

Address to Congregation at St Luke's, November 25th, 2018

Rev Anne Bourne, Janet Bates, Nick Donaldson

At the 3-parishes meeting in September, the Archdeacon listened to the views expressed by the members of the Working Party and said that she would prepare two alternative proposals for joint ministry in November. This week she has sent a draft, actually with only one proposal. The document is four pages long and we would like to tell you what seem to us to be the main points.

The Introduction lists six areas in which we had recognised that cooperation between the churches might be beneficial, for example, in youth work, and care for the vulnerable elderly. However seven “key issues” had been raised and these have guided the proposal. It seems best to give these issues in full.

- The desire for mission to Dunton Green and for resource to be directed there.
- The disparity in size of parishes and the need to allocate clergy resource accordingly.
- The need for a focal minister in each church.
- The desire to foster collaborative working and to bind the clergy and lay ministers together.
- The desire for each church to keep its own identity and preserve tradition.
- The need to be outward focussed yet still provide pastoral care for the congregation – especially for those towards the end of life.
- The need for an overall leader in order to try to ensure direction, progress and unity.

The proposal is to have a shared ministry that might be called the West Sevenoaks Team Ministry. You may remember the characteristics of a Team from the diagrams that we showed in the summer but this Team will be different.

All three churches will keep their own Team Vicar, or Rector; all will keep their PCCs and have 2 Wardens. They may keep control of their finances. They may

decide to make an annual offer to the Diocese from the Team rather than from the separate parishes.

In addition to the PCCs, there will be a Joint Council (focussed on vision and mission) and the Rector will have the job of leading the Team.

A significant point is that the Archdeacon is offering 2½ full-time posts which is more than we expected. However, she proposes that the Rector is full-time, perhaps at Kippington. Then, she suggests that there is a full-time vicar at Riverhead with a clear directive to take the gospel out to the new housing in that parish. Finally we, being, she says, “the smallest parish” would have a half-time post. So we would continue with the same level as at present (50%).

All clergy houses would be kept.

Finally she emphasizes the need to develop lay ministry and lists seven possibilities.

This is a draft and our PCC will consider at our meeting on the 15th January. We expect that after that, there is likely to be another meeting of the Working Group at which the views of the three churches will be discussed.

Now you may have heard that the Vicar of Riverhead, the Area Dean, Martin Booth, announced to his congregation last Sunday that he will retire in March next year. This is very sudden but the Archdeacon was aware of it when she sent us the proposal document so presumably her proposal will not be altered by the announcement. She has said in the past that she hopes to start advertising the new posts before Easter so let us hope that happens: it seems plausible, given this proposal seems rather satisfactory, but perhaps objections will put forward. It is only a draft.

We will post the full proposal on one of the notice boards. Please give your views to us or any member of the PCC so that we can represent the views of the congregation. If you have any questions, either ask now or in the hall after the service.