shares more of his new work overleaf. The Council has also engaged with the development of our first application for Strategic Development Funding with our proposal to establish a Resource Church for the Diocese of Newcastle. This exciting initiative passed the first stage application in December and we look forward to seeing the fruits of this project emerge as our application progresses in 2018.

At the Diocesan Office at Church House we said goodbye to some colleagues who retired or moved to other roles and we welcomed people to new roles including our Head of Communications, Roderick Stuart, our Finance Manager, Phil Ambrose, and our Transformation and Programme Strategy Manager, Chris Elder. The National Church has gifted us the financial resource to fund the new posts occupied by Ian Flintoft and Chris Elder.

Once again, I am indebted to all those who serve and have contributed to the life and mission of this wonderful Diocese through the many activities within our parishes to the wider work across our respective Boards, Councils and Task Groups. Although these reports reflect only a small part of the overall activities carried out across the Diocese in 2017 it gives me great pleasure to introduce these reports and to commend them to you.

*+ Christine Newcastle*

The Rt Revd Christine Hardman, Bishop of Newcastle

Diocese of Newcastle   
**growing church bringing hope**

## Discipleship & Ministry for Mission

2017 saw the bringing together of a number of areas of our diocesan work in the broad areas of 'Discipleship and Ministry for Mission.' A Diocesan Ministry Council has been established to oversee:

- the development of dynamic and fruitful discipleship and training across the Diocese;
- the discernment and development of vocations of all kinds; and
- the training, resourcing, and supporting of ministers to enable effective mission and ministry across our communities.

The Ministry Council encompasses the work of task groups and supporting ministers / advisers in the following areas: Children and Youth; Evangelism; Discipleship; Local Ministry Development; Vocations; Readers; and Continuing Ministerial Development. The aim is to bring a greater sense of coherence and synergy to our work, and some of the fruits of this are already being seen. Here, we highlight the work of the supporting ministers / advisers working in this area – acknowledging that this encapsulates only a part of the work being undertaken.

### Director of Discipleship & Ministry for Mission

The first three months in post (from 1st October) included meeting the Deanery Development Group (or Lay Chair and Area Dean) in a number of deaneries – to consult about: 1) their current deployment and ministry plans; 2) their hopes for ministry and discipleship provision in the future; 3) any specific actions we need to take now; and 4) possible development of new ministries and other areas of interest.

One thought clearly emerging is that we might develop other forms of Authorised Lay Ministry, learning from other dioceses: these could include – pastoral care; children's ministry; youth ministry; worship leader; parish administrator; community engagement (amongst others). We are beginning to do more work on this, learning from the pilot training for Lay Worship Leaders in Norham Deanery.

I began work with the Newcastle team of Shane Waddle, Carol Wolstenholme, and Catherine Macpherson as we prepared to attend the Setting

God's People Free learning community in January. We are fortunate to be one of the pilot dioceses for this work and now have an action plan to enable us to take forward a number of initiatives.

I also began to form what I hope are constructive supervisory relationships with the other members of the DMM team, and have continued to work on leading (with others) two strands of our diocesan strategy – the Month of Guided Prayer initiative and the work around Leading your Church into Growth.

I also continued to hold some of the tasks related to our vocations agenda, especially as we were not able to make an appointment to the Diocesan Director of Ordinands post. I am pleased to say that we have now appointed the Rev'd Claire Robson as Interim DDO.

### Canon Ian Flintoft

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### Vocations

2017 saw our previous vocations strategy bear much fruit. We continued (until September) to operate the Church of England Ministry Experience Scheme, which gives young people under 30 the chance to experience ministry first hand for 10-11 months, and it was heartening to see four previous participants in the Scheme ordained here in the summer. Indeed, summer 2017 saw the highest number of people ordained to the diaconate for many years here in Newcastle, and there was a joyous and hope-filled atmosphere at ordinations to both the diaconate and the priesthood.

We continued to send a good number of people to national Bishops' Advisory Panels to have their sense of vocation to ordained ministry tested. We now have 17 people in training for ordained ministry and around another 20 at various stages of the discernment process.

After Ian Flintoft moved to become Director of Discipleship and Ministry for Mission, Hilary Elder and the Assistant DDOs worked hard to maintain the sense of purpose and positive energy. We are delighted to say that the DDO Team is now back up to full strength, with Claire Robson as Interim DDO, Hilary Elder continuing as Associate DDO, and

Jonathan Lawson, Catherine Askew, and Alan Paterson all ministering as Assistant DDOs.

We have a renewed vocations strategy in place for 2017-2022: this is both exciting and a challenging time in the field of vocations, with changes afoot in the national Church and locally.

**The Revd Claire Robson**

Diocesan Director of Ordinands

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**Dr Hilary Elder**

Associate Director of Ordinands

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**Local Evangelism**

The year began with interviewing prospective Street Pastors as part of my work as a Street Pastor Trustee and Management Group member. Around 45 Street Pastors based at the Cathedral work every weekend on the streets of Newcastle. I also take an occasional slot on the rota as a Street Pastor and am always energised by the spiritual conversations with partygoers and those who work in the city at night.

Working with parishes on the growth agenda was something that peppered the year, one highlight being working with the PCC of Berwick following their leading your church into growth conference. I represented the diocese at the wedding show held in the arena and attended a 3-day conference on Growth Strategies which gave a useful insight into the way God was working in other dioceses.

I was part of 'Talking Jesus' which was the Bishops in Mission event in Durham diocese with the Archbishop of York. It was a good time, with a variety of activities all designed to help the church 'Talk Jesus' with a new confidence and in a natural way. I continued as a member of the Archbishop's reference group for evangelism and serving on General Synod and enjoyed the time reporting back to my allocated deaneries of Tynemouth and Alnwick. I also continued as a member of the Clergy Discipline Commission. All this helps me understand better the national agenda.

My work as a member of the Botswana Task Group was again rewarding in 2017, including spending two weeks in Botswana helping with their mission event. We held the first Leading Your Church into Growth

conference in the diocese with 20 parishes and 60 delegates. I was involved in the preparation along with the follow-up. I attended the annual Missioners Conference and helped with the preparation for Thy Kingdom Come - Beacon Event in our Cathedral. I led sessions on Faith Sharing with those training to be Street Pastors as well as with some parishes around the diocese. I worked with the Evangelism Task group on the "Invitation" course.

The year continued with Mission Weekends in Chapel House, Shilbottle and Morpeth Deanery. Events for young people and children as well as adults in the church and wider community all featured. I continued to speak to at outreach events, dinners and breakfasts from time to time.

The year was filled with the usual round of meetings with Bishop's Council, Supporting Ministers and Newcastle Cathedral Chapter and Canons. I was invited to preach and lead services across the diocese, taking the opportunity to remind congregations of the important role of faith sharing one on one and community engagement. I was pleased to meet with colleagues in the wider missionary network and especially with the Northern province group. I am always happy to be contacted if you would like to discuss my work, or if you feel I could help in some way.

Sharing the vision and preparing for the "Pathways" mission planned for September 2018 took up some of my time as 2017 closed. The mission will provide a great platform for engaging with our communities in new ways during 2018 and beyond. I give a huge Thank You to Steve Dixon for the motivational way in which he leads the Evangelism Task Group and to who all play a very positive part in the missional and evangelistic life of our great diocese.

**The Revd Canon John Sinclair**

Adviser in Local Evangelism and Mission

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## Children and Youth

Having launched the strategy, '*Growth and Fruitfulness*', in late 2016, the Children and Youth team, with a newly established Task Group, continued to develop its work of 'enabling parishes' and 'nurturing disciples'.

Work to gather, break down and map data from the '*Statistics for Mission*', parish questionnaires and the Archdeacons' Visitations '*Articles of Enquiry*' is almost complete. The purpose of this is to identify particular areas and parishes where support and intervention may be helpful and/or required, as well as where good practice could be shared.

**Enabling Parishes** - During 2017 members of the team visited 7 deaneries to present the diocesan Children and Youth strategy. In addition, more than 70 people attended the team 'Tour' at its 3 locations across the diocese: here participants heard about new resources and shared experiences and ideas. The number of people asking to receive the team's eBulletin exceeds 200, representing around 80 parishes/benefices. Our Facebook page continues to attract new followers. During 2017:

- 40 people from 11 churches attended '*Open the Book*' training;
- 22 people from 12 churches attended 2 Godly Play introductory days, from which 13 people subsequently signed up for the 3 day training;
- 45 people from 19 parishes attended 'Easter Comes Early';
- 48 people from 32 churches and schools attended 2 Prayer Spaces introductory sessions;
- 20 attended a day about Discipleship and Youth drop-ins.

Around 20 parishes applied for and received small start-up grants for activities like Messy Church and mid-week groups.

**Nurturing Disciples** - Parishes were subsidised in order to support young people to attend '*The Big Night Out*' at Light Water Valley; the Staying Alive youth residential attracted 50 teenagers and young adults; financial support was provided for a youth pilgrimage to Walsingham. A youth retreat took place

in June and there continues to be a regular gathering of the Youth Forum.

A training day for 'Admission to Communion' took place in February and the number of churches in the diocese now admitting to Communion before Confirmation has risen to 20. The discipleship course for those working with children and young people, which was piloted in June, is being developed for use in the wider diocese. Over 300 people attended 'Messy Church Goes Large' at the cathedral in June.

**Networking** - There has been ongoing contact with national and regional networks, other denominational children's and youth officers, other diocesan groups eg the Discipleship Task group, the Education Board officers, Together Newcastle and Continuing Ministerial Development. Links continue with the Resources Centre, Seahouses Hostel, Scripture Union, Open the Book, Barnabas, Prayer Spaces in Schools, Streetspace, Streetgames and Youth for Christ.

### Judith Sadler

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## Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD)

The CMD officer and task group have worked together to create and implement a wide ranging CMD programme for clergy and readers over the last 12 months. This year, for the first time, we have produced a CMD brochure, which has been sent to all clergy and readers, detailing the CMD opportunities available in the diocese. The brochure has been a collaborative effort with Lindisfarne, the Resources Centre, and the Children and Youth Team and has drawn much positive feedback. It has also led to a marked increase in the number of clergy and readers accessing the diocesan CMD provision.

We have enjoyed beginning to work with the Director of Mission and Ministry for Discipleship and the Ministry Council. The changing structure has already started to give our work greater cohesion and connectivity as part of the diocesan vision, and the ministry we share.

We were delighted to welcome the new Clergy Development Advisor for the Durham Diocese, the

Revd Canon Dr Alan Bartlett. Having a colleague with a similar brief in Durham has made a big difference to the range of Catherine's role, and the opportunities for working collaboratively with Durham. We already run the pre-retirement residential and mid ministry course across the two dioceses, and are hoping to be able to add several other joint projects to our portfolio. In particular, we hope to be able to run a course for first incumbents jointly, and do some work on church growth in Anglo Catholic parishes.

We continue to be responsive to the needs of clergy and readers, and to plan our annual CMD programme in response to suggestions and feedback. This year, we have invited Bridgebuilders to run two day courses, 'managing change' and 'leading well under pressure' to support leaders in parishes to build a positive culture around change.

The part we play directly in the diocesan vision is the 'Leading Your Church into Growth' strand, whose second cohort will meet in April. Our work also overlaps with the rural, impact, and prayer strands, and there is the potential for us to be involved in the training and development aspect of these areas as the vision unfolds.

#### **The Revd Catherine Pickford**

Continuing Ministerial Development Officer

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### **Rural Affairs**

In the year under review, the work of the Bishop's Rural Affairs Adviser has been dominated by the rural strand of the diocesan strategy, Growing Church Bringing Hope. Announced at a meeting of the diocesan synod in Ashington in November 2016, the strategy was launched formally at Rothbury in March 2017. At this latter event, the workshops introducing the rural strand were led by the Archdeacon of Lindisfarne and the Bishop's Adviser as the two leaders of this part of the diocesan strategy. The task given to the rural strand, the re-imagining of ministry in the rural multi-parish benefices, is a considerable

one, not least given the size and largely rural nature of the Diocese of Newcastle.

A guiding coalition, with eight lay and ordained members was formed, and is chaired by Stephen Purvis. This group meets monthly, and has had one away day, and is working hard at shaping a developing vision for the rural strand and exploring the extent of the strand's work within the context of the overall strategy. Planning has begun for a conference on rural ministry and mission to be held in the autumn of 2018.

In addition, a sub-group was set up to look at theological reflection and training for the rural church. This group is working on the delivery of a series of contextual practice workshops, the first to be held in March 2018 at the Sill, the recently-opened National Landscape Discovery Centre at Bardon Mill, on the subject of landscape and faith.

When the diocesan strategy was launched, the stated aim of the rural strand was this: To recruit, train and support new ministry and mission teams in our rural multi-parish benefices with clergy and laity working together – in order to reshape the rural Church's engagement with God's mission. The first project was inaugurated by Bishop Christine on Sunday 5th November 2017 in St Andrew's Church, Hartburn. A new ministry team was licensed to work collaboratively over two adjoining groups of parishes in the far west of Morpeth Deanery: Kirkwhelpington with Kirkharle and Kirkheaton, and Cambo joining with Bolam and Whalton, Hartburn with Meldon, and Netherwitton. In addition to the licensing of three individuals, Bishop Christine also commissioned all present in the very full church to the work of re-imagining ministry in these rural parishes.

In this new beginning, my work as Bishop's Adviser took on an additional dimension. Having been Priest in Charge of the Kirks and Cambo since June 2016, I was licensed as Priest in Charge of these other parishes as well. The Rev'd Fiona Sample, a Self-Supporting Minister, and Mrs Pam Walker, a Lay Reader, were licensed to part-time stipendiary ministry as part of the new team, the first time a Lay Reader has become stipendiary in this diocese. We are joined in the team by The Rev'd Frances Dower, a retired priest with Permission to Officiate. Work has

begun on establishing groups of lay and ordained people involved in a number of areas across all the parishes: visiting; schools; care of buildings; communications; liturgy.

A second project, involving the parishes in the former Glendale Group will be launched with a Bishop's Mission Order in February 2018. Plans for a number of further projects are being developed by the guiding coalition of the rural strand.

In addition to my work within both the guiding coalition and the rural theology group, I have addressed a number of deanery synods and PCCs about rural affairs, and in particular the rural strand, as well as helping to deliver a day-long workshop on collaborative ministry in rural parishes, organised by the CMD officer. Meanwhile, I have continued to develop a network of rural contacts at local, diocesan and national levels, with both individuals and organisations.

#### **The Revd Jonathan Mason**

Bishop's Rural Affairs Adviser

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### **Church in Society**



On Tuesday 7 November 2017, a thousand people gathered at the Tyne Theatre and Opera House on Westgate Road for the Tyne and Wear Citizens Launch Assembly – among them a significant number of church members and leaders from our diocese,

including Bishop Christine who spoke at the conclusion of the event.

Anyone who has been reading these reports over the years will know this is something I have been involved in since its inception. The Launch Assembly was the culmination not only of the planning and preparation undertaken by the leadership group, which I chaired, over the past year, but the whole journey to date, which began way back in January 2014.

There are now nearly thirty organisations in membership, including at the last count six parishes either already signed up or on the brink of joining. At the launch assembly, we also outlined three areas of action that would provide the focus of our work in the coming year. These are poverty, mental health and community safety; three areas that I know many in our churches are deeply concerned about. By working together with others who share our concerns, we can make a real difference. In addition I continue to serve on the Boards of a number of Voluntary Sector Organisations, which involve me in a wide range of activities. These include:

- Newcastle Council for Voluntary Services, which acts as the 'voice' of the sector. Amongst other things, this complements my role on the leadership group of Tyne and Wear Citizens, as my networks across the voluntary sector have proved fruitful in forging all sorts of connections.
- Newcastle City of Sanctuary, which is all about building a culture of welcome and hospitality for refugees and asylum seekers, and plays a key role in raising awareness in the region. Having been hosted by WERS, we are now in the process of incorporating as a separate charity.
- The Road to Recovery Trust, which promotes abstinence-based recovery from any kind of addiction, and runs a café and meeting space called 'George Street Social' that is rapidly becoming a very active and significant community centre within the city. The northeast has among the highest rates of drug abuse in the country, but recovery and wellbeing have a social – and for many a spiritual – significance beyond the immediate field of substance addiction.
- Just Meditation, which operates an independent high street meditation centre in the city centre, providing drop-in classes, courses, workshops,



seminars and training. A growing and very broad range of people are engaging with this enterprise – including a number of Christians and, perhaps even more significantly, ex-churchgoers. There is evidently a great thirst for spirituality that the churches seem somehow unable to meet.

Through all these activities I seek to bring the church into a mutually enriching relationship with civil society organisations and movements that share our values and an aspiration to work for the common good of society and its members. It has been a busy year, and much has been achieved – though at the same time, it also feels as if the work is only just beginning!

**The Revd Dr Nicholas Buxton**

Bishop's Advisor for Church and Society  
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## Together Newcastle



*“There is nothing more powerful than a community discovering what it cares about”*

Margaret Wheatley - Turning to One Another

Recent research carried out by Church Urban Fund and THEOS told us that over 10 million people in this country rely on activities provided and hosted by churches. It seems that now more than ever is a time for Christians and churches to be even more actively involved in their communities, particularly as many communities and people are experiencing hardship loneliness isolation and an uncertain future.

Our churches are embedded in their communities and as a result have developed trusting relationships and networks, this enables churches to play an important part in responding to the challenges faced by neighbourhoods and communities today.

Over the past year Together Newcastle has continued to develop connections and relationships with congregations across the Diocese and as a result we

have experienced an increase in requests to help set up activities in response to identified needs and issues. During the year we have been joined by our Just Finance Foundation worker, Liz Chadwick. Liz has also put together a report on her work across the Diocese since her appointment 1 September 2017.

Together Newcastle is a resource to churches, individuals and groups that are wanting to get involved in some form of community activity, as part of their mission and commitment to Growing Church Bringing Hope.

We have seen congregations and communities discovering their gifts and finding creative ways by which these have been put to use so they and their communities can flourish and thrive. During the course of our work we continue to celebrate and rejoice in the depth of commitment and wealth of gifts that reside in the people and places where we work.

In all our work we have continued to apply the principles of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

- start with what's strong rather than what's wrong
- never do for others that which they can do for themselves

The work is varied and exciting and we are invited to work in parishes across the length and breadth of our Diocese – between Tyne and Tweed and we have focussed our work on a number of key themes and programmes;

- Isolation and Loneliness – developing work out of a growing awareness that people both young and old urban and rural are increasingly isolated and lonely which in turn effects their sense of mental wellbeing.
- Church and Community Engagement – to continue our core work of supporting and encouraging churches to use their gifts and assets in order to engage/serve the local community. To use the Asset Based approach of “what's strong rather than what's wrong” and to celebrate all that is good in a neighbourhood. To bring about thriving and flourishing people and places
- Food Insecurity – building on the outstanding work undertaken by Food banks across the

Diocese to add value to all that is being done whilst continuing to question the “normalising” of food bank provision. Extend the provision of play with children during school holidays to incorporate the offer of food in order to compensate for the absence of free school meals.

- Resourcing and Capacity Building – on going support for clergy, churches and organisations seeking to identify and secure funding and other resources for work in their communities. Brokering relationships and connecting people and places using both church and other organisation networks.

Some examples of our work include:

- Working in partnership with **Northern Gas Networks** and **Community Action Northumberland** in order to set up Warm Hubs – an activity that uses the gifts skills and resources of local churches in order to bring people together who are isolated and lonely into a warm welcoming space in order to enjoy friendship and refreshments. This work enables us to support people who are struggling to heat their homes and pay their fuel bills by identifying Energy Saving Initiatives.
- Helping several churches and organisations to find funding to enable them to start activities or sustain a much needed piece of work
- Working with groups in parishes who are involved in the **Know our Church Know Your Neighbourhood** activity- an asset based approach to community engagement and mission.
- **Tyne and Wear Citizens-** Together Newcastle are a member organisation and contributing the campaigning work in particular campaigning to win parity of treatment between pupils on free school meals and their peers who pay for their school dinners.
- Teaching sessions with **Lindisfarne training programme** – Part of the Mission unit at Lindisfarne delivering a session on Asset Based Community Development – a model for Mission.
- Working with the **Diocesan Poverty Task Group-**encouraging conversation and activity around issues of social justice.

This past year has seen changes in the funding arrangements for our work therefore some time and

energy has been diverted into developing a funding strategy in order to secure financial resources in order to enable the work of Together Newcastle within the Diocese continue.

### **2017: Our work in numbers**

- Activities and parishes supported: **23**
- Training and workshop events: **14**
- Funding raised for parish activities: **£ 44.000**

### **Thank you**

We would like to acknowledge and commitment of clergy, parishioners and community members for the work they do in bringing their ideas and activities to life and helping communities to thrive and flourish. Thanks also to Church House and Diocesan staff for their support in helping to make things happen, and to CUF for their ongoing support. Finally to our Board of Trustees who give their time and much encouragement to guide and support all that we do. A special thank you to Steve Dixon who left the Board of Trustees this year, we will miss you. Also a warm welcome to Gwyneth Mckenzie who joined the trustees this year.

Thanks also to Angela who works so hard and quietly in the back ground to make a lot of what we do happen and also look good! Please have a look at our website [www.cuf.org.uk/together-newcastle](http://www.cuf.org.uk/together-newcastle)

### **Steve Forster, Development Worker**

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The Just Finance Foundation grew out of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Task Force after he served on the Parliamentary Commission on Banking Standards investigating the 2008 crash.

It has 4 Aims:

- Financial Services: Increase the supply of fair and affordable finance and financial services particularly for low income households.
- Capability and Access: Build people's motivation, expertise and access to fair financial services.
- Future Generations: Equip future generations to manage their money wisely.
- Local Communities: Develop fair financial systems in local communities.

### **Just Finance in the Diocese of Newcastle**

We have assisted in creating new Community Money Advice Centre at St Martin's Byker which engages and supports people who find themselves with unmanageable debt problems.

We have several financial capability work courses on offer which we can deliver on request. Seven courses delivered already and five organisations signed up to UCSavvy.

- Making Ends Meet
- Cash Smart Credit Savvy
- Universal Credit Savvy
- Debt awareness

The Lifesavers Programme was launched in our Diocese in 2016 and is funded by Virgin Money. This links Primary School children with a savings bank and lessons about money which link to the national curriculum. We currently have 5 active schools in the Diocese but intend to roll out to all our schools in the next year.

The Northumberland Church of England Academy is a stunning example of how this can work in practice and it gained national recognition when Andy Haldane the Chief Economist of the Bank of England came to visit Ashington in February. The visit was organised in partnership with the Church of England Just Finance Foundation and as the worker in our

Diocese I worked closely with local people and organisations in order to create an opportunity for Andy to hold conversations with teachers, pupils, parents, charities, credit unions, voluntary organisations, local councils, companies and housing associations, as well as Church of England staff and volunteers. The purpose of the conversations was to develop a clearer understanding of how the Bank of England can contribute to creating better access to fairer financial services for all. The visit was a resounding success and Andy left the region with a strong sense of the enthusiasm passion and warmth that resides if the people of Ashington and the wider region.

In our local communities we are building resilience into Credit Unions and Community Banks to allow people to save for life events and to borrow at very reasonable rates. We have over **100** new members joined Northumberland Community Bank in the last three months!

Currently we are exploring opportunities for people to engage and support ways in which they may help. We have worked with ten Parishes in our Diocese this year.

It is very difficult to find Christ when you are drowning in debt, when every minute of every day is consumed by money worries.

### **Liz Chadwick**

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## **Education update**

### **Mixed Multi Academy Trusts**

A Mixed Multi Academy trust is where community schools and Church of England schools can work together as part of one trust where the distinctiveness of the church schools is protected through model articles as produced in conjunction with the Department for Education and the Church of England National Education Office.

Newcastle East Academy Trust is now fully functional. Central Walker Church of England Primary School has now joined with four other community schools to join

the Trust. Not only was this the first Mixed MAT of its kind in the North East it also now offers opportunities to our other CofE Schools to have the option of converting to an Academy together with non-Church schools.

**Three Rivers Trust** has now changed its governance structures to allow Voluntary Aided Church Schools to join the Trust. This has been a three-year piece of work, which now allows schools in the Coquet Valley to work more closely together and share good practice in a very different more structured way. Dr Tomlinson's CofE Middle school and Harbottle CofE First School have now joined the Trust.

**The Pele Trust** which encompasses schools in Ponteland has now successfully gained academy orders for its schools including Richard Coates CofE Primary and Heddon on the Wall Primary School.

**Tynedale Academy Trust** (Schools from the Prudhoe Partnership) consists of a group of schools (one Church of England) who would like to form a Trust – we are currently working with all ten schools to support a further mixed MAT.

### **Northumberland Church of England Academy (NCEA)**

During the last three years I have been working with the Trustees of NCEA and the Department of Education to improve outcomes for children. Last year it was agreed that NCEA would be 'demerged' into three parts – A Primary School; a Secondary School with a Sixth form and a Special School. The demerger allows the schools more flexibility and allows for clearer lines of accountability both internally and externally as a Trust. As a result of this the Special School will have to lose its religious designation however, the Special school will remain part of the Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust. The Trust now has new Acting CEO Mr Alan Hardie who is also the Principal of Whitburn C of E Secondary School – an Outstanding Secondary School in the Diocese of Durham.

### **School Organisation**

In the last twelve months we have also supported schools and colleagues in the Ponteland Partnership as they have moved to a two tier rather than three tier system. Heddon on the Wall CofE First has now

become a Primary School as has Richard Coates that was a Middle School.

### **School Improvement & Outcomes for children**

Outcomes for children continue to rise at the end of Primary School / Year 6. In particular, we have been congratulated by HMI narrowing the gap of achievement for disadvantaged children in the Diocese – progress by this group is now significantly above the national average – a year on year improvement over the last three years. We are now looking to mirror this success into Key Stage 3 and 4 (GCSE years).

We have no schools in an Ofsted Category and this year all of our Require Improvement schools have made GOOD progress with one being judged as now good by Ofsted. Several schools in Northumberland and North Tyneside buy additional support from our team.

### **The Joint Education Team**

Anne Vernon (School Effectiveness) is now a Lead Inspector for Ofsted; Jo Warner (School Effectiveness) is now a THRIVE consultant which allows her to train teachers and teaching assistants to manage children's more complex behaviour she is also now training to inspect for Ofsted. Liane Atkin (Legal and Governance) has been focusing on the legal aspects of the mixed MAT work and supporting the legal and governance aspects of our schools. Due to demand we sub contract some of our school improvement work to trusted consultants who, in the main, are also working for Ofsted.

#### **Paul Rickeard**

Director of Education

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### **Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee (DMPC)**

2017 proved to be yet another busy year for the DMPC. Meetings were held, as usual, in February (Annual 'Away Day'), May, July, September and November.

**Membership of the Committee.** Mrs Liz Kerry resigned from the committee to focus on other responsibilities

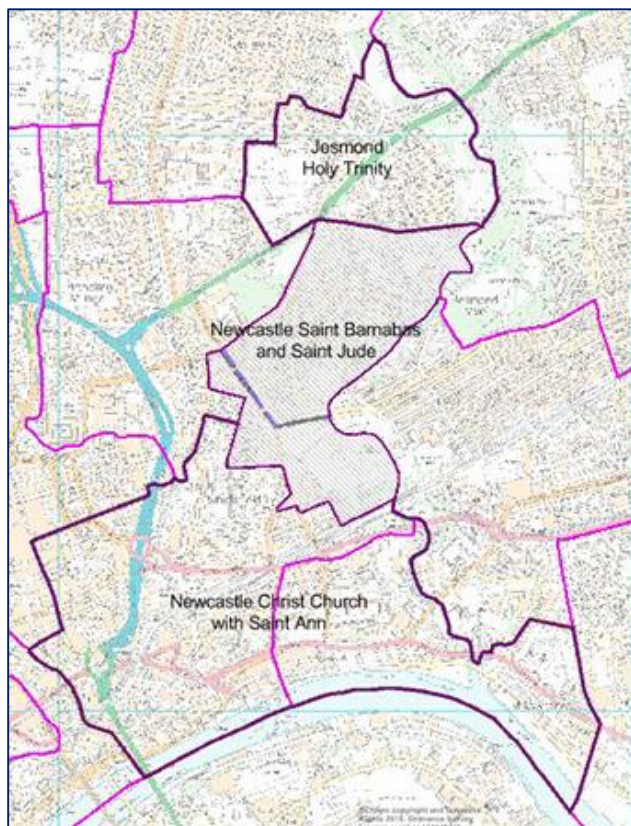


within the Diocese. Mrs Kerry was thanked for the contribution she had made to the work of the DMPC.

The work to support Suspension of Presentation and the making of Schemes and Orders involved the DMPC in consultation with the Patrons, Clergy, Laity and PCCs of 38 parishes within 21 of the benefices in the Diocese of Newcastle.

### **Schemes and Orders which received attention included**

Newcastle St Barnabas and St Jude: this Scheme was published providing for the dissolution of the benefice of Newcastle St Barnabas and St Jude and the realignment of the benefices of Jesmond Holy Trinity and Newcastle Christ Church with St Anne.



Pastoral reorganization across the Glendale Group was published providing for the termination of the team Ministry and the dissolution of the benefice of the Glendale Group. The new benefices of Doddington, Ilderton, Kirknewton and Wooler; and

Chatton with Chillingham, Eglingham and South Charlton and Ingram were created.



Other Schemes and Orders considered by the Committee included the development of a Scheme for the future pastoral care of Blyth; a Scheme for Newcastle St Andrew & St Luke, a Scheme for Ovingham & Wylam and a Pastoral Order for the North Shields Team.

### **Suspension of presentation was invoked for the benefices of:**

- Bolam with Whalton & Hartburn with Meldon and Netherwitton (Morpeth Deanery)
- Embleton with Rennington and Rock (Alnwick Deanery)
- Chollerton with Birtley and Thockington (Bellingham Deanery)
- Cresswell and Lynemouth (Morpeth Deanery)
- Bamburgh and Ellingham (Bamburgh & Glendale Deanery)

### **Suspension of presentation was renewed for:**

- Amble (Alnwick Deanery)
- Chevington (Alnwick Deanery)
- Kenton (Newcastle Central Deanery)

### **Other business included:**

- At the February Away Day the Committee considered aspects of pastoral reorganisation in the context of **growing church bringing hope**.
- Considered a Bishop's Mission Order (BMO) for a mission focussed structure of the parishes of Doddington, Ilderton, Kirknewton, Wooler,

Chatton with Chillingham, Eglington and South Charlton and Ingram.

- Consulted with Deanery Secretaries regarding the impact of suspension of presentation at a local level.
- Reviewed all of those benefices which had suspension of presentation in place.
- Reviewed documentation for clarity including notices to parishes regarding suspension of presentation, and financial reports.
- Continued the care of the closed Churches of Dalton Holy Trinity and Lynemouth St Aidan, and approved a Scheme for the disposal of the latter.
- Oversaw expenditure on works to the Vicarages at Holy Island; St George's, Jesmond; and at Bamburgh.
- Held initial discussions around the future of the Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) at Kingston Park.

**The Revd Canon Paul Scott, Chairman**  
**Mrs Carol Hepple, Secretary to the DMPC**  
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### **Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC)**

The Committee met 8 times at Church House in 2017 and also enjoyed a day's tour in August of some of our splendid churches. The ones visited were at Ulgham, Hebron, Morpeth, Whalton and Mitford. It is always a joy to visit places where the Committee have had some involvement over the recent past and it is always good to catch up with old friends as well as making new ones. DAC members made 10 further site visits over the year to gather background information to inform the faculty process,

Sadly Neil Moat died in early part of the year. His depth of knowledge of church buildings is so sadly missed, especially in the field of stained glass. Michael Slade retired as the Vicar of Chollerton with Birtley and Throckrington and was co-opted onto the Committee, His invaluable knowledge and expertise is a great help in the smooth running of the faculty process. Unfortunately, Marion Penfold retired from the Committee leaving it somewhat gender unbalanced and her down to earth contributions are sadly missed. The Committee at present has a

vacancy for nominees from Historic England and the Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies but hopefully these will be filled shortly as the DAC enters into discussions with them about the consultation process.

The new procedure introduced by the Church of England to control the maintenance and development of its buildings seems to be working well and parishes are benefitting from the streamlining that has been introduced and the way in which permissions are sought. Work is designated as one of three categories of work: List A, List B or faculty items. List A items do not require permission, and List B can be authorised by the Archdeacons after referral to a DAC member. This year there were 57 list B items sanctioned by the Archdeacons, which indicates the growing significance of this initiative in its attempt to speed up and simplify the permissions process.

The Committee continues to consider various schemes and proposals of varying size, complexity and significance where parishes are seeking to apply to the Registrar for a Faculty and it is keen to be as helpful as possible to parishes. There were 85 faculty full applications in the year, of which 15 were done via the Online Faculty System (15 fully completed faculties, 25 in the system in total for 2017). The use of the online faculty process continues to grow in popularity and this is to be encouraged as it significantly reduces the amount of paperwork involved in the process by all parties. Other Dioceses have introduced a wholly electronic system, Newcastle has some catching up to do.

By popular demand, our regular annual meeting of Quinquennial Inspectors was held on 21st February 2016. Wintertime is thought to be the most suitable time of year to hold this annual event as it appears to ensure maximum attendance. Due to unfortunate circumstances the Annual Dinner was not held this year.

The Archdeacons have continued to ease the work of the DAC through their careful and helpful liaison with parishes who apply for a Faculty and I would particularly like to thank them for their judicious application of the Part B process that has helped to ease our workload. They were supported in this by

Rev Canon Jim Robertson who stepped in as Acting Archdeacon of Lindisfarne for a period of time as well as Rev Mark Wroe who is currently the Acting Archdeacon of Northumberland while Geoff Miller fulfils the role of Acting Dean of the Cathedral.

Finally, I would also like to thank all members of the Committee for their expert advice when considering schemes that come before us. The Diocese is lucky to have the benefit of so many high quality opinions willingly offered at our meetings. On a personal level, I would particularly like to thank our Secretary Lucy Burfield for all the hard work and co-ordination that she does so efficiently.

**Canon Roger Styring, Chairman**

**Mrs Lucy Burfield, Secretary to the DAC**

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## Inspired North East

The work of Inspired North East (managed by the Inspired North East Project Officer, Ian Bapty) involves supporting the care of all the church buildings in the Newcastle Diocese (50% of Ian Bapty's time, funded by the diocese) and delivering the innovative Heritage Lottery Fund grant aided 'Inspired Futures' project (50% of Ian Bapty's time, runs until Summer 2019). In 2017, as a one-off transitional arrangement, the diocesan church support work was additionally supported by a part time assistant (May 2017 to August 2017), and via a consultancy contract with the Tyne and Wear Building Preservation Trust (September 2017 to January 2018).

36 churches in the Newcastle Diocese were directly assisted in the year via the Inspired North East support service. Our input was wide ranging, from helping re-start a stalled kitchen and toilet upgrade project at St Paul's, Dudley, to supporting a facilities development, heritage interpretation and heating improvement project at St Cuthbert's, Norham, and initiating a project to take forward Quinquennial Inspection maintenance recommendations at All Saint's, Rothbury.

Given a demanding funding context, it is not surprising that helping churches with fundraising for

building care and development was a major area of work in 2017. While this can exceptionally involve direct preparation of applications on behalf of a church, more usually Inspired North East will identify appropriate funders, advise on application preparation and offer mentoring support through the process. In 2017, Inspired North East assisted 14 churches in the diocese to successfully secure nearly half a million pounds of funding in total, ranging from major repair grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the National Churches Trust (e.g. St Thomas's, Haymarket) to smaller but nevertheless vital grants from agencies such as the Headley Trust, Churchcare, and the Northumbrian Historic Churches Trust (e.g. St Paul's, Branxton roof repair and Holy Trinity, Whitfield spire repair), and grants to meet the costs of initial project development work (e.g. St Augustine's, Alston).

The Inspired Futures project - which is working with 18 churches in the dioceses of Newcastle and Durham - is now at the mid-point of the three year delivery stage. The project uses a combination of training and professional consultancy to facilitate sustainable project development for the 18 churches in areas ranging from repair programmes to Business Planning and heritage presentation. In 2017, 138 people attended 6 training events on topics including Business Planning in March, Consultation and Fundraising in April, and Heritage Activity Planning in November. In addition, 81 'one to one' consultancy support sessions and workshops have taken place with the Inspired Futures churches, with 325 days of church and community member time delivered through that work. Several of the churches - including St Cuthbert's, Elsdon and Christ Church, Shieldfield in the Newcastle Diocese - have undertaken community events and heritage days as part of their development and consultation processes, and these were well attended and generated valuable feedback to help shape evolving projects.

A key collaborative project which is being delivered across the Inspired Futures churches is the innovative 'Travelling Treasures' exhibition. Three workshops have refined the concept for this and have undertaken initial design and development work on the exhibition itself (which will travel around all the Inspired Futures churches). The theme of developing



the practical value of heritage as a key asset for churches was also explored in the very successful 'Inspired' conference co-organised by Inspired Futures and Durham Cathedral (and held at Durham Cathedral in February 2018), and this included a key note address by Loyd Grossman, Chair of the Heritage Alliance and presentations from the Inspired Futures consultancy team, churches in the Inspired Futures project, Durham Cathedral and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Another area of development has been advocacy and promotional work to both develop partnerships supporting church building care in the diocese and to pass on the practical experience Inspired North East has generated since it began in 2010. For example, during the year Ian Bapty met directly with funders including the National Churches Trust and the Northumbria Historic Churches Trust to help ensure grant applications from churches in the diocese are targeted as effectively as possible (and as one output of that we now have an arrangement with the Northumbria Historic Churches Trust to ensure that at least three applications from the diocese are submitted in every quarter). Ian Bapty also attended and made presentations about Inspired North East/Inspired Futures at national and regional events in London, Bristol and York. In addition, Inspired North East has offered detailed responses to relevant national policy consultations including the Government's English Churches Churches and Cathedrals Sustainability Review and the Heritage Lottery Fund's current Strategic Review (and it is very important for churches to make their case in this context following the closure of the Grants for Places of Worship programme in 2017).

#### **Ian Bapty**

Inspired North East

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### **Houses & Glebe Committee**

The Houses & Glebe Committee experienced another busy year carefully overseeing the maintenance and management of the various clergy housing and glebe holdings. There are 160 clergy houses and glebe properties throughout the diocese with a wide variety

of different styles, construction and ages. The oldest parsonage was built in the 1700s with the most modern house within the last few years. Some vicarages are very remote, some detached with large grounds and woodland (one even includes its own riverside and bridge) and others, in the urban areas, have no garden or drive at all. In one sense the needs are quite different but the responsibility the same. The committee recognises that clergy houses are primarily homes and a place for study, preparation and prayer – with the opportunity to provide hospitality and place to talk as may be needed.



During the year there were three main capital projects. Firstly, following the purchase, *funded from the sale of the former Assistant Bishop's house*, of Berwick House as the Suffragan See house in 2016, the necessary adaptation work, including the provision of office space, progressed in 2017 and was completed in April.

There are a further 27 locations of agricultural glebe or grazing land which historically were the means of supporting a local priest but are now used to provide a small contribution towards the payment of all clergy stipends in the diocese.

All of the glebe land is situated in rural locations with 60% being smaller fields up to 5 acres in size with the rest being up to 10 acres with some larger areas in Hartburn, Bellingham, Simonburn Whittingham and Birtley. In 2017 and over the last few years efforts have been made, through the help of land agents, to



let the land on more flexible tenancies rather than the former more cumbersome traditional agricultural tenancies. Only two parcels of land now remain on the old terms. Time was taken at each committee meeting to inform the members on the various glebe holdings, identifying what options could be explored for the future.



The second capital project was at St George's Jesmond. A large extension to St George's Vicarage was completed this year too. A two storey addition increased the living space by 60m<sup>2</sup>, providing a second reception room, more suitable bedroom space and additional bathroom facilities. The opportunity to improve the garden areas which had been neglected for a decade or more was also carried out, now providing a secure and private outside space to be enjoyed.

In the last couple of years the number of clergy moving in and out has increased by nearly 50% with an unprecedented number of 38 movements occurring in 2017. In addition, a further 7 clergy required property from the rental market to enable them to serve in their training parish as assistant curates. Often the first point of contact for clergy moving into the diocese is in connection with their new home, so there is an important role for the committee and its officers to provide the necessary support in what can be a stressful time.

A small overspend (1.5%) occurred due to the additional strain on the budget for ingoing works and

a general increase in the central heating servicing costs. However, given the total budget for 2017 was reduced by 7% it was felt to be a good effort. There was also more focus on the rental opportunities this year for the vacant houses, seeking opportunities for short 6 month tenancies whenever possible. The target rental income was exceeded by 17% which was a great blessing and helped to bring the final overall balance within budget.



The third capital project was at Bamburgh. The committee was especially pleased to be able to progress this project in Bamburgh. For many years a replacement vicarage had been sought in the village and a number of potential plots and several houses had been considered. The types of property didn't have sufficient flexibility and there were a number of planning and locations issues with the building plots. Thankfully, one particular property became available and although required some modifications the committee felt it was worth pursuing and this was duly purchased after planning approval was obtained. The 'former' vicarage was sold at a figure higher than the independent RICS valuation so this enabled work to be carried out with the net surplus deposited in the Diocesan Pastoral Fund.

As always, grateful thanks to all members of the Houses and Glebe committee. Their input, careful consideration and long hours are appreciated.

Particular thanks to Ian Beswick (Property Manager) and Alison Campbell (Property Administrator) for their hard work, thoughtfulness and attention to detail.

**Canon Roger Windass, Chairman**

**Mr Ian Beswick, Secretary**

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## Readers



Newcastle Readers were active this year organising and running learning and mission events,

which are open to all, not just Readers. We made some changes to our organisation to make ourselves ready to contribute to the developing role of lay people in the Church that the national Renewal and Reform programme and our diocesan strategy Growing Church Bringing Hope will need if they are to bear fruit. We moved our AGM to earlier in the year, and paired it with a Day Conference, which this year focused on preaching, led by Revd Kate Bruce, who inspired and challenged us. We reviewed our Bishop's Regulations to ensure they are fit for purpose for today's and tomorrow's ministry. Safeguarding was a key priority for us and we worked hard to make sure that every Reader holding a licence is properly trained and resourced to keep themselves and those they work with safe. Our pastoral network provision has not provided the support and connection we had hoped, so we have set in train work to simplify it, which should bear fruit in 2018. This year, we licensed two new Readers, and five people entered training. We continue to promote Reader ministry with a team ready to provide information, inspiration and support to parishes when they request it.

All of this work enables the body of Readers to work supportively and imaginatively in their parishes, and we find Readers popping up all over the diocese, helping with work including safeguarding, discipleship, children and young people, the gift of years and social justice projects. Coming from many walks of life and with a wealth of experience, we try to be a resource for the diocese wherever we are

needed, and it is joyful work. Please continue to pray for us in 2018.

**The Rt Revd Mark Tanner, Warden of Readers**

**Dr Hilary Elder, Secretary to the Readers' Board**

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## Parish Giving and Stewardship

2017 was the middle year of a three year project to strengthen and support parishes and deaneries in their efforts to grow generous giving as part of discipleship.

Led by the Developing Stewardship Group (a working group reporting to the Finance Group of the Diocesan Board of Finance) this had three main aspects – working directly with individual parishes; and seeking to embed stewardship, with a strong theological underpinning, as part of the diocese's strategic agenda through improved communications and tools. The work has been ably supported for most of 2017 by the Parish Giving Officer (PGO) and the Project Manager for Developing Stewardship.

Direct work with individual parishes has primarily been through a range of tailored activities under the umbrella of the Stewardship, Worship, Renewal Programme facilitated by the PGO. These have ranged from one-off sermons or special services to a series of events exploring aspects of giving through time, talents and money. This year, following on from well attended sessions with the National Legacy Officer, parishes have been encouraged to establish legacy policies; this is a continuing priority and is to be followed up in Archdeacons' Visitations.

New 'tools' include Giving for Life Re-ignited which helps parishes to talk about and review giving, and participation by the Diocese in the national Parish Giving Scheme (PGS). The three PGS launches in early 2017 attracted over 200 participants from nearly 100 parishes and at the year-end 17 parishes were active within the Scheme. The scheme administers planned giving including claiming gift aid and repaying it monthly, and enables donations to be made by direct debit and linked to inflation if the donor so wishes.

Take-up is gaining momentum and has been welcomed by participating parishes as a 'no brainer'!

Awareness raising has included stories in the Link, a new BLOG and revamping coverage on the diocesan website, including posting notes of meetings and annual reports. In addition the remit of the 2017 round of Archdeacons meetings with Deanery Officers was extended to encompass the whole stewardship agenda, setting parish share in the wider context of generous giving and the diocesan vision. This was also reflected in the Deanery Finance Officers meetings. Feedback from these meetings has helped to shape plans for a simplified accounts template and a new modular approach to Treasurer Training being introduced by our new Finance Manager, Phil Ambrose, in 2018.

Two key developments which are helping to mainstream stewardship and increase ownership have been the Bishop's Study Day for Clergy on stewardship and the DSG reporting arrangements to the Finance Group and Bishops Council, which puts generous giving on the diocesan agenda.

At the close of 2017, as the DSG moves into its final months, we are looking to ensure that stewardship is increasingly recognised as an integral part of our discipleship and underpins our ability to support growing church bringing hope in every parish, deanery and the diocese as a whole.

At the end of 2017 our Parish Giving Officer, Richard Gascoyne, retired and Rachel Jobes, the Project Manager for Developing Stewardship moved to another post outside the Diocese. We will be reviewing the staffing resources to support stewardship in 2018.

#### **Liz Kerry**

Chair of the Developing Stewardship Group  
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*A better way to encourage giving in your church*

## **Safeguarding**

We have three plans that inform the work we do in safeguarding- the main business plan, a training plan and a domestic abuse action plan. Across these plans were **49** objectives and at the end of the year I was able to report to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group that **39** were green ie all actions were on track and progressing to plan, **10** were amber ie some problems and/or delays but expected to recover and **none** were red.

As a Diocese, in line with the experience of the rest of the Church of England we continue to deal with the legacy of the past both in terms of cases and media coverage.

We have begun the implementation of updated national policy and practice guidance eg Responding Well to Domestic Abuse and Responding to, Assessing and Managing Concerns or Allegations against church officers. We purchased 200 copies of the National Safeguarding Policy '**Promoting a Safer Church**' which were then circulated to every parish in the diocese.

We have continued to seek ways of engaging with adults who are survivors of abuse within the church and the DSA was involved in the recruitment of a national project manager for a Safe Spaces project which is developing in response to survivors.

We have continued to support parishes in the development of their practice locally as they increasingly take responsibility for safeguarding in their churches. The majority of parishes now have a safeguarding policy in place and an action plan that allows them to track their progress.

A key objective from the SCIE Audit 2016 was to review and increase the resources for safeguarding - agreement for an Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser finalised within the budget process and an appointment made in February 2018.

2017 also saw the roll out of DBS online in conjunction with our partners APCS- this system has

seen DBSs being processed much quicker than in the past.

- Number of DBSs processed – **576**
- Number with blemish requiring a risk assessment- **8**

Cases managed by the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser – **40**. (**13** opened during 2017, **16** closed during 2017, **1** remained dormant all year)

Parish queries responded to by DSA

#### **Core training places**

- Creating a Safe Space (Laity foundation C1) **457** (20 sessions)
- Creating a safe Space (Laity leadership C2) **65** (4 sessions)
- Helping Others Create a Safe Space (Clergy/readers foundation & leadership C3) **53** (3 sessions)

#### **Specialist training places**

- Safer recruitment (S1) **14** (2 sessions)
- Domestic Violence & Abuse (S3) **21** (3 sessions)
- Child Sexual Exploitation (S4) **61** (2 sessions)
- Parish Audit, **48** (8 sessions)

Towards a Safer Church columns published in LINK **8**

It has been a productive year of continued progress and consolidation.

#### **Ruth Rogan**

Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser

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### **Pastoral Care & Counselling**

In my work as Adviser in Pastoral Care and Counselling and Ministry Development Officer I have, as it were, two jobs that, to a degree, meld into one. My overriding concern is the health and wellbeing of the clergy and my main task is to provide support for and engagement with clergy that enables them to be, as far as possible, healthy and resilient.

Inevitably much of my work is carried out confidentially so I am unable to mention names of people or places. At the outset I have to be clear that clergy have to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. I provide access to psychological

therapies that can help clergy to regain their wellbeing and also develop themselves both professionally and personally in ways that enable them to stay well physically and psychologically and also develop greater resilience. Resilience along with emotional intelligence is very much the flavour of the times in which we live with regard to organisational leadership and management.

Resilience requires the cultivation of both strength and flexibility and is often described as the ability or capacity to bounce back after experiencing a difficult or stressful situation. Generally, we have the capacity to bounce back after the experience of an acutely stressful situation. What is much more difficult to deal with and more injurious to the health and wellbeing of the individual person is prolonged chronic stress which often leads to depression, anxiety and sometimes ministry burnout among other things. It is much more difficult to bounce back from this situation and far from easy to remain emotionally and psychologically unscathed or unscarred. This experience also inevitably has serious consequences for spouses, children and families. Developing the resilience of the church's ministers contributes to the creation of a resilient church and that has to be worthwhile.

Where possible I have also provided counselling and psychotherapy for Readers and other lay people in congregations of the diocese. Inevitably this is a very limited but not insignificant part of the work. I not infrequently signpost people on to other colleagues when individuals are looking for a counsellor or psychotherapist. When asked about the difference between a counsellor and a psychotherapist the quip is that psychotherapists are like German theologians, they dig down deeper and come up muddier!

In the Diocese there is a pastoral counselling network with a membership of twelve, all of whom are highly qualified and accredited professional counsellors and psychotherapists with a wealth of learning and experience. This means that I am able to respond very quickly to someone seeking help through a regular meeting with a counsellor or psychotherapist.

An arrangement to meet with a counsellor can sometimes be set up in a matter of hours on the same day as the request. As therapists we provide a safe



and calm place where an individual can work through significant issues in the context of a safe and containing relationship. I often use the metaphor of 'holding' to speak of the work we do with a person who comes to see one of us.

Of course, we don't literally hold them but we do provide a kind of psychological holding that allows an individual to tell their story; being carefully and attentively listened to means that their story is heard at depth and witnessed. It also means that they hear themselves telling their story and constructing a meaningful narrative and sometimes this is for the very first time. There are strategies which we can offer to help individuals move forward, enabling them to change their lives for the better. Counsellors themselves have to model that capacity for change and be a catalyst for change in the life of the person with whom they are engaged. In one of my favourite quotations, the therapist Robert Kegan quotes from memory his former teacher and colleague William Perry, "Whenever someone comes to me for help, I listen very hard and ask myself, 'What does this person really want - and what will they do to keep from getting it?'"<sup>(1)</sup>

Over the last three years the Diocese, in cooperation with St. Luke's Healthcare for the Clergy and a London-based firm called Cognacity which brings together experts in mental health and wellbeing in the workplace, have organised a series of workshops in Developing Resilience for the clergy.

In 2017 we ran one such workshop which was attended by 15 clergy including some of the recently ordained younger clergy and a smattering of older experienced clergy. Generally, the response of those who have participated in these workshops has been very positive and I think about 70 clergy overall have attended one of them. In the workshop key themes are addressed such as creating spaces for recovery, creating opportunities for marginal gains, knowing the defences to which we go when under pressure, recognising the human capacity for the denial of reality. Particularly memorable for participants will be the idea of the chimp brain from The Chimp Paradox by Steve Peters<sup>(2)</sup> which outlines a mind management

model that helps individuals live more healthily and make better decisions - that is the theory anyway.

That is a flavour of some of the work I did in 2017. When we turn to facts and figures, in 2017 I provided 326 hours of counselling and psychotherapy, some of those hours given to spiritual direction with a therapeutic element. I also saw individuals for pastoral supervision or pastoral care or sacramental confession. I provided mentoring for an assistant curate in a parish without a training incumbent in place. I had the privilege of visiting Fr. Andrew France on a regular basis over the weeks leading up to his death in November last year. As professional therapists we need to have our work supervised by an experienced colleague and I receive three to four hours of supervision a month. I also supervise the work of some of my professional colleagues who serve the church.

I am a member of the deliverance team and in 2017 I responded to a number of requests for help, providing the pastoral care that is an essential accompaniment to this particular and distinctive ministry. We have a group of ministers who carry responsibility for the healing ministries which include deliverance, healing and spiritual direction as well as my own. We meet three or four times a year and together create a very valuable forum within which we are able to share in confidence and at depth aspects of our work as well as providing support for one another. I have, on an annual basis, for a number of years, contributed to the 24 hours residential for training incumbents preparing to receive curates. My task with them has been to explore the possible relational pitfalls and learn how to deal with the difficulties that may arise in the particular training incumbent-curate relationship.

In recent years I have also provided a Myers-Briggs workshop for training incumbents and curates, using the lens of psychological type to enable them to understand one another better and work together more effectively. In 2017 I provided two Myers-Briggs

workshops in which, overall, 43 incumbents and curates participated.

As a pastoral selector for Bishops' Advisory Panels I interviewed a number of local candidates before they went on to attend a Panel.

In the wider church, in 2017, I led a weekend spirituality and healing workshop for men at Holy Rood House, Thirsk in North Yorkshire last September. In November I also led a day conference on spiritual direction and spirituality for the spiritual directors of York Diocese which was attended by almost 40 people.

<sup>1</sup> *How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work* Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey Jossey-Bass San Francisco.

<sup>2</sup> *The Chimp Paradox* Steve Peters

### **The Revd Canon Peter Kenney**

Adviser in Pastoral Care and Counselling & Ministry Development Officer

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## **Communications**

Towards the end of the 2017, I joined Newcastle Diocese as Head of Communications. It is an exciting time to be here with so many great things going on and so many fabulous stories to tell.

Martin Shepherd, Diocese Communications Officer, left his role in March and was temporarily replaced by Laura Ball who did a great job of maintaining the communications function while the recruitment process for a Head of Communications was underway. Laura left the Diocese in October which is when I joined.

As well as developing my knowledge of the Diocese, I spent time in 2017 reviewing the platforms we use to communicate our messaging and considering ways of enhancing these to reach bigger audiences and help bring new people to Church. I have been looking at the effectiveness of Link, the eBulletin, our website, and also the social media networks we use, all of which do a good job for us. But there's more we could do and I aim to develop this thinking in 2018.

In my short time at the Diocese, there have been several highlights where communications and PR activity has played an active role. Shortly after I took up my role, Bishops Christine and Mark took part in

the Great North Run, and this presented us with wonderful media opportunities. Their story featured in the Evening Chronicle, Northumberland Gazette, Northern Echo, Premier Radio and BBC Newcastle. It was terrific coverage and as well as being great publicity for the Bishops and the Diocese, it helped raise significant sums of money for the charities they were running for. Laura Ball and Daniel Doran from Church House captured photographs of them at the start line and during the run, and these pictures gave us wonderful content for Link and to use on social media. One photograph in particular of the Bishops with Mo Farah was viewed more than 3,000 times in Twitter.



Immediately after the Great North Run, Bishop Mark travelled to visit our partner diocese in Botswana, so when BBC Newcastle asked if they could interview both him and Bishop Christine reflecting on their experiences during the run, it was a unique opportunity for Bishop Mark to do the interview live on the radio from Botswana, speaking not only about run, but also our link with the African country!

In December, Bishop Christine jointly led a multi-faith celebration of the life of Dr Martin Luther King Jnr as part of Newcastle University's Freedom City celebrations. The celebrations marked 50 years since Dr King visited the city to be awarded an honorary degree by the university. After the event, which was staged at Newcastle Monument, a Christian service led by Bishop Christine took place at the Cathedral attended by the general public and civic leaders. To help promote the event, I recorded a video invitation with Bishop Christine which we shared on social

media and through direct email. It was viewed an impressive 1,508 times.



I am bringing more video into our communications mix. My background in television makes this easy, and cost effective, to do. To ensure our messages are heard by new and existing audiences, we think more creatively – engaging photography and video is key. A video invitation I recorded with Bishop Mark to a visit by Dr Fiona Gooder in November was viewed on social media 1,508 times, and a short film I made with St Luke's Church in Newcastle, which is situated on the start line of the Great North Run, was viewed 1,700 times. These three videos have been our top performing pieces of content on social media and produced at no financial cost.

My first three months also saw us busy handling media interest in a number of issues related to the Diocese. This included two criminal court cases, one of which attracted national media coverage, and I worked extremely closely with our education team on matters related to our schools. I have a very good relationship with the local press – I strongly believe in being open and transparent to ensure fair and balanced reporting and this served us well on all these occasions.

In November, we interviewed for the role of part-time Communications Officer to give me greater resource within the communications team. Beth Hemming, a former journalist who most recently has been

working in the communications team at Sunderland College, joined us in January 2018.

2017 was an exciting start to my career at Newcastle Diocese and 2018 promises to be even better!

**Roderick Stuart**

Head of Communications

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## Ecumenical Work

2017 was a landmark year for ecumenical relations, as the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation provided an opportunity to both commemorate the Reformation's importance and to learn from its history. I therefore spent a significant amount of time first instigating and then coordinating the ecumenical planning of an event called From Conflict to Communion: Still Reforming? In October about 80 of us spent the afternoon at Brunswick Methodist Church considering what the church today could still learn from the events of 500 years ago.

I sense a growing energy and enthusiasm for us to work together with other churches in Mission and Ministry. Nationally, the Church of England's 'Ecumenical Canons' are in the process of being simplified and streamlined to make them more user-friendly as part of the General Synod's 'Simplification' Agenda. The new instruments such as Bishop's Pastoral Orders (BPOs) and Bishop's Mission Orders (BMOs) provide a welcome flexibility and fresh approach to working together with other churches in Mission and Evangelism wherever appropriate. In addition, there is the exciting possibility that interchangeability between Anglican and Methodist ministers might be achievable in the next year or two. I am also enormously encouraged by Bishop Mark's initiative in bringing the church leaders from Newcastle city centre together for a breakfast meeting recently, and await with interest any positive outcomes from this new collaboration.

The maxim to 'never do separately what we can do together' is a good one and helps to avoid duplicating effort or cutting across one another's work.

Inevitably I spent a lot of time in meetings, as one key part of my work is ensuring effective communication between different Christian groups to enable us to

work together more effectively wherever appropriate. These include regular regional meetings of Ecumenical Officers from the traditional denominations, as well as the annual CTE (Churches Together in England) national conference. This year I was also a guest (along with Clare McClaren and Alison Rudd) at the Reformation Conference held in our Link Diocese of Møre. It was fascinating to find out just how much we have in common in our liturgy and practice, as well as learning from things they do differently – such as the special books of Bible stories and prayers given to all 4 year old children at an annual service especially for them. The one we attended was a successful hybrid of a traditional Sunday Eucharist and Messy Church!

There is also a lot of work involved in managing the discernment process for Kingston Park which is a four-way Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) between Anglicans, Methodists, URC & Baptists. I chair the 'Staffing Advisory Group' which exists to support both the church and the four denominations in making the best possible staff appointment there. As usual this year I have provided support and technical advice to a number of clergy and laity in widely differing circumstances. I always seem to be on a steep learning curve as there is always so much more to learn in such a complex and ever-changing church environment. In particular I have enjoyed helping Slaley to make a 'Declaration of Ecumenical Welcome' so that their Methodist colleagues can worship with them now the chapel is to close. This is a simple and flexible instrument that other churches may like to use – do get in touch if you are interested.

Ecumenism is going through challenging times as resources both nationally and regionally continue to be cut (I am a volunteer, as are many other Ecumenical Officers these days) and there is a concern that the vital communication and interchange of wisdom that the regional hub (NECAT) provides could be lost to the detriment of all. It is ironic that this is happening at the same time as the increased collaboration with the 'newer' independent churches.

If there is one thing I have learnt this year that I would like everyone to know it is the wisdom of realising, as David Cornick (the outgoing CTE Officer) said at the

CTE conference: 'when we encounter the other we discover more of ourselves.' This epigram resonates with my own experience and I have been immeasurably blessed by encounters with other churches which invariably serve to enrich and deepen my Anglican Christian faith, often in surprising ways. I also believe that it is in praying together that we will learn what it is that God wishes us to do together. So, my prayer for 2018 is that more people will find ways of praying regularly (monthly or even weekly?) with other local Christians about local needs (practical and spiritual) that they can then joyfully respond to as we work together in our mission and evangelism for the kingdom 'that we may be one that the world may believe' (John 17:21ff).

### **The Revd Janet Appleby**

Ecumenical Officer

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## **Diocesan Task Groups**

### **Botswana Task Group**

Promotion of Link – The new poster and leaflets following Bishop Christine's visit and the Botswana visit here in September 2017 will be circulated early in 2018.

Colin Gough visited St Augustine's Theological School again in August and September to work with the new group of ordinands. He had a student, Chris Minchin, on placement from Mirfield with him for part of the time and Colin acted as mentor for some of that time. There is a plan to continue to send another tutor next year.

11 leaders from Botswana came to Newcastle in September. It was a very diverse group mainly in their middle years and of more varied interests, so the Task Group here provided a programme to meet this diversity. During the visit the group explored some of the issues relating to necessary training and discipline to enable priests to work in challenging rural and urban communities, and some good reflections on Mission in context were shared. There was a significant impact in the places they visited, though



there seemed to be differing expectations of the purpose of this link visit.

Bishop Mark, John Sinclair, and Ian Knox went to Botswana, also in September. Apart from Bishop Mark becoming acquainted with the diocese, he and John worked with Ian Knox in mission and evangelism in the north of the country in the more outlying parishes around Francistown.

Though not in our priorities for 2017 we continue to support Holy Cross Hospice which struggles to overcome the difficulties it faces in its development of providing palliative end-of-life care. The progress is very slow through considerable delay in government responses to the issues there.

**Canon Allan Marks and Jennie Jones**

### **Committee for Interfaith and Ethnic Relations (CIFER)**

Voices of Faith – bimonthly interfaith dialogue sessions held in various Places of Worship and other venues in Newcastle and North Tyneside. We explored the following topics: ‘Heroes of the Faith’ (18th January), ‘Faith and Care in Mental Health’ (15th March), ‘Interfaith Worship: Can we pray together?’ (10th May). ‘Meditation and Mindfulness’ (19th July), ‘Death and Dying’ (27th September), ‘A Faith Leader’s Calling, Inspiration and Purpose’ (15th November). In 2017, we were pleased to hold a session during National Interfaith Week in one of Newcastle’s mosques. This is the first time that Voices of Faith has met in a mosque. Attendance has been higher in 2017 than in the previous year with numbers exceeding thirty at some sessions.

Pathways from Abraham – this major piece of work brings together Christians and Jews in Newcastle to explore the contemporary Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A lively ‘Day of Discovery’ facilitated by Solutions Not Sides was held on 22 May 2017. At the end of October, a group of eight participants visited the Holy Land to see some of the places where conflict erupts and listen to a range of differing political and religious perspectives.

Engagement with Local, Regional and National Interfaith Organisations – we have engaged with the following over the past year: RC Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle’s Interreligious Department, West End

Refugee Service, Walking With, and the Church of England’s Presence and Engagement Network. Our Chair, Revd Gavin Wort, was appointed a Vice-Chair of the Newcastle Council of Faiths.

Supporting Persians – this new initiative in 2017 offers support to clergy and local churches in welcoming Persian asylum seekers and refugees into their congregations. A training day was held on 28th November with participants from several churches and ministerial contexts in the Diocese.

**Gavin Wort and Lesley Hillary**

### **Deaneries Development Task Group**

The Task Group met four times during 2017 to discuss and plan how the Group can best support the Deaneries and parishes they serve. We welcomed Tony Thick and Martin Lee as new members of the Task group. Peter Sinclair, a founder member of the Group and instrumental in shaping the early work undertaken, retired during 2017. We will miss his energy and commitment to the development of deaneries.

There were a number of newly appointed Area Deans and Lay Chairs taking up post in 2017 as well as newly elected Synod members beginning their term of office. Induction training for new Lay Chairs and Area Deans was undertaken and a training module offered to Deanery Synods. About one quarter of deaneries are taking up this offer.

We have focused particularly on how we might encourage and enable the Diocesan vision and priorities to be communicated and promulgated at Deanery and Parish level. Consultations have revealed that there is a wish to revisit the role of Area Deans and Lay Chairs.

Consultation was also undertaken to look at how Bishop Christine could meet with leaders of Deaneries and a new pattern of meetings be agreed. The Bishop will meet all Area Deans and Lay Chairs at an annual meeting and in addition will meet Area Deans and Lay Chairs within each Archdeaconry annually.

In February 2018, a conference for Area Deans and Lay Chairs will begin the new pattern of meetings as well as discussing their roles and how Deanery

Leadership can encourage and support involvement of parishes in the vision and priorities of the Diocese.

**Canon Carol Wolstenholme**

### **Disability Task Group**

The Task Group has been without a Disability Adviser since the Revd Bill Rigby retired at Easter 2015. The small remaining core group has met from time to time with the Dean of Newcastle, our Moderator, and we have considered our next steps. We particularly want to build on the momentum which we felt was building in the Diocesan Synod Forum in early 2015. A letter has now been sent to every Area Dean, Lay Chair and Deanery Secretary asking for time to explore the whole spectrum of disability issues, and specifically to identify one or two 'champions' in each Deanery. Our aim would be to have just one Disability Forum each year for these representatives to share insights and experiences in keeping disability issues before the Diocese.

I had the pleasure of attending a very good national Disability Advisers' meeting in London in November 2017. As often in the Church of England, each diocese operates in its own way. But the need for an identifiable officer/adviser on Disability, however organized, seemed inescapable. Now that we have lost our moderator as well as our adviser, we hope this point will be addressed in 2018.

**Canon Richard Hill and John Telfer**

### **Discipleship Task Group**

Our action plan was agreed at Bishop' Council in January 2017.

Our first priority – to discover what examples of discipleship were already happening in the diocese – is complete. This research was useful in highlighting some things we knew and some things we didn't. Although limited by the nature of the sample group – it was carried out at Deanery Chapters – it has nevertheless begun to work its way into diocesan thinking and we continue to look for opportunities to further this work.

Our second priority – to promote discipleship – has made good progress and went public at the November 17th Open Synod. As well as initiating and celebrating Ian Flintoft's new role, we pray that this event will prove to be a launch pad for an increased

understanding of the role of all the baptized as disciples. In order to model this inclusivity and prevent the impression that discipleship is the responsibility solely of a Task Group, a planning group was created to bring this to fruition.

Working in parallel with this planning has been the preparation of materials which will allow those attending the synod to follow links and resources to further their interest. These are now available on the web site. We think it is important that the event is not seen in isolation but as part of a journey.

Our work has been conducted within a changing national context and emerging diocesan structures. The appointment of DDMM and the establishment of a Ministry Council have the potential to further shift the importance of exploring what is discipleship and how we do it. Paula Gooder's talk might form a useful baseline for the progress we could achieve. We look forward to the emergence of new structures which allow an understanding of discipleship to be the essence of how every group goes about its work.

**Robert Peers**

### **Ecumenical Task Group**

In 2017 we were able to facilitate the inclusion of regular prayers for Christian Unity and Ecumenical events into the diocesan prayer diary every Thursday. There has been some exploration towards a 'Declaration of Ecumenical Welcome' in areas of the diocese where other denominations are no longer well represented, such as Slaley, and other examples of increased ecumenical collaboration, such as the Anglican Methodist Agreement in Alnmouth. The question of how the diocese interacts with new churches being formed outside traditional recognized groupings remains an ongoing consideration.

One of the main events of the ecumenical year in Newcastle was 'From Conflict to Communion: Still Reforming?' – a day spent considering whether there was anything that the church today could learn from the events of 500 years ago this year, when Martin Luther set in train what came to be known as the Reformation. This event was held at Brunswick Methodist Church and attracted around 80 participants from different church traditions. The Task Group was responsible for instigating this event

but it was planned and led ecumenically. Professor John Derry introduced the day in a lecture outlining how Martin Luther was just one in a long line of reformers who longed to return to a Golden Age of the church.

A Roman Catholic priest and a German Lutheran pastor were then interviewed about how the Reformation had influenced their faith journeys. This was followed by an open discussion of some contemporary issues and what insights on them we could learn from the Reformation. The support of the Mothers' Union in organizing refreshments was also appreciated. The meeting finished with a service. It was an opportunity for share theological reflection and understanding of how history has thrown up challenges to our desire for collaboration.

**Helen Gill**

### **Estates and Urban Task Group**

The Estates and Urban Task Group exists to gather clergy and layworkers in especially difficult and economically deprived areas of the diocese to share ministry practice, learn from good practice in other parts of the country and inform the diocese of special issues and concerns that influence ministry in our areas. The group's contact list numbers 40+ individuals and 15-20 people generally attend our quarterly gatherings.

We met four times in 2017. These meetings included being led by Canon Christopher Smith to reflect on the address given by Bishop Philip North to New Wine on 'Hope for the Poor'. We will be using this document again to plan some of our topics in 2018. We visited the Parish of Seaton Hirst to hear about the link with schools through the Church of England Academy. Canon Ian Flintoft, in his new role as Director of Discipleship and Ministry, joined us for one of our meetings.

Five members of the group (lower numbers than hoped for – two had to drop out at the last minute) visited Birmingham Diocese to meet clergy and estates practitioners from the Birmingham Outer Estates Group and share ideas and good practice. This was an

overnight stay and included visiting three different parishes and projects.

One of our members will be taking part in the national Estates Theology Project which is bringing together six clergy from across the country and six theologians to work in pairs in parishes to ask what the good news is for our estate parishes and the people who live on them. This is being chaired by Bishop Philip North.

**Fr Alan Paterson**

### **Evangelism Task Group**

During 2017 we worked on the following priorities:

- Finalising, resourcing and delivering the 'Invitation' training session in Parishes and Deaneries. This has been specifically developed as a preparation tool for the Pathways Weekend (Bishops in Mission) and for Parish Mission Weekends. It might also be used as a follow-up to Leading Your Church into Growth (LYCIG)
- Continue to deliver the Faith Stories training session, again linked to Pathways, Parish Mission Weekends and LYCIG
- Promote THY KINGDOM COME prayer for mission and assist in the 'Beacon Event' at Newcastle Cathedral
- Assist in Parish Mission Weekends at Chapel House, Shilbottle, Morpeth Deanery and The Willington Team week of mission
- Begin to explore material for a 'Welcome' training session in line with Evangelism: Way Ahead Mission Action Planning Guide
- Work with the Advisor in Local Evangelism in the planning of the Pathways Weekend

**Steve Dixon**

### **The Gift of Years Task Group**

The Gift of Years is a new task group charged with developing a ministry among older people in the diocese. Since the task group formed we have been busy meeting our priorities or having the priorities well in hand.

Task to find a Chair Person – this is well in hand with meetings scheduled for mid-October.

Task to compile a 3-year strategy and action plan – this is ongoing. As new opportunities have come to

light we will keep adapting and adding and we will have this completed by the end of 2017.

Task to map all parishes to determine the level of dedicated support in worship and community activity for all over 60s – this is now complete. All parishes received a questionnaire, 49 were returned. There is some dedicated work happening in a few parishes, a little in some others, but mostly none. Those with none gave the reason as ‘everyone is welcome to come to any service.’

Task for representatives to attend the annual Gift of Years conference in Hertfordshire – 5 diocesan reps will attend. Meetings have been scheduled with contacts we have made in Winchester, Rugby and Rochester. A report will be made available on our return.

Task to arrange to meet with potential partners – complete. A meeting was held with those interested in future opportunities to work together. Disability and Ecumenical partners attended. 3 task group members also attended a meeting with BRF and Methodist Homes to look at future joint projects.

Task to compile an initial training programme – this is almost complete. We have been given the opportunity to host the first UK Spiritual Care training programme. A course of 8 sessions will equip Anna Chaplains for the challenging task of working with those near the end of life and through the varying stages of dementia. We will offer the first course for up to 10 participants beginning in February and commission the first Anna Chaplains in late spring.

Task to host an event to introduce progress with three strands – this booked for 2nd December 2017 at Holy Nativity, Chapel House. We will celebrate the work being done, discuss strands 1 & 2, get feedback, and offer packs with various ideas to support dedicated ministry to older people in each parish. We will launch the Anna Chaplaincy Spiritual Care Course, explain the course in detail and offer application forms.

**Lynne Craggs**

### **Higher Education Task Group**

Our task overall is: Helping the church to understand and connect better with HE and consider where it can set culture and context for growing church bringing

hope. Building partnerships with other interested groups, congregations etc.

The regional chaplains’ meeting on mental health was very successful, with representatives from all north-east university chaplaincies, and a useful discussion. These meetings, initiated through the task group, are now becoming more mainstream chaplaincy activity, though they are still developing and will need some ongoing resource. We have had approaches from universities beyond Newcastle and Durham Dioceses, and have yet to see how this interest will emerge.

Of our planned Deanery visits, 2 have been completed – changes of Area Deans and diary conflicts meant that two more planned for 2017 have been deferred.

At our most recent meeting we said farewell to our convenor, Chris Dalliston, with thanks for his active contributions over his time with us.

**Chris Dalliston and Pauline Pearson**

### **Poverty Task Group**

In 2017 we met on only two occasions and for various reasons much of our work remained on hold. Individuals working on particular areas continued to do so. At our recent meeting in December it was clear that there was fresh energy and engagement for the agenda we hold and new areas of work were identified.

Tyne and Wear Citizens UK was launched in Newcastle last November and two of our members are involved in the leadership and development of this locally based organization which is focused on community empowerment. One of the key themes of the Citizens UK is the development of the real living wage. We discussed how we might give this greater profile in the church so as to encourage parishes and other organizations to give more attention to this as a way of combating low pay poverty in society. Other issues that were given high priority were mental health issues with particular reference to young people and community safety with particular reference to hate crime and safety for users of public transport. Newcastle Diocese is a founding partner along with others and has contributed financially.

Another issue on the agenda of the PTG is one of concern for refugees and asylum seekers. Felicity

Shoemsmith brought us up to date with what has been happening in North Tyneside with regard to the welcoming of refugees and the housing and settling of them in the local community. We are also aware of the work being done by West End Refugee Service and North Tyneside Walking With.

Another matter on our agenda is that of food banks. We had planned to hold a consultation and another day conference for those working in food banks. These had to be postponed and we hope to work on these developments in 2018 along with exploring the possibility of some grounded research on food banks and those who are using them.

There was some discussion regarding the introduction of Universal Credit in the region in 2018 with reference to an organization called Just Finance Foundation which is an initiative of the Archbishop of Canterbury which seeks to support the development of Credit Unions and assist those on benefits and low pay to take control of their money by offering courses on budget management and help individuals to stay debt-free. There is also an initiative enabling primary school children to gain knowledge and skills to manage money wisely through savings clubs. North Tyneside has produced good quality magazine style pamphlets providing education in finance. Helping people to be free of debt and able to join credit unions has been a key theme of the group since its inception. Alongside this is a continuing concern for the effects of poverty upon children physically, emotionally and spiritually. Another issue that caught our attention and produced an interesting conversation was regional devolution north of the Tyne and the implications for the Diocese and region.

**Canon Peter Kenney**

### **Tourism Task Group**

The main preoccupation in 2017 has been to steer the Spirit in Stone Digital RE Christian heritage project to completion. This has taken much longer to reach completion than expected, due to unforeseen technical issues and delays in the production schedule. This required more intensive project management than anticipated. The good news is that all the multi-media content – which includes video films and interactive maps – has now been completed and successfully tested and at long last is now in final

production. We expect 2,500 copies each of DVD and USB versions early in January, ready for distribution to churches and schools.

The project is grant-funded, and we expect this to be completed within budget. The delays and distractions have prevented progress on a launch event or workshop events for churches – these will need to be addressed in the New Year.

The Spirit in Stone website has been extended with a new 'Learning' section linked to the Digital RE project – this will enable the content to reach a wider audience. Work has also continued to liaise with the Northern Tourism Alliance on proposals for a regional tourism initiative on the theme of the Northern Saints. This has been progressing slowly, but the hope is that this will proceed in 2018 and help to promote visits to churches.

**Andrew Duff**

### **Vocations Task Group**

Our priorities for 2017 were as follows:

- To continue to deliver a programme of opportunities and events for those aged 18-30 – to allow them to consider and develop their sense of what God might be calling them to: this will include the God Calling Programme (of retreats and regular events) addressing the theme of vocation very broadly, as well as the Young Vocations Group.
- To respond to the invitation from the Church of England to be one of two national pilots for the new Vocations Hub concept. We will formulate a plan of action around the five themes of the new national Explorer Engagement software: awareness; articulation; confidence and desire; decision; and on-boarding. Using this action plan, we will bid for funding and then put into action our proposals. This is likely to involve: promoting prayer; vocations events and days; nurture groups; theology taster days and short courses; promoting ministry experience and apprenticeship models, among other initiatives.

The God Calling planning group continued to work on the first of these and has secured some funding to enable events to continue to be offered in 2018. A substantial amount of work was done on the second



priority, but our decision not to run the Church of England Ministry Experience Scheme for 2017-18 meant that we were not able to access the national funding to become a Vocations Hub pilot. However, the planning work done enabled us to refresh the Diocesan Vocations Strategy and we look forward to working with a new Chair of the Vocations Task Group, a renewed Task Group, new interim DDO, and 2 new Assistant DDOs in beginning to deliver the strategy in 2018.

In 2017, we continued to respond to requests for preaching and resources around the theme of vocations. We also continued to work with various individuals exploring a range of vocations.

**Canon Ian Flintoft**

### **Winchester Link Task Group**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Task Group is

*“To enable, promote and encourage relationships between the Dioceses so that each may share, learn and develop for the growth of God’s Kingdom.”*

The Winchester Link began in 1988 as a result of the “Faith in the City” report when Bishop John V. Taylor challenged the Diocese of Winchester to raise an equivalent amount to its parish share for needy dioceses.

Newcastle was one of the beneficiaries of this very generous gesture and the money has been a huge blessing to the mission of the church in the Diocese.

Nearly thirty years later, Winchester is still generously providing funding to our Diocese, and in more recent times the link has evolved to develop relationships and provide opportunities to share and learn from each other.

There has been a Task Group in Newcastle for many years with responsibility for nurturing the link. There is also contact between General Synod members from both Dioceses, who meet annually during the York Synod, and the cathedrals of both Dioceses have contact with each other.

In 2017 Bishop Christine suggested that we relaunch the Task Group and a small group from Newcastle met together to decide the way forward and then

produced a paper for Bishop’s Council, which was endorsed in November 2017.

#### **Structure**

A group of people from Newcastle representing Diocese, General Synod and Cathedral work in partnership with Winchester Diocese to develop an action plan for the next 5 years. Canon Stephen Harvey, Canon John Sinclair, and Canon Shane Waddle have agreed to be part of the Task Group with myself as Coordinator. A work programme for 2018 is being developed with Winchester.

**Canon Carol Wolstenholme**

### **Worship & Liturgy Task Group**

The group met twice during 2017 and was kept busy continuing to work on what has proved to be a mammoth task – writing, editing and producing the final two-thirds of the “Celebrating the Northern Saints” prayer resource folders.

We have continued to support and resource RSCM events in the Diocese and Rachel Wood and myself have been involved in leading a training session for Church Wardens (at the request of Morpeth Deanery) and a 7 session course to equip Lay People to lead worship in Norham Deanery – both very well received.

Our number has shrunk significantly in the past 18 months – mainly due to other work commitments (Frances Wilson and Catherine Macpherson) and moving into new roles (Bishop Frank, Rachel Wood). We now consist of only four members, which will shrink to three, as Paul Collins retires. I am immensely grateful to all Group members who have contributed time, theological insight and creativity to produce what we have accomplished so far – and particularly to Sue Reilly, Paul Collins and Donald Mowat (a new lay member of the group).

It has been good to work with Canon Richard Hill, to ensure that our work dovetails with his on the Diocesan Prayer Diary.

We have also been tasked by Bishop Christine with reviewing the Diocesan Licensing Service – but that will have to wait until we have the capacity to do so.

**Canon Clare MacLaren**