Clergy Wellbeing

Last autumn the Diocesan College of Bishops sent out a ‘Clergy Wellbeing Handbook’. This has been the result of considerable reflection, consultation and discussion...

Bishop Christopher has said that he wants the flourishing of God’s people in Southwark to be the focus of his ministry, clergy and laity in partnership. Thus alongside developing lay leadership and ministry, clergy wellbeing will be a primary concern that he will be looking to promote and address. We all need to give attention to what it means to ‘live well’ in the presence of God and one another. This is part of Jesus’ own stated mission “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

This is true not only for clergy but for the whole people of God and those who are living well are more likely to be part of flourishing, outward-looking Christian communities. We all recognise that life is challenging for clergy and for the people of God in today’s world: to minister effectively in it means to take care of oneself in order to better minister to others. This also includes, in a frenetic, competitive and anxious world, challenging some of the drivers and assumptions that have led to the breathless activity that we find it hard to step out of.

The ‘Handbook’ offers advice, counsel and support for clergy in undertaking their ministry. The booklet was also sent electronically to Churchwardens and if you’ve not seen it or read it can be found here: http://southwark.anglican.org/downloads/resources/clergywellbeinghandbook2018.pdf

Some of the matters addressed apply equally to lay officers! The partnership between clergy and churchwardens as clerical and lay leaders together in the parish is of paramount importance ensuring that the mission and worship of the local church goes forward. Part of mutual wellbeing will be to ensure that that working relationship is sustained and nurtured by regular opportunities to meet together for prayer and mutual support – that goes beyond checking the rota and the ‘to do’ list.

These concerns are shared by the wider Church of England: this summer the General Synod will be asked to consider a report on ‘Clergy Care and Wellbeing’. The Report will seek a more focussed partnership between clergy, PCCs and the wider (Diocesan) church in the care of clergy and the health of the people of God. As part of this, in Southwark, we will be asking each PCC to have a discussion guided by notes and questions about clergy care and wellbeing. This information will be sent to all parishes in the coming weeks and months. With it will come a request that each parish identifies three action points that have arisen from the conversation that can be reported in the 2020 Articles of Enquiry. It is hoped that each Church Council can set aside a substantial part of one meeting between now and March 2020 to do this.

The Bishop has brought together a small working group currently convened by the Archdeacon of Croydon to help implement the themes of the College of Bishops’ booklet. During the year the group will offer ways in which wellbeing can be promoted and enhanced in different ways across the Diocese. Going forward the responses that are gathered from PCC discussions will be an invaluable resource to developing this – do make sure that your parish takes part!
Mission and the Environment: a buildings perspective (1)

Church buildings are an opportunity to ‘practise what we preach’:

- They are places of gathering for Christian worship and bases for mission.
- They are symbols of the Gospel message to the outside world.
- They embody the history and legacy of a gathered group of Christians over the generations.

Putting buildings at the centre of a parish’s missional activities includes addressing energy efficiency and environmental sustainability. Mission Action Planning will help to formulate a vision for change and to discern how to implement it. Environmental improvements to the building can lead to other benefits such as making a church more ‘warm and welcoming’, increasing its potential for ministry and community uses, and a better appreciation of its heritage.

Understand the building itself so as to find solutions which, in the best possible way, achieve benefits for the people and for the building.

Even Grade I listed historic buildings can accommodate well-managed change. Talk to others and be inspired by what has been accomplished elsewhere.

(Turn to page 7 for some more tips on how to take action.)

Luke Tatam,
Assistant Secretary to the DAC
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Mission and the Environment: a buildings perspective (2)

This is what we are called to strive towards:
Safeguard the integrity of creation
Sustain and renew the life of the earth. (5th Mark of Mission)

Using our own parish churches, how might we do this? Here are some suggestions to consider.

Think small:
- Better heating controls / zoning
- Draught-exclusion (but also ensure adequate ventilation)
- Replacing old/inefficient boilers

Research shows these are (relatively) low cost but can have a positive high impact.

Think big:
- Install solar panels
- Convert to low-energy (LED) lighting
- Install roof insulation

These will be expensive and could take longer to implement, but the long-term benefits will be significant.

Reminder: these solutions, both ‘big’ and ‘small’, may require formal permissions from the diocese (such as a Faculty) and possibly the Local Planning Authority too. Talk to your Archdeacon and the DAC.

Think everyday:
- Maintenance of boiler and heaters
- Turn off equipment / lighting / heating when not needed
- Review the heating on / off and turn down the thermostat

These are straight-forward and simple steps, so begin with these.

Next steps:
- Agree a parish vision for change.
- Talk to key people, such as the Archdeacon, Diocesan Environmental Officer / Advisers, Diocesan Advisory Committee, church Inspecting Architect / Surveyor, PCC’s insurers.
- Research options (there is much guidance available), and consult widely on plans for change.

For more information, and examples, go online: www.churchofengland.org/environment
Maintenance Matters

The best and most cost effective way to care for your Church building (or any building for that matter) is regular, timely maintenance.

A stitch in time saves more than nine. It is estimated that deferring maintenance can be up to 30 times more expensive than an early intervention. That is to say that repairing the roof this year might cost £10,000 but leaving it for ten years (with continuing wear and tear) will mean it costs £300,000 – and that’s not accounting for inflation.

Identifying small issues early is key, preventing them from becoming big, expensive issues; which is why keeping on top of the recommendations in your Quinquennial Inspection Report is vital. The report identifies any problems with the building fabric and might suggest where improvements could be made.

Fixing minor problems as they occur makes the difference between maintaining and repairing. Repair is defined as “to restore (something damaged, faulty, or worn) to a good condition”; while maintain is defined as “to cause or enable (a condition or situation) to continue”. Prevention is always better than cure and William Morris’s advice to “stave off decay by daily care”, is still pertinent.

To help you to decide which elements of daily care should take place when, ChurchCare provides a ‘Calendar of Care’ on their website and the SPAB has a ‘Faith in Maintenance Calendar’. These are helpful tools to suggest when different elements of maintenance should be attended to and how often throughout the year.

5th Mark of Mission – Care for our World – Encouragement from Environmental Advisers

‘The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it’ Psalm 24.1. God gave people land ‘to till it and care for it’ Genesis 2.15.

People should be using the earth’s resources, but handing it on in good order; taking only a fair share, not more at the expense of their neighbours. The chance of a good life, for generations to come, is for all people.

We know this is not the way the world is today and so the 5th Mark of Mission is increasingly important. It is about lifestyle; showing our faith and our care for creation in the way we live; both as individuals and as church communities.

It sounds easy, but do we do it in our churches?

To find out, use A Rocha’s survey on the Eco Church website, which surveys all aspects of church life. A series of online questions measure achievement; analysing life in your church and prompting new ideas, ways to bring about change, and ways to bring more care for creation into church life; the 5th Mark of Mission.

The survey looks at:
Worship and Teaching, Buildings, Land, Community and Global Engagement, and Lifestyle.

A Rocha is an award scheme with a different survey for Gold, Silver and Bronze levels. There are resources and support available on the Eco Church website, including liturgy for celebration and worship. The Church of England Environment Programme (formerly ‘Shrinking the Footprint’) produces a wide ranging seasonal Newsletter and other useful resources. Yet more resources are available on the Diocesan website, along with details of the Southwark Environmental Advisers and DEO who are happy to speak to deaneries and groups of churches, as well as to link you up with others in Eco Church.

Finally a few ways for churches to change by showing care for creation:

- Monitor how fossil fuels are used, but consider leaving them in the ground.
- Change to ‘green’ energy, like wind or solar, at the next contract. Try Parish Buying.
- Grow plants attractive to pollinators, especially bees; help ensure future harvests.
- Always reuse, repair and renew where possible, and recycle.
- Encourage walking, cycling, and car sharing.
- Use recycled paper in the church office - and the toilets.
- Use biological, not chemical, cleaning agents.
- Preach it and teach it to all ages; put articles in newsletters and on websites.
- Bring it into prayer and worship throughout the year, in church and sometimes outdoors.

Reigate Deanery...

Maybe one of the mysteries of what happens outside of the Parish is the Deanery Synod. Historically this has had a somewhat poor press, sometimes justified, often from people who were members in earlier times; but times are changing especially since one of Bishop Christopher’s aims for Southwark has been to “Breathe new life into our Deaneries”.

Deaneries are encouraged to become centres for Mission and Ministry. In our Deanery in Reigate our Twitter strap line is “The place where we have the resources to do together the things we can’t do alone” but the question has to be how can we achieve our goals?

The tradition in Reigate has been to organise our Synod and related activities as well as any financial matters including grant applications through our Standing Committee whereas the Deanery Mission & Pastoral Group has been the focus for anything additional to the synod: Quiet Days, Study Days, Courses, Training, Healing Services, supporting refugees and holding joint services and prayer spaces and other activities for Thy Kingdom Come. The two groups stood alone with just a few people serving on both.

Then came the suggestion – why not combine the two into one Deanery Leadership Team? It makes sense and so we are giving it a go. It means that we can look at the whole area of mission across the Deanery at one time; it means we can consider financial implications and activities that need funding together.

It’s a very new concept for us and will evolve over time but, hopefully, by making the Deaneries more efficient it will help us all to be centres of support for both parishes and Diocese where we can all work together to extend the Kingdom of God.

Chris Elliott

Battersea Deanery -
Deanery Leadership Team

“So, who wants to try and do what they’ve done in Lambeth here in Battersea?”

Battersea Welcomes Refugees chooses love at Summer in the Square (Battersea)

It was 9.00pm on a Thursday evening in February 2017 and, at an open meeting of Battersea Deanery Synod, we had spent the evening hearing two volunteers from Lambeth Welcomes Refugees share stories of determination and hope from their own experiences with refugee families: how 25 local volunteers had, in partnership with Lambeth Council, facilitated the resettlement of 9 Syrian families, 2 Iraqi families and 4 unaccompanied child refugees.

And in response to the question above, 15 people from 7 churches within Battersea Deanery – some on Synod, most not – signed up for more, keen that Battersea should emulate Lambeth. Two months later we met up again, naming ourselves Battersea Welcomes Refugees. And from the following September onwards, meeting once a month since, we have proceeded to work out what we need to do in order to live up to our name.

Battersea Welcomes Refugees has given the Deanery a natural sense of unity and collaborative sense of purpose. We have tapped into something meaningful, relational and missional and have enjoyed making our new discovery: that the deanery has enabled us to do together what none of us could have done alone. In short, we have found a common purpose and simply got on with it, trusting the appropriate structures to follow. As it happens, the deanery leadership team remains as it was: Area Dean, Lay Chair, Secretary, Treasurer.

We have been delighted to welcome two Syrian families in 2018 and anticipate the arrival of a third early in 2019. Synod, meanwhile, passed a motion in June 2017 calling on Dioceses to provide support for refugees with professional qualifications to retrain in the UK. This will be debated at General Synod in February 2019.

Richard Taylor

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