Deanery Responses to Transforming Presence

Presented to Diocesan Synod on 2\textsuperscript{nd} March 2013

In alphabetical order within Archdeaconries

Barking & Dagenham
West Ham
Harlow
Chelmsford
Southend
Colchester
Stansted
Barking and Dagenham - Response to Transforming Presence

The massive Building programme in the first half of the 20th century saw Barking and Dagenham mushroom as the home of a multitude of the White working class many of whom were re-housed from East-end slum clearances. From the construction of the massive Becontree estate in the 1920s and 1930s until the turn of the millennium the area continued to be pretty monochrome. Pockets of Asians arrived in the 1960s and 1970s but this did little to dent the massive white working class majority. The area has from the start been characterised by low average income and low educational attainment.

The decade between the last 2 censuses (2001 & 2011) has been a time in which this demographic has radically changed. The departure of many white British residents and the arrival of large numbers from Africa and Asia as well as a smaller number from Eastern Europe has presented large-scale social challenges and the religious complexion of the area has also been transformed. Now white British residents are fewer than 50% of the borough’s population.

In addition to the local historical denominations at least 40 new Black African Churches have been established in the last 10 years; there are now more than 115 churches in the borough. Significant Muslim immigration has also led to the understandable demand for mosques and a number have been established throughout the borough.

The Deanery

The Church of England deanery of Barking and Dagenham is made up of 13 parishes. Although the majority of parishes would identify themselves as Evangelical with only one parish self identifying as open catholic there is a high level of mutual support, respect and friendship. However as would be expected differences of approach occasionally rule out working closely together for some.

Many parishes value the support networks that have developed within and beyond the borough. Among those mentioned are Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum, Christian Voice, Barking Churches Unite, South Eastern Gospel Partnership and also other more informal support relationships

A number of the parishes gave detailed responses to the Transforming Presence consultation; others gave very brief responses and some none at all. This makes this consultation an incomplete work in progress. However we have found much to celebrate in the Deanery

Events

Over the past year key events within the deanery have included two park based events “God in the Park” in Chadwell Heath and a screening of the Olympic Opening Ceremony in Central Park Dagenham. Both of these were co-operative events involving a number of Churches including partners who are not Church of England Parishes. Christchurch Thames view has spearheaded imaginative engagement with the local Thames View community and successful street parties engaged hundreds of residents.

Projects

A key project that has received support from across the Deanery is the Life after Debt project based at St Thomas’ Becontree. This project which has help hundreds struggling with debt was about to founder but a presentation at the Deanery Synod attracted an enthusiastic response. As a result of support from Parishes, other churches individual and the Local Council the situation was relieved.

Churches in the deanery also support the Counselling project at Harman House.
The Marks Gate regeneration programme focussed on St Marks Church is making good progress and will provide a new worship and community centre, together with interns working to enhance the area. This is linked to new housing provision and work will start in the near future.

Education

The Church of England has been heavily involved in Education. There are now three Church of England primary schools and one Secondary School – George Carey School and Dagenham Park School have only recently been developed as Church Schools. Church members are fully and actively involved in supporting these schools. George Carey School is in the heart of the Barking Rivergate regeneration area and the Church is very visibly involved in planning and delivery.

The deanery as a whole has welcomed Transforming Presence as an aid to reflecting on and improving our ministry to our town. Looking at the four sections parishes commented

**Inhabiting the world distinctively**

Parishes reported many imaginative ways in which they engage with the wider community. Lives transformed by Jesus can have a transforming effect on our town. The need to explore the possibility of seeking fresh ways of learning and praying together was stressed; perhaps trying to understand and value our varied traditions as part of the distinctive contribution of the Church of England to our area.

**Evangelising Effectively**

Some have recognised the invaluable role of establishing relationships and new contexts for engagement in any evangelism. Reminded of Dryden’s parson “His Preaching much, but more his Practice wrought; (A living sermon of the Truths he taught;) Such Godly lives are surely an essential aspect of evangelism. In such settings the opportunity to share the message of Jesus can under God’s grace bear fruit. Believers in all parishes would benefit from teaching on how to communicate the beauty of Jesus in an attractive way. The idea of meeting together in a deanery setting to explore the diverse ways (content and manner) in which we spread the message appealed to some. The training being provided later in the year by Bishop Stephen is eagerly awaited.

**Serving with Accountability**

Responses here indicated the value of mutual accountability within the leadership teams in each parish. Accountability within the Deanery can enable us to help each other to see areas for learning and how to benefit from each others experiences. Bad experiences in some settings teach us of the need to “raise the bar” in areas of financial propriety, safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and addressing grievances; the Archdeacon’s Visitation can rightly help us think through some of these areas. Some felt pretty positive about also using the visitation as an occasion for the suggested “health-check”.

**Re-imaging Ministry**

This was seen as a challenge by many. Most of our parishes have one church building served by one or more ordained clergy and anxiety was expressed about radically altering this. Requests for examples of successfully changing this model were expressed.

However identifying vocations and widening training opportunities to develop these were generally welcomed. The existing models for training provided within the diocese were seen as inappropriate for many believers in the deanery who are eager to serve but have limited transport and work on shift patterns. The concept of a locally developed and delivered training programme was welcomed by some and the Newham “On the Way” course was seen as a possible model for taking this forward. Concerns were expressed that standards of training for ordained ministry should not be allowed to fall.
Transforming Presence Report for Havering Deanery 2013

Background
Havering is the largest deanery in terms of population and numbers of clergy. It is a diverse area in terms of social needs, employment, housing and churchmanship. In order to update our Mission statement and Vision for the deanery we held a Mission Fayre at our deanery Synod meeting in November 2011. This was an opportunity to:

1. Review and celebrate what we are already achieving. To collate the variety of ways that the parishes are relating to their wider communities against the 5 Marks of Mission
2. Synod members were asked to state what they would like to see transformed across Havering. So that our area might become more in line with the values and practices of the Kingdom of Heaven. Although this was not a rigorous approach, the results were are indicative of the needs of the area:
   - Addiction/homelessness
   - Anti-social behaviour
   - Youth Issues
   - Needs of the elderly
   - Family life
   - Community well-being (health, peace, safety, environment)
   - Churches working together
   - More knowledge of the Christian message

Action taken:

We recognise that in a deanery which has a broad spectrum of churchmanship, the best way for us to move forward is to work together. We can make a difference in the deanery by working together on issues that concern people. We have proof that this approach works through Street Pastors in Romford, and those working with young people involved in the nightlife on Friday and Saturday evenings. We can also cite the Hope for Havering project which works with the homeless in the deanery. Both projects enable us to work with other Christian communities and build links with them.

Looking at the needs of the area has led to three foodbanks being established in the deanery with the possibility of another being established this year. CAP Money/Debt guidance and Contact centres have also been established.

For each of the projects some churches provide actual help i.e. premises to use, people to staff the centres, while other people have provide equipment needed, and still others provide funds that enable the work to continue.

Point 1 in Transforming Presence is to live distinctive lives. We think that our work on these projects demonstrates that we are showing how our faith enables us to live distinctive lives. Our varying spiritualities across the Deanery enable us to engage in prayer and worship, in order to be energised to live out distinctive lives.
reflected through these joint mission activities. We are taking our duty of care and evangelism seriously.

To this end, the analysis of the needs of our deanery to date has identified groups of people we believe we can begin to evangelise effectively, **Point 2 in Transforming Presence**. We know that more work is needed to bring to bear. The skills and passion of those churches more experienced in evangelism will help us to move forward in this area. We know that there are conversions and discipleship amongst the homeless already.

Building relationships within our Anglican community enable us to we work on common causes. We can learn from each other about the value and practice of the different strands of mission. Working on agreed needs helps build the bonds of trust between us and also spurs the different churches on to develop in their less strong areas. **This relates to Transforming Presence point 3 Serving with Accountability**.

At our deanery synod meeting at the end of January 2013, we undertook a SWOT analysis to have a closer look at our deanery. We will use this to identify other projects we can work on together. We plan to have the analysis of this material completed by the end of February.

Working together enables us to learn from one another and helps us identify training needs in our deanery. As these needs are discovered and people are motivated by getting involved, they will be putting their faith into practice in the areas of need in Havering. We believe that people are going to hear a call to serve to a greater extent and also hear the call in to accredited lay and ordained ministry. Ministry will begin to take on new shapes, serving the missionary practice. – **Transforming Presence point 4 – Re-imagining Ministry**

**Conclusion:**

We have found that projects which meet the needs of our local community have drawn support from a variety of Anglican churches. It has also built links with other Christian communities.

We hope that building these relationships will give insight into how we mission together using our diversity in churchmanship as a strength.

Havering Dean Team

23 February 2013
Setting the Scene:
Situated just three miles from the centre of London, Newham is a diverse and vibrant East-End community. A product of the borough’s astounding diversity is the bewildering array of authentic ethnic restaurants and shops from which to choose. You could easily dine out each night for a fortnight without the need to eat in the same type of restaurant twice.

Newham is a well connected borough. There is easy access to the centre of London by road, rail and tube, with Crossrail presently being built. It is easy to travel around the Borough by public transport and bike. Newham is not just a concrete and brick jungle, with Wanstead Flats to the north and the Royal Docks to the south, there are many open spaces to enjoy.

Newham is a place of great faith - with natural opportunities for interfaith engagement and working. Whilst Christians are in the minority those who hold a Christian Faith do tend to take it seriously. We have 24 Anglican Churches and 37 members of our Chapter at present. We have two Team Ministries and one Group Ministry. We have good local ecumenical relationships and there is an ecumenical cross church organisation called, ‘Transform Newham’, which works with some churches across the Borough. We also have Christian organisations which seek to serve the needs of our borough in different ways and these include, ‘The Renewal Programme’, and ‘Aston Mansfield Charities’. Most churches are engaged with their local community and are being effective as they seek to be ‘salt and light’ in the midst of the community they seek to serve and love in Christ’s name.

We now seek to ensure that clergy appointed within the Deanery have a desire to work collaboratively. It is the firm view of the Deanery that working collaboratively should be both a way blessing and being blessed.

Newham is a place of great need, huge opportunity and massive change. Projections to 2025 show Newham’s population increasing from the present 308,000 to 420,500! We need to ensure that the Church of England and our partners and friends are well placed to serve the needs of this growing and changing Deanery.

Transforming Presence:
Newham Deanery Synod has looked, in detail, at Transforming Presence twice. We have had an emphasis on seeking to work out what our response at a local
level will be. It has also been considered by Chapter and at PCC's. Most people are open to the Transforming Presence agenda and can see the need for change.

There has been a focus within the Deanery on seeking to respond to the need for increased vocations and relevant training. Two local training and vocational courses are now run in the Deanery: 'On the Way' and 'Time to Share'.

'On the Way':
This course seeks to attract and work with people who want to do some basic Christian Training whilst exploring what God's call may be on their life. This is now in its third year and proved a great success. We have a 'Fellowship of Vocations' group that people can join as they explore with others what God's call upon their lives might be. Very much acknowledging that 'We are the clay, you are the potter' (Isaiah 64:8)

'Time to Share':
This course is a specific response to Transforming Presence and the desire expressed under 'Evangelising Effectively' to have a trained Evangelist in every parish. This course has just begun with its first group of students who we hope will be commissioned for ministry later in the year.

As a Deanery we believe these models of training are extremely flexible and that we could attract and train people for a variety of ministries including 'Local Preachers', 'Pastoral Assistants' etc. We have developed this approach in association with the Barking Programme and believe that there is potential for it to work across the Barking Area.

As we look to the future it may be possible that we could both develop a model that would enable people to be encouraged to explore a vocation to Ordained Ministry with the Deanery and be Locally Deployed within their Parish at an early stage of their training with on-going training and formation within the Deanery context.

Conclusion:
Newham Deanery has many growing churches from across all traditions with Jesus uniting us. There is a willingness to support each other and work together for the sake of the Kingdom through a time of great change. We need flexible structures and 'centre' within the Diocese that will encourage, reflect on and welcome new ideas and possibilities as we explore what sort of church God is calling us to be in the years to come.

Canon Dave Wade, Area Dean of Newham
RESPONSE TO TRANSFORMING PRESENCE - REDBRIDGE DEANERY

There is much about the Transforming Presence strategy that we wish to commend. It is clear to us that we cannot continue to operate the current model of parish ministry without fundamental changes. We have an opportunity to address issues of discipleship for the whole Church, against the backdrop of what is happening nationally. This paper is based on responses from the majority of PCCs in the Redbridge Deanery.

Redbridge is a highly populous outer London borough comprising nearly 300,000 people. We have just 36.8% self-identify as Christians; this is the lowest percentage of all of the outer-London boroughs (in our diocese only Newham is considered an inner-London borough). We also have the highest percentage of Muslims at 23.3% of the population (more than any other deanery except Newham). Ilford, at the heart of the borough, has been designated one of the ten strategic development hubs for the new London. This, together with the advent of Crossrail, makes us one of the fastest growing boroughs in the country. Whilst many deaneries can argue for retaining a higher stipendiary allocation, it is worth noting that Redbridge will be increasingly strategic and demanding as a mission field. Informing our strategy for the future shape of ministry, we also note that there are comparatively few retirements expected in the short-term (as the average age of Redbridge clergy is somewhat lower than the diocesan/national averages) and therefore restructuring may have to take place over a slightly longer timescale. We want a clear plan for restructuring rather than being driven to make stipendiary reductions purely on the basis of where retirements occur.

In the last few years we have moved to a cluster model covering the whole of Redbridge and through this have already had significant experience of working collaboratively. With the demise of the Redbridge Deanery Youth Worker Project, it was natural for us to reorganise youth work provision at a cluster level, ensuring that there were viable youth groups in every cluster and a named point of contact in every parish. This move to clustering might be seen as somewhat prophetic and means that the models of ministry proposed in “A Framework for Ministry” are not unfamiliar. The “re-imagining ministry” part of the Transforming Presence strategy has been given some clarity by this document, but several parishes ask for greater explanation and definition in other areas, such as elastic terms like ‘evangelism’ and ‘Rule of Life’.

There are many things that, as a deanery, we can celebrate. Most of our parishes have significant community engagement with good multi-cultural links and a vibrant presence in their local area. Some parishes have particular expertise in areas such as evangelism, Messy Church and youth work. There are also two or three excellent models of the ways in which church buildings can be redeveloped, most notably at St. Paul’s Goodmayes, All Saints’ Woodford Wells and St. John’s Seven Kings. Despite the opportunities that come
from these strengths there is a general recognition that actually being a transforming presence (rather than simply ‘surviving the world’) remains an aspiration for many parishes. The twin challenge of increasing financial pressures and the increasing age of the congregations leaves many fearful for the future. We recognise that, by and large, we are weak in the areas of evangelism and prayer. We struggle to motivate the whole laity, and discipleship is often reserved for Sunday observance rather than the whole of life.

Alongside this are signs that the church in Redbridge is creatively engaging with the issues. Several parishes are planting services at times other than Sundays. There are opportunities for basing practical and theological training at a local level, with parishes hosting training for the diocese and for streams within the church such as New Wine. There has been a very positive engagement with the opportunities afforded by the Government’s ‘Big Society’ push. Church sites are increasingly being used for aspects of social provision, examples being a child contact centre, work with children with special needs, food bank, debt counselling and an innovative centre for business start-ups. The ‘cluster model’ across the deanery and the ‘minster model’ at All Saints’ Woodford Wells can be developed further, not simply as a response to declining stipendiary numbers but as a method of transforming and delivering ministry more effectively. Finally, there is evidence in a number of parishes of a desire to facilitate ministry based on people’s spiritual gifts in a risk-taking and entrepreneurial environment.

As a deanery it seems that the things that concern us are remarkably consistent across all the parishes and churchmanships. There is a fear that we will be asking too much of the laity. Allied with that is a concern about the skills required of the clergy to change to a more episcopal role. Several parishes have emphasised the need for all aspects of diocesan policy to support this strategy (e.g. the use of diocesan housing stock), and generally there is concern about the resource challenge. Negotiating, rather than imposing, changes in the model of ministry will be key - otherwise some churches will feel marginalised and will not want to contribute, whilst other churches, asked to be resourcing churches, will be overburdened.

For us, the way forward seems to be our existing cluster model as a basis for future ministry units and for present training. We seek to learn from each other how to use buildings more effectively for mission, how to establish local training centres, how to promote greater engagement with evangelism, and how to develop our personal and corporate prayer lives. One possibility would be to trial the new framework in one cluster. Some of our existing clusters will probably need to be reorganised (though not all) and thought needs to be given to who decides the clusters and their leadership, as well as how best to combine the minster model operated by All Saints’ Woodford Wells with the clustering model proposed for the rest of the deanery. We believe that the shape of ministry does need to change, but we are already making progress on the journey.
Response to Transforming Presence current to Feb. 2012

1. Background & Process
1.1 Since the publication of Transforming Presence and the Time to Talk conference Waltham Forest Deanery has sought to engage with the vision. We have encouraged parishes to consider the document in whatever way is meaningful. Many have had discussions at PCC, or even at whole congregation level, many of which have informed deanery synod discussions.

1.2 Each of our Synod meetings since May 2012 has taken one of the four themes in turn. We hope this has enabled us to
- ensure our considerations happen in Synod with people from across the church (not just amongst clergy or office holders)
- give sufficient consideration to generate specific written responses to work from, rather than simply talking about theoretical ideas
- make our engagement applied into the practice of ministry rather than just a planning exercise.
- be attentive to the way we talk together, benefitting from insights beyond our churches and borough as well as continuing to structure Synod with plenty of time for one to one conversations (this last element has been something grown over the last 2 years, learning from London Citizens)

2. The Story so Far
2.1 May 2\textsuperscript{nd} 2012 Living Distinctively
Brother Bartholomew from The Parish of the Divine Compassion, Plaistow joined us to consider what it means to act and pray in our own context, offering resources from the Franciscan tradition.

2.2 October 6\textsuperscript{th} 2012 Evangelising Effectively, half-day conference
This theme was the sole focus of our half day conference led by Revd Barry Hobson offering insights on change in society, the nature of evangelism, the marks of mission and natural church growth. Part of the aim was to try and resource parishes for the task of evangelism, rather than create a deanery strategy for evangelism. In particular parishes were encouraged to consider the history of their local contexts and what that might teach about evangelism that connects with place and people.

2.3 November 26\textsuperscript{th} 2012 Serving with Accountability
In our responses it became clear that there are a wide range of small group opportunities across our parishes that provide key places for growth in discipleship and nurturing ministry. Key elements of fruitfulness in these were, the place of the Bible and the quality of welcome at gatherings and services. The question in TP about changing the focus of Archdeacon’s Visitation received a clear ‘YES’, however it was also suggested that such conversations need to be locally responsive, perhaps preceded by a PCC discussion that would frame the conversation at the visitation.

2.4 February 4\textsuperscript{th} 2013 Reimagining Ministry
Synod responded to this theme by considering sections 2.3-2.4 and 3 of the Framework for Ministry Paper on principles, values and structures. Amongst the most energizing ideas we identified: celebrating diversity, new developments, growing communities, focus on mission and ministry and plural leadership. Turning to key challenges here we noted: the 6 principles and 5 qualities of missional life are a challenge. In particular creating sustained plural leadership that works is seen as perhaps the greatest challenge facing our parishes, as well as ‘taking the congregations with us’. The discussion considered the concept of ‘units’ that received a mixed reaction at this stage, particularly issues around the problem of transitions. During this session one of our parishes offered a model of whole-church engagement with this theme based on using a questionnaire during services to help the PCC and leadership reflections.

3. Current Responses & Questions
These are not yet resolved, but they are what we are working with and offer to others for consideration. They arise directly from individuals engaging with each theme and are mostly unedited.

3.1 Mission
- How accommodating can our different visions for evangelism be? How focussed does the diocese want its vision of evangelism to be?
• The use of our buildings in hosting other churches or nurseries is an important way some of us connect ecumenically and to the community, can shared mission come from shared premises?
• Activities that we do together across churches build better opportunities for faith, partnership & ministry development better than most. Examples locally are the Forest Churches Night Shelter project, The East London Citizens Organisation (TELCO) and Christian Kitchen amongst others
• How robust are the figures and missional strategy that underlie 'A Framework for Ministry'? Whilst encouraged by the principles it does not appear to have any specific ministry strategy at the macro/regional level, based on a clear analysis of demographic change, social change, the nature and allocation of existing resources, existing missional provision and strategic Christian presence. If these things were clearer and more central, would our suggested clergy numbers be different? (for instance, where are the largest places of new population and do our numbers reflect that?) or, should diocesan deployment mirror say the Church Commissioners basis for the block grant?

3.2 Clergy Flexibility
• This is an issue that was raised in many different ways through the process. How will we address the need for new skills, calling, support, training and deployment of clergy, as well as the locally focused and deployed lay training, that this will require?

3.3 Accountability
• Accountability for what we claim we are doing, or for what others think we are doing?
• We want the diocese to beware of 'managing to the measure' and it simply becoming an exercise to tick boxes, how will we seek to ensure that does not happen?
• Whilst accountability is crucial we don't want churches to work to a set agenda, rather to see what God is saying to that church, to look at what is happening.

3.4 Units
• A mixed reaction as currently it was very hard to see how these would work.
• A number of people mentioned 'IKEA' as the first thing that came to mind when talking about units!
• Perhaps 'Base Ecclesial Communities' might be better, but they must be more than a 'Zero Sum' game.
• The 'requirement' or 'aspiration' to create structures and units across church traditions is one which is plausible in principle but brings out new tensions as well as old allegiances. We are uncertain how practical it is for all, whilst some will embrace it.
• What place do Church Schools have in units, and what mind of thought is being given to engaging them in the conversation now? What are the key mission opportunities they and community schools offer, and what should that say to our decisions about deployment and paid resources?

4. Our Way Forward
Having taken time to collaboratively and consultatively glean insights from across the deanery on all the themes, we have formed a development group from across the deanery to bring forward a draft plan for the consideration of and implementation within Waltham Forest. This will report to our next Deanery Synod as well as the diocesan July timeline.

We will be looking in detail at how we understand the future growth in deanery population and how that relates to our figures. There are already some emerging ideas that Units in Waltham Forest have at least some rationale to be geographically based in 3/4 areas which are separated by major arterial roads (North Circular, A12 etc). However we are also aware that much of the transition to manage down stipendiary numbers relies on retirements or resignations, and we are conscious of having made quite a few new appointments in the last few years and the consequent limited opportunity for change this will offer.

In all this there has been a constant theme asserted in our various times of worship together, that everything must begin and end in God: For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture. And the sheep of His hand. (Psalm 95)

Area Dean & Deanery Committee of Waltham Forest
February 2013
Epping Forest Deanery is seeking to move forward the Transforming Presence initiative in a number of different ways.

Promoting Transforming Presence

Our Deanery Synod and a large proportion of the Churches in the Deanery, have devoted time to pray, discuss and move forward the Transforming Presence agenda. This has included Advent and Lent Courses, Parish Weekends and a variety of ‘Away-days’. In these, we have looked at all four elements of Transforming Presence and are now looking towards the next stage of ‘making it happen’.

St John, Epping, adopted a particularly imaginative approach with a Lent Course on Transforming Presence and then, on September 30th, within the Eucharist, the whole congregation considered ‘Becoming an Icon for God’. Members of the church also read and studied Vincent Donovan’s book ‘Christianity Rediscovered’ and related it to Transforming Presence.

Vocations

Promoting vocations is a key part of our deanery strategy and is integral to being a Transforming Presence in our communities. Our Vocations Adviser and the Warden of Ordinands are currently engaging with a significant number of people who are seeking to discern their calling for lay or ordained ministry. Three people have dates for selection conferences this year. A number of churches have also run Shape courses and a very enthusiastic group are participating in the Course in Christian Studies at Theydon Bois.

Parish Development Projects

The proposed Building Projects at St John Buckhurst Hill, St Mary Loughton, St John Loughton, Holy Cross and St Lawrence Waltham Abbey, Holy Innocents High Beach, St John Epping and All Saints Epping Upland, are all seeking to make further provision to serve their communities in new and imaginative ways and thus live distinctively, evangelise effectively and serve with accountability.
Local Transforming Presence Initiatives
Recent local initiatives, which straddle all four aspects of Transforming Presence, include: Food Banks provided on an ecumenical basis, Street Pastors, Messy Church, Limes Farm Kidz Klub and Café Church, Ignite, Grace Academy, school services and assemblies, Love Loughton, Holy Cross Day, High Beach Festival and Tranquility Trails in Epping Forest. In addition, as part of Living Distinctively, our synod will be looking at ‘Living Lightly’ at its next meeting.

Re-imagining Ministry
As a deanery, through the Synod and the Pastoral Committee (which will have representatives from every church), we will prayerfully consider the shape of ministry in the Epping Forest Deanery. This will continue our previous discussions on clustering and we will aim to work together to develop imaginative models of ministry which build on the strengths and weaknesses of the different churches and which value and promote the ministry of all believers. We will seek to form diverse and complementary mission units which will be unencumbered by bureaucracy and will be free to promote mission across boundaries. An important part of this will be the continued development of the Children’s and Youth Network which is being led by our Deanery Youth Adviser.
God is moving (in) Harlow Deanery & we want to join in!

**Celebrate**
- God is moving our Lives
  - Heart4Harlow, Street Pastors, Foodbank
- Working together - & we are joining in!
  - New Chaplaincies, Many ‘Churches’ together
- Buildings & people
  - All God’s people called to get involved
- Shared Deanery Strategy
  - Living Strategy, working across boundaries
  - Developing Lay participation EG in Visitations

**Structures**
- Dean Team
  - Corporate Leadership for Deanery
  - Broadens our vision
- History & Legal
  - Lay involvement in previously Clerical roles
- Inter Parish Focus
  - Develop Corporate Leadership for ‘Units’
- Mutual recognition
  - Of Churchmanship, Lay/Clergy
  - Of Authority of training standards

**Things to do**
- Many feel called to serve
  - They need guidance and recognition
- Equip the workers in the Harvest
  - Lay Training, Harlow Programme
  - Authorise / recognise leaders
- Supporting offered service
  - To serve the community
- Share skills & needs
  - South Harlow Covenant, ‘Pioneer Unit’

**Overcome**
- Fear of Failing
  - When taking on new roles
  - Authorisation or Theological criticism
  - Lack confidence in discussing beliefs
- Build confidence
  - Expectations of roles
- Empower Disciples
  - How to use & authorise volunteers
- Local concerns
  - Look up & see the big picture

*We walk in the light, not in the shadow of the past!*
God is moving (in) Harlow Mission Deanery & we want to join in!

How are we responding to *Transforming Presence*?

We have discovered that we had begun our thinking before *Transforming Presence*. Finding there a common mind, we recognise that the Spirit of God has already started our response. We join in and take the work forward.

**We Give Thanks and Celebrate** that we see evidence around us of God’s work increasing a Christian presence in our area –

- Communities and congregations working together in support of Street Pastors, the Foodbank, and the new chaplaincy at the Harlow College.
- That we are being provided with resources, both buildings, and people who have heard the call to get involved.
- Increasing opportunities to work with other churches
- That we have a living strategy that works across boundaries of place, style, or experience.
- Developing lay responsibility e.g. participating in the Visitation as Visitors

**Things to do:** We must liberate the ministries God has given to us –

- Many feel the call to serve, but are not always clear as to their skills, the responsibilities of their calling, and how they become recognised and authorised to serve.
- This leads to a growing need to equip the ‘Workers in the Harvest’. We seek to improve the training of our Laity in a variety of roles to suit their calling and skills. We have begun ‘The Harlow Programme’ of training.
- We need to authorise and support people as they take on new roles, and ensure that their contributions are recognised and honoured across the places they are called to serve.
- As we increase the numbers and skills of those serving God, we also need to share the needs of our community and their priorities.

**Structures:** We are building a team to coordinate and guide our presence as we transform –

- We have a developing ‘Dean Team’ who coordinate and guide the work of the Deanery. Each member of the team is concerned about particular areas of our activity. This encourages a wider understanding of concerns across our area.
- This understanding of the whole area helps us to broaden our activities beyond the purely local, and so allows an increase in mutual respect and support.
- We have already started the planning for ‘Units’, with the ‘South Harlow Covenant’ covering around 50% of town’s population, and examination of the potential for our villages.
- Working in and across ‘Units’ raises questions about mutual recognition, authority, and training standards.

**Things to Overcome:** We are very encouraged by Transforming Presence, but we must overcome some problems –

- Responding to God’s call can be worrisome – “How will I cope?”, “We might get things wrong!”, “If I get things wrong, they won’t let me help again”
- This is an issue of confidence imparted in the training received, as well as guiding the expectations of current leaders and overcoming parish insularity.
- We must encourage train, authorise and empower Christian discipleship expressed in voluntary service and stewardship
- ‘If you want things done, ask a busy person” BUT how can we pass some activities onto another volunteer in order to free a ‘busy person’ to develop and take on new contributions?
Deanery Presentation of Transforming Presence.
Diocesan Synod 2nd March 9:00am at Chelmsford Cathedral

Our 21 churches in Ongar Deanery are spread over a large rural area, served by Three full time Priests: One 0.5 Priest serving the Matching and Lavers churches, a pioneer/lay training minister recently appointed to Fyfield & Chipping Ongar, One Associate Clergy at Fyfield, One Priest who is 0.5 Parish and 0.5 London Russian Church and One Priest who is 0.2 Parish with 0.5 Advisor at Fyfield. An Associate Priest is to be licensed soon to High Ongar with Norton Mandelville. There is also currently a vacancy for the Parish of St Andrews North Weald Ongar, which has recently been united with the Parish of St Mary Magdelene in Potter Street Harlow. Both these two Parishes are resolution AB & C and so it seemed a natural move for these two Parishes to be served by one Priest of the same tradition.

Since our Transforming Presence Training Day in January 2012, the majority of parishes have engaged with the paper, both at PCC & Parish level. So far the Deanery hasn’t engaged together on a joint initiative, other than inter-village games during the Olympics within one or two of the Benefices, but with the recent appointment of a full time Pioneer minister whose time is shared between Fyfield and Chipping Ongar and a third of her time is given for the lay training in the deanery, we are looking towards some lay training and study days to begin very soon to encourage our lay people and clergy to be more involved. But here are some of the events that have come from individual Parishes.

Priory church of St. Laurence Blackmore and St Peter & St Paul Stndon Massey

Inhabiting the world distinctively
- the Royal Jubilee themed services - Churches were decorated. Invitations were sent out and the services took on a less formal nature. St Laurence had a café style service with lunch served during the service and a large amount of non church villagers were present. Street parties throughout the village with church members involved.
- After School club and Open The Book Team in local primary school every week.

Evangelising effectively
- Toddler group held in St Laurence Church (all non church members); Teas in The Tower. Once a month in St Laurence
- Once a month outreach in village hall for the elderly/ board games, quizzes and refreshments at St Peter & St Paul.
- Palm Sunday walk with Donkey. Good Friday walk with the cross / Quiet hour in St Peter & St Paul Church
- Harvest Suppers held in St Laurence Church & Stndon Village Hall; Quiz evenings / music evenings held in St Laurence
- Carol Singing in the village and Pub. Easter & Christmas leaflet drop for both parishes; Pet Service in St Laurence.
- Bereavement/remembering services with afternoon tea for all bereaved families.

Serving with accountability
- Both PCC’s are going through the T.P. headings as the main item on the PCC agenda followed by a study and Q & A time.
- Sermon input; Marriage preparation; Lent course on prayer; PCC day in the church with a presentation from Vernon Ross.
- Joint APCM
- To explore the vision in joining Ongar and Epping deaneries together in order to be more fully resourced, thinking, praying & working across boundaries!

Re-imagining ministry
- Team of lay people to develop the Family parade service, once a month with young people’s involvement in prayers & drama.
- Lay led Morning prayer, Lay led Mothering Sunday & Harvest Service, Two Lay people have joined the Course in Christian Studies (one is our present Churchwarden ), Lay led service & drama for children’s Christmas Eve Service

Future plans...
St Laurence PCC is considering the options for a part time youth worker; Possible joint PCC; Multi-Media system in St Laurence; St.Peter & St Paul PCC are considering a possible café style family service to be held in Village hall instead of the church building once a month.

For Fyfield Benefices

Inhabiting the world Distinctively
- The Number of midweek home groups have increased from one to three; An annual nurture course and pre nurture course is run, currently Christianity Explored; Advent and Lent courses which has focused on modern media as a means of engaging with the Bible.

Evangelising Effectively
- Encouraging of Lay people to attend one of the Evangelism Courses being offered in the Episcopal Area by the Mission and Ministry Advisor.
- The Appointment of a Pioneer Minister (joint with Chipping Ongar), and lay Trainer
Accountability
- PCCs, Ministers and group members in consultation

Re-imagining Ministry
- Pastoral Team in Moreton and Willingale consisting entirely of Lay people, Ministry team of lay and Ordained Responsible for planning and implementing Sunday worship

Next Steps
Joint PCCs to review Mission Action plan. Giving in Grace as a joint programme.

Chipping Ongar with Shelley
Parish Day held in November with Vernon Ross as speaker.
Matter arising from that session
- reading the scriptures, daily notes available, bible study (lay people to facilitate), Vocations group to explore God’s calling, a nurture group (lay led), it is planned to run a SHAPE course later in the year.

Further initiatives
- More school involvement (Open the Book Team), staffing a breakfast club, plans to set up a coffee morning for parents, Pioneer Minister to plan for work with teenagers & young families (non church goers), Starter service once a month for newly baptized, Ecumenical. Sharing with the local RC Church during Lent (stations of the Cross).

United Benefice of the Lavers and Matching.
Our Priorities and involvement.
- 10 week course looking at Mark’s Gospel. Follow up to the course during Lent. Sermon input and village magazine. Local Head Teacher invited to Church to share her experiences as a teacher. Harvest prayers & Hymns shared in local pub. Opened up mid week drop in for Cake & Coffee. Possible Sunday afternoon church in village hall. Parents to oversee this. Informal Bible study Q & A times around a table with a bottle of wine. Monthly family service in School. Possible messy church. Toddler group in School with the children’s visits to the Church. Problems...many are over-worked and under strain so to encourage more quiet time and stillness before God within the Sunday services. To be a Transforming presence we ourselves must be transformed.

United Benefice of Greensted Juxta Ongar with Stanford Rivers and Stapleford Tawney with Theydon Mount.
The last four years of rural ministry to four distinct congregations administrated by three even more distinct PCCs has shown that while churches may appear to be dysfunctional amidst their financial and relational crises, they are only crises of identity.
- PCCs and Churchwardens to formulate the vision of the church and offer reasonable, biblical and inspirational mission action steps for 2013 and beyond.
- Christian mission and outreach is being considered as our main priority.
- Home Group is developing an interest in prayer, Bible study and outreach, has initiated a number of regular outreach events (some of them in the local pub and village hall), formal and informal services, Confirmation classes, Healing Services and courses like: Alpha, Christianity Explored, Purpose driven Church and stronger links developed with other Christian churches and denominations.
- Marriage courses - pastoral support for couples/seeker friendly services in village hall.
- Musical production is planned in April (bridge-building). The plan for this Spring/Summer is to start new informal services at the heart of the village.

High Ongar St Mary Vn w Norton Mandeville All Saints
- Our new website:  http://www.parishofhighbongan.org/
- The partly MOF-funded Youth worker project since Oct 2010; as you might already know, Alan is leaving our employment on 31 August, but we have a continuity plan to ensure things that have been established continue and indeed expand incl: We are relaunching our ‘play and praise’ toddler group after Easter 2013. After Easter 2013, we are changing our monthly after-school Harmon Bible club at High Ongar Primary School to a weekly lunchtime club
- Last Summer we did an Olympic-themed Holiday club for primary school aged kids and we intend for this to be an annual event going forward; the planning for the summer’s club is under way and we have booked Revd Alan Comfort to help us with a World Cup-themed club in June 2014.
- Alan Comfort is also booked later in June 2014 to lead a men’s football outreach event part of the 2014 World cup and the 2014 Diocesan mission.

St Andrews North Weald in Interregnum

2
Brentwood Deanery:
Response to Transforming Presence

Introduction

Brentwood Deanery Synod welcomes the paper Transforming Presence. The Deanery found the conference A Time to Talk a highly positive experience, and appreciates the process of dialogue. Many have been enthused by the ideas expressed, and look forward to developing the priorities. There is the feeling that nettles are being grasped, especially with regard to reimagining ministry.

Brentwood's context

The Deanery is largely coterminous with the Borough of Brentwood, giving it a sense of unity. Perhaps as a result, the Deanery is valued by its constituent parishes and the desire is often expressed for increased collaboration. Although there is a range of commercial activity within the Borough, including the presence of Ford's and BT, it remains a largely residential area, with green belt and agriculture surrounding the central area of population. There is much community activity both within and beyond the churches. A significant factor in the life of the church is the number of church schools (11 primary and one secondary): these undoubtedly act to bolster congregational size. The Deanery consists of 21 parishes, 15 of which are in benefices of two or three parishes. Monthly members total 1,770 (averaging 84 per parish), with three parishes having memberships in the range 200 to 300.

Celebration and resonance with Transforming Presence

There is much that the parishes want to celebrate.

- The churches feel they have a valued place in the parishes they serve, with support for the community events they organise even where this does not translate into regular attendance.
- Opportunities are being taken for mission and ministry to the church schools, with which there are close relationships; there are also many young families associated with the churches.
- Most parishes feel they are active, with new initiatives always under consideration.

The Deanery believes Transforming Presence to be an organic development, without radical departure from existing church life. Thus there is resonance with much that is already happening in the Deanery, in particular through the need for engagement with the local community.

New planning

Two of the themes of Transforming Presence have had the greatest impact so far.

- Inhabiting the world distinctively. This has enable parishes to look afresh at our individual discipleship, with reflection on what this means in their local context. Some are developing Rules of Life; many are considering the place of prayer, and deepening the prayer life of their churches.
• Reimagining ministry. There is a renewed engagement with lay ministries, and the number is increasing of those coming forwards for training, for instance as pastoral assistants. At a Deanery level, the outworking of the ministry framework is being actively considered.

To date, least impact has seemingly been made by the element serving with accountability. Transforming Presence is frequently being used as a planning tool as parishes review their ministries: in particular, a number of parishes have used it as the basis for day conferences.

Outcome for the Deanery as a whole

It is hoped there will be four outcomes in particular for the Deanery:

• greater co-operation between parishes;
• more sharing of resources;
• more lay involvement, especially in the larger churches;
• the Deanery becoming seen as a training resource for its parishes.

Anxieties and challenges

• Of the four elements of Transforming Presence, evangelising effectively causes most anxiety. As one Deanery Synod member commented, “The word ‘evangelism’ strikes fear in the heart.” There is the perception that lay people lack the knowledge needed.
• The second cause of anxiety is reimagining ministry, with its backdrop of fewer stipendiary clergy. This is especially so for smaller parishes, which fear that clergy will be deployed to large centres rather than smaller villages.
• However, the major anxieties are not caused by Transforming Presence as such, but by the context it addresses: falling congregations and a lack of energy for change, especially in smaller churches; a lack of money; a lack of people to undertake tasks; a decreasing number of incumbents. Distress has also been caused by a perceived devaluing of Reader ministry evinced by the current changes in Diocesan policy.

Conclusion

Transforming Presence is already proving fruitful in the life of the Deanery, and has set a useful agenda for the future. The parishes of the Deanery are engaging with it with confidence, albeit against a backdrop of anxiety in many parishes for their futures.
Responses to “Transforming Presence” in Maldon and Dengie Deanery

Initial reception
Of the eleven benefices most have given PCC time to discussion, and others have taken steps to promote further study. Most have ensured that copies of “Transforming Presence” are available to members of their congregation. Some have replicated “Time to Talk”, using the materials developed for that consultation in January 2012; one has viewed the video of Bishop Stephen’s talk at the conference. Some clergy have made regular reference to “Transforming Presence” in sermons. However, one benefice at least reports that “there is little enthusiasm and a certain amount of suspicion”. Reports in some cases refer to the age of congregations as a limiting factor. One parish did discuss the initiative but in a busy schedule it has yet to be dealt with fully.

Positive Steps: things to rejoice about.
One small parish was a little underwhelmed at the presentation from a visitor, but decided in any case to move forward, and “A few of us have decided to start a prayer group and a bible study group” This is a step towards implementing the challenge to distinctive living.

Purleigh’s PCC has examined community-church contacts and plans to provide accessible worship for a wider swathe in a parish with a strong tradition of mainly Eucharistic worship. Simpler, lay-led services for special occasions address both the ministry and the evangelism strands of Transforming Presence. Reaching the parish in the spirit of Serving with Accountability uses the Rector’s skills in open “Relax, Paint and Draw” sessions. Some church members have increased their participation in village sporting and social activities. The church magazine’s format is to be reviewed.

Southminster used “Time to Talk” for a parish day. Home groups took this further and choosing the SHAPE course reflects these discussions. The Parish plans further exploration with Canon Martin Wood. Southminster rejoices in “Messy Church” to complement the annual Holiday Club. Messy Church now has a regular clientele monthly, comprising children, and carers with 12-15 church members offering craft activities, “godly chat” and a free family meal. A secular group, “Harbour”, in a neutral setting, offers a safe space for people with personal and social difficulties. It is staffed entirely by Church people apart from the convener, from Maldon CVS. Regular shipments of food and clothing go to Chelmsford CHESS. The Church website has been upgraded and the Church enables families to use the building for refreshments after weddings and funerals. The Church rejoices in 11 different lay ministries. These include two authorised Pastoral Assistants and a trainee Evangelist. After Easter, “Christianity Explored” will run instead of a further Alpha Course.

All Saints Maldon, in common with others, discussed Transforming Presence at PCC level and moved to a Parish conference. This has resulted in a nurture group through Epiphany and Lent, a new youth group and extended lay ministry, including the commissioning of four newly-confirmed young people as Communion Assistants.

Tillingham and Dengie also had an “away day”, preceded by some members of Dengie PCC viewing Bishop Stephen’s “Time to Talk” address video. Responses were positive, but no set plan has yet emerged.

In Bradwell and St Lawrence the main priority has been coping with a vacancy prior to the Installation of Patrick McEune. St Lawrence discussed the Bishop’s paper at PCC. Both parishes are getting used to the new situation of a house for duty, part-time priest. With an ageing congregation this may take time.

Latchingdon, already firmly embedded as a village-centre church with local involvement has emphasised the Service strand. Church initiatives spread to the village in celebrating the Queen’s Jubilee. Other causes for rejoicing include extending the Crib service to include village children in the Nativity play and organising a village “doggy walk” on New Year’s Day. The church continued supporting charities at Harvest time and church members work with the local Drama Society and as school governors.

Burnham has had discussions at PCC level and an action plan is being formulated.

All the parishes of the Crouch Valley have read the booklet and had PCC discussions. The strategy is, where appropriate, a regular item in sermons.

Mayland has yet to take a real decision, but the ideas are being explained in sermons as ‘a picture of the Church’ rather than as ‘a diocesan project’. The SHAPE course is running as a way of moving towards reimagined ministry. Much time and effort has been devoted to searching for a new parish priest.

Transforming Presence may offer tools to make an appointment more fruitful when it happens.
St Peter's Chapel Bradwell, now administratively separated from the parish, has a dedicated chaplain with time to plan and ideas to develop it as a centre of prayer and evangelism as it was at its foundation. It promises to be a very helpful resource in building spiritual depth so that outreach is well founded.

Hopes and Dreams for the deanery
One particular hope is for a better relationship between parishes so that the Deanery is seen as a useful tool for mission rather than (my words) an irrelevant extra layer between parish and diocese. An associated concern is that a united Deanery is a long way off after centuries of parochial isolation and churchmanship “party” loyalties. Perhaps this could be covered by another hope, from an experienced priest, who hoped for “a greater sense of God’s presence in and among them, and more response to his call”. Positively, Churches Together in Burnham are working with Southminster Churches on a Food Bank; more and better communication is being sought. One incumbent’s ‘dream-with-attendant-nightmare’ is of a much expanded lay ministry. Will the attempt to avoid dilution hinder vocations? Can/should we move in the direction of Base Christian Communities? (And Liberation theology?)

Nightmares (Anxieties and Concerns, at least)
There is still a good deal of ‘building-centred worship’ in a Deanery with several mid-Victorian village churches (9/21, most of the other 12 given Victorian makeovers), and rigid ideas of what kind of building is a “proper church” – even down to what kind of seating is sufficiently holy. These “folk” ideas can hamper the real work of the Church in reaching those who see building and faith as one.
There is some anxiety in parishes with a small, ageing congregation, particularly where members have been very active in the past and have, one respondent suggested, been the target of clergy suspicion, now to be told that they must ‘reimagine ministry’ in a way that means much more lay effort. It may not, since focus will need to shift, but the anxiety needs to be addressed. Certainly there is a perceived need to ensure that clergy are trained to work as part of a team and to trust and train lay people in ministry. The process of planning will also need to be very clear. Some anxieties are felt at whether we have a clear common focus, and also whether there might be (so far unstated) financial implications. Can we implement “Transforming Presence” without spending a lot?

Challenges and Opportunities (I was there first time round!)
In some places, as reported above, “there is little enthusiasm and a certain amount of suspicion”. I suspect that having been through “Call to Mission”, “A Church for our Children”, “Moving On”, “Challenges and Opportunities” and a plethora of Deanery Visions and Plans, people can see “Transforming Presence” as just another Episcopal project. The challenge, as one priest has said, is to embrace the transforming presence of the Holy Spirit and to help people to understand that they must be transformed as in Romans 12:2. Without that prior transformation, the Church has little hope of transforming the world. With it, challenges become opportunities.

Missing/Misguided? One respondent questions a stipendiary/non-stipendiary divide where “Episcopal” ministry is limited to the paid, rather than to the anointed (though ‘A Ministry Framework … 2012-25’ is more flexible).
Another questions the example given (p6) in ‘A Ministry Framework … 2012-25’ on what a “ministry unit” comprises – this looks like an urban/suburban example and is difficult to work where distances between settlements average three to six miles and congregations are in tens rather than hundreds. One incumbent repeated the call for greater clarity and for a “route map”.

In Sum
The Deanery has taken “Transforming Presence” seriously. Some have been wary, looking at this as perhaps (yet) another way to reduce stipendiary cover, but most have concentrated on the work of serving communities and through that, evangelisation. It seems to be recognised that the local Church needs the transforming presence of the Holy Spirit if we are to have an effect on those around us.

Ken Dunstan
Assistant Rural Dean of Maldon and Dengie
Chelmsford South Deanery – how we are implementing Transforming Presence

We followed up the day in January 2012 in our Deanery Synod, by showing the need to involve us all in God’s mission and to strategically place our Stipendiary priests. As vacancies arose this gave us the opportunity to explore how parishes might be grouped together. We consulted widely with PCC’s about possible ideas (3 times,) including a Saturday morning meeting, and used views from those who already had some experience of working together to explain how it might work (The Chelmer Crouch Group of 7 parishes who were not a Team Ministry but who had a formal agreement about sharing and a Group Council of clergy and laity).

We had a working group and we developed a plan which we took to Standing Committee who accepted it unanimously and this went onto synod, which accepted it in the same way.

The vision states that God is calling every member of every church in the deanery, about 1,850 members, to be sent out as full-time Christians with a ministry from God. Incumbents are there to equip and encourage and in 2016 we allowed for a stipendiary incumbent for every 185 members. This worked out as 10 stipendiary ministers, reducing from 13.5.

We have achieved this already and we have done it by creating Pastoral Communities. These are sets of churches working together, some call them clusters. For example take the parishes of Moulsham St. John, Moulsham St. Luke, Galleywood and Widford in South-west Chelmsford. They had 5 stipendiary priests and now have 3. This has been helped by priests leaving or retiring. The 3 paid clergy are going to work together as a team but the parishes will stay separate keeping their own identities. One of the incumbents will take the lead in the areas of pastoral care, spirituality and community, another will take the lead in vision, pioneering and vocation, and the third will take the lead in education, worship and evangelism. The aim is for these three to equip and encourage their people, to take on board training and become responsible for much of the pastoral care and other tasks. The deanery already has 50 authorised preachers. So we are creating a lot more help that existed before.

With the extra help and more people on board we will be able to take the church out and do the things God is calling us all to do, serving our communities and telling of God’s love to a wider number of people.

In making the decision about who should join with who, a number of criteria were used, things like the children all going to school in a particular place, people shopping in a particular place, possibly all going to the same clubs and recreational facilities and of course geographical links. It became natural for a group of churches to share a leader in these circumstances.

These factors were true with regard to the Chelmer Crouch Group of 7 parishes and 8 churches. The aim is to have 2 stipendiary ministers here supported by a range of SSM’s,
evangelists, licensed lay minsters, pastoral assistants, authorised minsters and many, many different people in all sorts of roles doing the work of mission and maintenance. The churches are already working in smaller sub groups or exploring this.

The Deanery has supported all this by giving over time to inviting Diocesan Officers in to talk about training and to have ‘Road Shows,’ of lay people going around explaining their journey and involvement in their church life. We realise the importance of having role models to follow.

We sent round a brief questionnaire in the summer on the 4 main areas of Transforming Presence, to get a snap short of where parishes are and this has provided a guide as to where support is needed. It is now the task of the deanery to set up activities that will support the findings. To this end our recent synod was spent on ‘Prayer,’ as this was something perceived as people needing help with which was not done well across our churches.

The wider plans of the deanery are to explore the idea of working beyond pastoral communities and into bigger units. To this end we may need to work with other deaneries where it may be a good idea to encompass parishes outside our boundaries. We are at present working with Chelmsford North to see how we can both be part of the plans for the New Beaulieu Park Development which spreads across our parish boundaries. This is a huge development and it is important that a community/Christian presence is made available to the people. Beyond this we need to continue to equip and serve and to work on all sorts of vocations.

Those Pastoral Communities we have, and their work and innovation will be good examples to share as we progress.

All of this is a long term plan and our deanery plan is already out of date so we will need to review it. These are changing times, but Transforming Presence provides us with a huge opportunity to involve so many more people in the mission of our churches and to no longer have the ethos of one day a week Christians and ‘over to you vicar.’ For Christians to recognise their gifts and responsibilities will be greatly liberating for them and of enormous benefit to the team work and leadership needed for each community, unit or whatever it might be.

We go forward with enthusiasm and a degree of excitement as to what will be.

Hebrews 3 v 20-21

“Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do his will, working among us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever and ever.”
The Deanery of Chelmsford North

Initial Responses to Transforming Presence

Our Location

The Deanery of Chelmsford North is one of the eight deaneries within the Bradwell Episcopal Area and is located to the north of Chelmsford. The Deanery includes 14 parishes of which some are located in the town centre, some are urban parishes (including two LEP’s) and some large rural parishes. The Deanery includes chaplaincies to hospitals/hospice the prison, industry, shopping centres and Anglia Ruskin University. The Cathedral is also located in the Deanery. There is an imbalance between the numbers of people living in the rural parishes compared to those in the urban parishes and this is in the ratio of 20% rural and 80% urban.

Our Mission Statement

We believe that the Church is called to be a growing, worshipping, celebrating, and caring Christian presence in every community. We recognise the rich and varied resources for mission and ministry which exist in our Churches and the Deanery exists to support and guide the Churches, their parishes and the various chaplaincies in this mission and ministry.

The Parishes Responses

All the parishes have considered ‘Transforming Presence’ and each parish gave a brief summary of their work so far at the recent meeting of the Deanery Synod. The files they have produced for display at the Diocesan Synod demonstrate the activities they are currently involved in and, in most cases, how they are beginning to discuss and explore the ideas contained in ‘Transforming Presence’ alongside this.

Reasons for celebration

‘All Saints’, Kings Road, whose church is in a poor state of repair, have decided to share ministry with the Ascension Parish, and work together in the Melbourne/Boarded Barns area.

The ministry of Readers, Pastoral Assistants and Lay Evangelists throughout the Deanery is valued. We also welcome the willingness of Readers to assist in parishes other than their own in times of need and during vacancies. We also recognise the very valuable help given by the retired clergy in the Deanery, which is often an essential additional resource.

The appointment of a new Vicar at Great Waltham & Ford End who, will in the short term, spend some time working closely with the Rector of Great Leigs, Little Leigs and Little Waltham, the Warden of Pleshey Retreat House (PIC Holy Trinity Pleshey) and the church at Chignal Smeale (where there has been no incumbent for a number of years) to develop bold and imaginative plans for sustaining ministry collaboratively in this group of rural parishes. It is also envisaged that the new incumbent will work with the Rural Dean and the Area Team Leader on Lay Discipleship in the development of new patterns of ministry and also assist with some of the training.

In 2012 the Deanery paid 90% of its Parish Share. This was a little less than in previous years due to the difficult financial situations facing some parishes (including lead theft)

New planning has started

For some years the Deanery has been divided into four collaborative groups. The Standing and Pastoral Committee has recently started to look at the implications of the paper ‘Re-imagining Ministry’ and how we might organise the Deanery into two or three Mission and Ministry Units with six stipendiary ministers by 2025.
The Rural Dean and Lay Chair have met with their opposite numbers in Chelmsford South, the Bishop of Bradwell and the Archdeacon of Chelmsford to explore whether the City should continue to be divided into two Deaneries and the need for deanery boundaries to be porous. The future role of the Cathedral in the new structure also needs to be discussed. The meeting also included discussion on the Greater Beaulieu development which largely falls in the North Springfield and Boreham parishes.

**Challenges we are facing**

It is clear from the Chelmsford Development Plan that our Deanery is growing and will continue to grow. Some of this development will be within our Deanery, particularly the creation of new neighbourhoods in Springfield and Broomfield, as well as the villages of Great Waltham and Little Waltham, potentially providing up to 6,000 homes by 2021.

We recognise that we must encourage all our parishes to become more aware of the thinking outlined in 'Transforming Presence'. The report challenges us to respond to the changes in our culture, for example changes in family life, employment changes and an increasingly mobile society. We recognise that to achieve growth we will have to explore new ways of being church and be more flexible over times and types of services that we offer so as to attract people of all ages, particularly in the light of the proposed new housing developments in our deanery. We also need to be more ready to go out of the church buildings to meet those who find them unwelcoming.

A priority for the Deanery is to think more proactively about encouraging vocations and developing a wide range of lay ministries. In this respect we also wish to encourage each parish to seek to stimulate more vocations, such as self-supporting ordained ministry and lay ministers, both licensed and authorized, but never forgetting the day to day ministry that many parishioners have, who also need to encouragement for all they do.

We recognise that one of our priorities must be to explore how we may develop our work with children and young people across the Deanery, especially in those areas where few children and young people are involved in the life of the Church. We hope this may lead to the employment of a Deanery youth worker.

**Summary**

As the Deanery looks to the future, the areas that require further consideration, development and discussion have been identified as:

- Working in greater partnership across parish boundaries;
- Addressing falling church attendance;
- Work with children and young people;
- More work with schools, especially non church schools.
- Recognising the needs of ageing congregations;
- The development of improved links with our local community organisations and the various chaplaincies that support them;
- Addressing the challenges of new residential developments.
- Rural issues, in particular the loss of local amenities, public transport and affordable Housing, together with closer relationships with the farming community.

Rev Canon Carla Hampton, Rural Dean
Roger Shilling, Lay Chair
February 2013
Basildon Deanery Response to Transforming Presence
February 2013

What do we celebrate?

- Across the deanery there is a strong commitment in most parishes to developing children’s and youth work whether it be through running youth clubs, some high quality schools work, youth film nights, children’s holiday clubs, toddler groups, messy church and so on. Much of this has been going on for a number of years but there are some notable new initiatives that we hope to see grow and flourish.
- Our work ecumenically across the deanery is very good: there is real co-operation and shared worship between denominations with some key ecumenical projects working well: Schools Team Ministries in Billericay and Basildon being notable in this respect.
- Schools work in general is a strength across Basildon Wickford and Billericay.
- A growing emphasis upon developing lay leaders: this has been quietly going on in many parishes for some time but is now emerging as an area of positive growth.
- Positive engagement at synod with particular focus over the last two years on mission, outreach and children’s work; and developing vocations, including our own vocations Sunday. In 2012.

New planning/action that has started or is being considered.

- With regard to the detail of the Transforming Presence document, it would appear that parishes have had TP on agendas at PCC; a number have devoted parish meetings or awaydays to considering the document. There is now evidence that parishes are getting to grips with some of the practical outworking. For example parishes having a focus upon spirituality/prayer/renewing faith. Deanery synod begins this new year with a presentation from Canon Edward Carter on prayer and spirituality and developing a rule of life.
- Reflecting the call in TP to living a distinctive Christian life and to be at the heart of the community’s needs, last year the CAP Money Courses were launched and The Basildon Debt Centre was successful in its application to MOF for funding. This is a resource for the deanery but is a Basildon based ecumenical project entirely staffed and led by volunteers.
- Whilst acknowledging the collaborative work that is ongoing within the 2 team ministries there is also the cluster partnership between Langdon Hills and Laindon and discussion has begun between the 3 incumbents on the East side of Basildon to establish greater collaboration.
- There is ongoing cross-deanery (Basildon and Thurrock) discussion about the possibility of establishing a chaplaincy at South Essex College.
What we hope will emerge for the deanery as a whole

A renewed hope and a renewed passion for the Gospel – a new love for Christ. A real coming together around the Lord who truly unites us. How could we hope for anything less?

Anxieties/challenges

- Among some clergy – the fear that they are being required to reconsider what lies at the heart of their priestly calling.
- How do we encourage people to volunteer/take up training for ministry when they are already hard pressed?
- Training which is based central to the diocese is very difficult for many people in our deanery for whom transport/transport costs is a real issue. Parishes help, but out of limited resources.
- Low educational standards, in Basildon especially. Low expectation. Sense of hopelessness/powerlessness where you are at the mercy of cuts in services and benefits and unemployment is a particular reality.
- Locally based training will not be forthcoming unless it can be adequately funded.
- Is TP yet another initiative, launched with a great fanfare that people will lose interest in? What about all those invited on the original conference last January? Have they continued to be consulted in order to keep their momentum going?

Resources or ideas we could contribute or offer to other deaneries

- There are some very good examples of collaborative clergy/lay teams working together and although not necessarily experts, could contribute to an ongoing discussion about this.
- Vision and ideas for the deployment of LLMs.
- We have people with presentation/teaching skills who may be willing to contribute to assist other deaneries in leading courses and/or provide resource material.
- People able to facilitate discussion and help others to formulate vision.

Rev Margaret Shaw and Mrs Shirley Jeffery
Area Dean and Deanery Lay Chair.

February 2013
**Transforming Presence in the Hadleigh Deanery**

Seeking to live distinctively, to evangelise effectively, to serve with accountability and to re-imagine ministry.

*

For the past 3 years we have sought to grow accustomed to the language and the vision that is Transforming Presence. We have moved tentatively from affirming that nothing can possibly change – that we are a special case and that the numbers of full time, stipendiary Ministers cannot possibly be reduced – to beginning boldly to imagine what units or clusters of Parishes might look like and how this might actually work on planet earth where we live.

We agree that starting from where we are to get where we need to be by 2025 is not ideal. The change in mind set required is almost total. We are conscious that some have been living and breathing the ideas for some time whereas others are blithely carrying on, comfortable in their deck chairs, quite unaware of the iceberg that lies ahead.

We are conscious that even within the one Deanery, parishes will move and embrace the new reality at different speeds and with varying degrees of enthusiasm.

However, progress has been made!

- Two Parishes, St Barnabas and St James The Less, are now sharing one Ministry Team.
- Other Parishes are increasingly glancing across the boundary fence with a view to working more closely whether on high days and holidays or throughout the year.
- It is agreed that a forthcoming appointment will be for a Priest in Charge rather than a Rector. The successful candidate will be appointed well aware of the imminent changes in Pastoral reorganisation across the Deanery.
• A new and renewed emphasis on encouraging, recognizing, enabling and nurturing vocations is already bearing fruit. One Parish has no fewer than 6 lay people actively in conversation about and exploration of their vocation to Ordained or Licenced Ministry.
• Training for Locally Deployed Ministry is a timely development in our understanding of our future needs.
• Messy Church, Legacy Skate Park, Open The Book and more accessible Family Services go from strength to strength.
• Pastoral Assistants, Evangelists, Readers et al are being entrusted with a greater degree of autonomy and responsibility within parishes rather than just doing what the Vicar has not got time to do!

Our Deanery probably has the greatest diversity in terms of Churchmanship, ecclesiology and interpretation of Theology. But the Deanery Vision document has been contributed to and owned in some way by every one of the 12 Parishes that make up the Deanery.

The first Deanery Service in a very long time was held at Epiphany. The Church was packed despite the outside temperature and ice on the ground.

The Book of Proverbs says, ‘Where there is no vision, the people perish’. We live in exciting and changing times. God grant us the grace to have the vision, selflessly to share the vision and to help bring about the Church that he would have to enhance his work in this place.

David St.C. Tudor
Rural Dean of Hadleigh
March 2013
Southend Deanery Response to Transforming Presence

1. INHABITING THE WORLD DISTINCTIVELY

Teaching people to pray
Many churches have identified the desire for more opportunities to pray. This has resulted in the setting up of a variety of new services, prayer groups for both clergy and laity and regular teaching on prayer. One church has put in place a prayer co-ordinator to develop the prayer life of the church and provides prayer after services through a prayer team.

Greater biblical and theological literacy
Churches have regular in-depth bible-study, expositional teaching on Sundays by those in the preaching team and an encouragement to ‘get to know your way around the Bible’. One church produces its own Bible study series and has focused on prayer in February: another church has encouraged the uptake of daily Bible reading notes and has chosen home group study material that is based on a specific book of the Bible.

Christian living in worship, ministry and daily living, including the way in which we inhabit our planet, issues of ecological, social and political being.
Topical issues on daily living are discussed at one church’s ‘Breakfast Church’ once a month. This is based on Christian teaching on how we live out the issues. Fairtrade eggs with the Easter message have been ordered for Easter and only Fairtrade tea and coffee are purchased.

2. EVANGELISING EFFECTIVELY

Identifying the evangelists
Training for a parish mission helped many to become evangelists at one church and another has looked for those who have a gift in communicating the gospel, either on a one to one basis or through a preaching ministry.

Nurture courses
Some churches run an Alpha course with a Post Alpha home group. Other churches run sermon series that specifically build aspects of nurture. Some church members attend courses.

Evangelistic events, witnessing in our community
A variety of events is held within the Southend Deanery. From a Christmas Tree Festival, interactive Nativity in the shopping mall and Good Friday witness, there are also fairs and fetes. Hospitality events include Harvest meal, Seder meal, Carols and mince pies outside the fundraising shop and Quiz nights. Several churches have cafes that are open during the week. Ladies’ group & Men’s group meet monthly. Christ Church Charity shop witnesses to the local community and it and Café Hub use community volunteers who are not members of the church family. (SAVS, Catch22 etc.)

The sponsoring of a beach shelter, (belonging to Southend Borough Council) to publicise services, facilities and major events.

Communicating our faith with confidence
One church held a Faith Mission which trained and supported the members to promote the church’s Good News throughout the parish. Another church has appointed a Children’s work Co-ordinator and evangelist and a Family Projects Co-ordinator. Several churches have special services to draw others in. Churches also work with local primary and secondary schools to provide for children’s needs and a Christian link. A Lent series from one church provides talks about various Christian churches in the world.
3. SERVING WITH ACCOUNTABILITY

Teaching people to pray
A number of churches have set up courses to teach people to pray. Prayer requests are identified on the news sheet.

Help with discipleship
Advent and Lent courses are provided at several churches. Teaching and nurture groups exist at several churches.

Enabling people into ministry
Many churches encourage members to take part in services: by reading the bible, leading in prayers, singing in the choir, playing in the worship band and by helping with the sound desk and AV. Authorised lay members help in the distribution of the sacraments at Holy Communion.

Blessing the community, witness to God's justice and peace
Churches support the homeless by providing food to HARP. The church with a shop offers support to the needier members of society by the provision of low cost clothing and goods. To some these may be provided free. The church with the Family Projects Co-ordinator who works within the community provides a recognised and acknowledged blessing to the community. Several churches allow homeless individuals to sleep in the warm during the very cold and wet winter nights.

Partnership with local, diocesan, national and global Christian Communities
In different parts of the deanery, churches work with other Anglican churches, run joint events with other denominations and are part of local ecumenical groups. At least one church gives 10% of income to national and global Christian organisations. Another church has close links with a church in Zimbabwe.

4. RE-IMAGINING CHURCH AND MINISTRY

Giving expression to daily ministry and participation in 'church' life
Through sermons and conversations churches are encouraging members to live a Christian life at work and to talk openly to neighbours about their faith. Churches distribute information around their parish to inform 'What's on'.

Understanding transition of ordained leadership to local level
Many churches have discussed this with their PCCs. This is particularly the case where they expect their own vicar not to be replaced when he retires.

Helping authorised lay ministry to develop
Many churches are empowering Readers (Lay ministers), other service leaders and preachers. New Pastoral Assistants have been commissioned recently.
Transforming Presence in Rochford Deanery

Background
Rochford Deanery is very varied in nature and lacks a natural focus. We comprise the District of Rochford plus the parish of Rettendon. Geographically we stretch across the north of Southend and Hadleigh Deaneries; so in many ways the centre of Southend is the focus of activities for most of our population. However a very high proportion commutes to the west for their work and this also detracts from any local sense of community. Nevertheless, many of our parishes do provide a real focus of community, but of course this is dispersed around the district.

Most people live well to the west of the deanery in the conurbation of Rayleigh, Hockley and Hawkwell which houses 60% of the population, while the five parishes in the eastern half only have 18%. In addition, this very rural area has poor roads and is intersected by unbridged rivers, so travel times between the churches are long and the communities are isolated from each other. Not only this, but they tend to hold on to their ‘history’ and churchmanship. In the last ten years or so, there has been a steady drawing together, but we still have a long journey to make.

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<th>Occasional Services</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rayleigh</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>34,000</td>
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</table>
| **Totals**                  | **15**             | **8.40**| **938**    | **86,093**          | **438**

Indicative number of stipendiary clergy for 2025 is 7
Some basic parish statistics are shown above. A major consideration is that in the past ten years or so, three parish churches have been closed for normal Sunday worship. We believe this number is the same for the rest of the diocese combined. In this period too, the number of stipendiary clergy (not counting title posts) has fallen from 15 to 8.4 and for a couple of years we were two below this strength. So we have recent experience of working to lower numbers and we know that without major change it is not sustainable. It has also reminded us that we have only a small number of Lay and Self Supporting Ministers and most of these are retired or soon will be. We believe these two factors have been instrumental in causing our total membership to fall more rapidly than in most parts of the diocese. The almost total defection of Church members at Hockley to the Ordinariate has been well documented and Synod will recall the 'good news story' of the resurrection of that congregation.

The Deanery Pastoral Committee and the Synod has done a lot of work on plans to promote cooperation and links between parishes. We have also devised several plans for linking parishes and thereby allowing a reduction of stipendiary posts. So there is a very gradual movement of thought in the direction of cooperation and the old barriers are becoming more permeable.

**Recent Developments**

Our Synod has placed Transforming Presence in the main slot of its agenda for the past two meetings and will do so again at the next two. Synod members have been asked to share this with other members of their PCCs. So we are spending time studying each of the four themes and thereby keeping the whole program on our collective agenda. But we are well aware that change of this magnitude takes time, attitudes change rather slowly for most people and this is what is needed. Accordingly, work is underway to respond to these known facts and become increasingly pro-active in bringing them to the surface of our discussions and onward decision making.

As a Deanery, especially over the past two years, we had looked at the possibility of using the recent vacancies to reduce, still further, the number of posts. But, it became increasingly apparent that we were not ready for this and it would probably have further accelerated our loss of members. Two specific areas of development and encouragement were identified, those of 'Mission Development', to increase contact and involvement in the community and encourage growth in numbers of those being brought to faith, and 'Vocations', encouraging members of the congregations to consider their ministry in the church, both lay and ordained, self-supporting and stipendiary. So we are grateful that Bishop John agreed to the appointment of 'priests in charge' to both the benefice of Rettendon and Hullbridge and the Parish of Hockley. We recently welcomed Brenda Wallace to the former post which is combined with two days a week in the deanery at large developing our mission. Similarly, in a few days Ken Havey will be licensed and installed in Hockley, where he will also spend two days a week encouraging vocations in the deanery. We trust that these two new deanery responsibilities will address the weaknesses that were so apparent over the past year or so, and we look forward to embracing the emerging outcomes of this initiative, which we pray will form a strengthened framework for current and future growth.

We are increasingly concerned with potential risks that could result in major adverse consequences. So we have started work on a formal risk analysis, including the identification of corrective actions.

We are aware that by 2025, there will be at least 3,400 new dwellings in the deanery, i.e. well over 10,000 more people: a relatively high proportion. This will bring more mission opportunities and ministry pressure.

**Further Information and Queries**

Please contact Mike Lodge or Gordon Simmonds
THE DEANERY OF THURROCK’S RESPONSES TO
'TRANSFORMING PRESENCE'

Thurrock is situated south of Essex and lies to the east of London on the north bank of the River Thames with an area of 165 square kilometres. The population of Thurrock in 2010 was 159,658 of which 78,549 (49.2%) were male and 81,109 (50.8%) were female an increase of 13,000 over the past 8 years. The estimated population by 2025 is 189,000.

The age structure follows a similar pattern to the regional and national figures but with a larger infant population (0-4) and a significant larger population in their 30s and early to mid-40s. Conversely, Thurrock’s older population is smaller as a percentage of total population and the highest rate of those over 65 reside in the north of the Borough in areas such as Orsett, Corringham and Fobbing. Figures show that Thurrock overall has a greater proportion of young people, aged 0-19, than England and this trend is likely to continue into the future.

As a key part of the Thames Gateway regeneration area, Thurrock has seen significant migration from East London – driven by housing market conditions. Between 1999 and 2005 over 22,000 people migrated from East London and this trend is likely to continue alongside the on-going availability of housing.

Over the last decade ethnic diversity in Thurrock has increased at a rate faster than the national average as the population grows. In 2001 the non-white ethnic population was estimated at 4.7%, increasing to 10% in 2007 and to 15.8% in 2010. This increase can in part be attributed to substantial inward migration from East London and also rising levels of international economic migration from parts of Africa and Eastern Europe.

Thurrock Deanery is made up of the following parishes:

Corringham St Mary and St. John & Fobbing St. Michael.   Chadwell-St-Mary
Grays Thurrock Team Ministry – St. Peter & St. Pauls, Grays; St Mary Little Thurrock; St Clement, West Thurrock & All Saints Chafford Hundred.
Grays North St. John the Evangelist. Stifford St Mary and St. Cedd
Orsett St Giles & All Saints & Bulphan St Mary & Horndon-on-the-Hill St. Peter & St. Paul
South Ockendon St Nicholas and Belhus Park All Saints.
Stanford-le-Hope St Margaret with Mucking. Tilbury Docks St John the Baptist.

The Church Urban Fund deprivation scores show the Deanery as having a mixed level of poverty and affluence. Out of a total of 12706 parishes in England of Thurrock’s 14 Parishes 7 are in the top 50% and 7 in the bottom 50%. Only 1 Parish, with a population of only 1900 is in the top 10% and 3 Parishes, each with a population of over 11,000 are in the bottom 15%. This may and can have an effect on how parishes see themselves against other parishes and can make it more difficult for them to work together.

As a Synod we looked at the suggested questions in Bishop Stephen’s letter of the 15th June and related them to the four priorities from the Transforming Presence document whilst keeping in mind in the following:

**Our Passion:** Our passion is Jesus –Proclaiming and Living out God’s love for all people.

**Our Aspiration:** to be a Transforming Presence in every Community, open and welcoming to all, and serving all.

**Our Resources:** Faithful people, Prayer and worship, Visionary Leadership, Liberation gifts.
Inhabiting the world distinctively:

- Our faith should and is at the heart of the community.
- There is outreach across communities
- Our buildings are used as community resources in the work that we ourselves do and those of outside organisations: Pre-school groups, Parent & Toddler Groups, Lunch & Coffee Clubs, Uniform organisations, Community Cafe, etc.
- The newly formed Thurrock Foodbank and the numerous parishes supporting this with use of building, time, talents and donations.
- Multi-purpose buildings being used on a daily basis by outside agencies drawing people over the threshold.

Evangelising Effectively

- Groups planning for 2014 – Year of Evangelism.
- Stop waiting for people to come through the door but to go out into the community where people meet together. Look at different ways to do church.
- Much work is being done in local schools both in assemblies and visits to church buildings both for services and for education.
- Occasional offices – keep in touch with Baptism, Wedding and Funeral families.
- Bar n Bus visiting various locations throughout Thurrock supported by local churches.
- Encouragement in personal evangelism.
- Services being held in nursing homes and retirement complexes.

Serving with Accountability

- Working collaboratively – Clusters being formed with nearby parishes to share resources etc.: Grays Team with Stifford and Grays North; Aveley & Purfleet together with South Ockendon & Belhus (working together to form the new Mardyke Team Ministry); Orsett, Bulphan & Horndon-on-the-Hill together with Corringham & Fobbing.
- Forming of these clusters will help us to share our strengths and weaknesses; share resources such as buildings, people (i.e. paid admin support). Mutual support to ministers/wardens, etc.
- Looking to draw up Letters of Intent to work together with clergy, lay ministers and PCC’s all coming on board.
- Drawback of how we will do this and how can parishes with different traditions would be able to work together. Need to respect and recognise this diversity. Recognition that some parishes would need a longer term plan than others.
- Need to overcome fear that buildings will be closed whilst recognising that not all our current buildings are either necessary or appropriate for the future growth of the church.
- Need to look at when and where services are held, to overcome the confusion where services are held at different times and places on a Sunday and to use the resources available effectively.

Re-imagining Ministry

- To use stipendiary resources in the most effective way and in the right places.
- To reinforce that every member has a ministry – As St Paul writes ‘some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers’.
- To hold Parish Vocation Days – informal and gentle approach, not only for Ordination or Licensed ministry but also to encourage members to undertake other roles in services and church life.
- To have deanery push with some deanery ‘road show’ type material.
- To consider the shape of local ministry and to design and deliver locally based training appropriate for local needs.
- To look at Deanery wide training, using local and diocesan expertise, e.g. Local run courses for those working with children and young people training, Child Protection policy etc.
- To remember our older people encouraging them to use their experiences and knowledge in retirement.
Colchester Deanery Response to *Transforming Presence*

**Diocesan Synod 2nd March 2013**

Colchester is the main, large population centre in North East Essex. The Deanery has 19 benefices, comprising 27 parishes of which 17 are situated within the urban area of the town, which over many years past has seen a considerable growth in the dense distribution of population, and this is set very much to continue. The Deanery is in a state of flux, because, having lost some rural parishes to the South (now in Witham Deanery) as recently as December 2011, it amalgamated with the parishes in a crescent shaped area immediately to the North of the town (formerly part of the Dedham and Tey Deanery) which is countryside in character. Consequently, this last year has been largely devoted to ‘getting to know one another’. One new Parish was also created – St Luke’s.

Layered on to these significant changes is the concurrence of 5 vacancies, some of which are about to occur at Easter. This is currently where we are at – *there is lots going on!*

**Things to Celebrate**

**Chapter and Deanery**

Like most Deaneries and the Anglican Communion in general, there is a very broad range of churchmanship and ways of being church. Both Chapter and Deanery operate in a friendly, co-operative and collaborative way, recognising and honouring the validity of our differences, and the need for flexibility, and for each other. Parishes will no longer be little islands. We can celebrate our being able to feel free to express concerns, raise issues and formulate an agenda for our Deanery, which is encouraging to everyone. Although being *all in this together* has become a recent cliché, nevertheless this applies and helps us as a Deanery on the journey to 2025.

**Outreach and Sector Ministries**

There are adventurous special projects and Fresh Expressions such as the New Braiswick Park Project, and the Source at the Hythe – *both outreach to housing estates*, and Messy Church. (Presentations on all three have been made to Diocesan Synod in the recent past). A further outreach to new housing is the Abbeyfield Project, which is an ecumenically supported venture. The Oak Tree Café, situated right next to a large Tesco, provides a practical service to the community and a place of meeting.

Colchester is exceptionally blessed in the provision of Sector Ministries comprising active Anglican Chaplaincies not only to our Hospitals and Hospice, but also in the Business community connected to our Town Centre Benefice, the University of Essex in a multi-faith centre, and the Army based at the barracks. There are good and effective C of E schools.

Alongside all this, the wider church in Colchester is much involved and highly committed, as our Presentation shows, to inter-denominational Christian activity as the broader *Body of Christ* here and in bringing Christ to people in so many different ways. In particular we have been much blessed by the ecumenical role which Bishop Christopher has played in this respect, especially benefiting from his chairing (until recently) a pan-denominational organisation *Seeking God’s Blessing for Colchester* which historically has its origins in a major mission to the town 24 years ago.

*Seeking God’s Blessing for Colchester* (SGBK) has enabled a conversation to continue amongst Christians of many persuasions throughout the area.
New Planning

In order to inform our thinking and to facilitate our planning, together with a revised Deanery Plan, we carried out a very detailed audit during the autumn, by means of a Questionnaire to all Parishes. We wanted to discover where people were at, and in particular, inviting them to consider their external Parish relationships. Highly useful information has been provided and collated, assisting with the processes of the allocation of resource and effectiveness of deployment.

In the light of Transforming Leadership and Ministry Framework - having 5 Interregna and many Parishes in suspension, provides a challenging opportunity to realign ministry and resources throughout the Deanery. This inevitably leads to ‘conversations’ not only in the vacancies, but also throughout the whole Deanery, as there are knock-on effects. Especially when the policy needs to encompass the Transforming Leadership and Ministry Framework agendas to provide an effective mission for growth and doing things differently, but also to allow for reductions in stipendiaries.

These ‘conversations’ are beginning to take place, and may encompass the sharing of administration and youth work provision/cover for holidays, illness and vacancies/nurturing vocations - perhaps especially lay - to leadership roles/making full use of what we have/working through porous boundaries/meeting informally say over a meal for fellowship and to express concerns and support each other/keep people informed/review cover of institutions such as schools and colleges, and hospitals, residential homes etc/consider where mutual support can effectively operate/thinking adventurously.

Already there are encouraging signs, as at least 3 parishes have, or will soon apply for, MOF funding for Youth or Family workers. The challenge is being taken seriously.

Anxieties

Unless the Lord builds the House ............ The need for discernment that we are Kingdom building in what we do, not just maintaining a structure ++ Relationships are more important than buildings, but the latter are needed, and cost money to run ++ Decline in clergy numbers relies on laity being willing and available to plug the gap in ministries – where are they numerically? Do they understand the theology of Gifts? Are they encouraged to use them to effectively? ++ If Units are geographically formulated, unnatural churchmanship partnerships may occur – arranged marriages rather than heart and mind alliances ++ Particular missional churches might be diluted by a ‘common denominator’ effect if aligned to ‘weaker’ Parishes ++ The ‘one-Parish one-Priest’ mode is ingrained ++ Will the ‘conversations’ between Parishes become stale? ++ The risk of evangelism is that people do not always respond in the way you expect – but that can also be exciting!!

Help Required

Facilitation of conversations at all levels ++ Development of an in-house Deanery mode of education ++ Deanery and Churches to identify where additional resources might be deployed for the effectiveness of outreach ++ Teaching and training and support for people ++ Enabling Parishes to understand that it is not just about getting people IN but also about going OUT THERE to meet people who do not know Christ ++ Speaking in a language that people understand and appreciate.

Prepared by Rural Dean Revd Canon Ian Hilton and Lay Chair Roger Ennals
28th February 2013
DEANERY OF HARWICH

TRANSFORMING PRESENCE. GETTING STARTED:
How we are organising ourselves for mission. The Deanery Plan divides the Deanery into 3 units

East:
Harwich Peninsula

Central:
Tendring:
Beaumont,
Little Bentley,
Great Oakley,
Wix,
Wrabness,
Mistley
Manningtree

West:
Lawford
Dedham
Ardleigh and the Bromleys
Elmstead.

Each unit, knowing how many stipendiary clergy it can have, has been asked to work out locally how it provides mission and ministry in their many forms.

Cuts in stipendiary ministry - a disaster?
No - a chance to re-image ministry in real time not in some theoretical future.

It has not been easy but we're getting there.

We are Resourcing Lay ministry by running courses led by our Missioner to help lay people play a greater part in ministry.

TRANSFORMING PRESENCE. WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW:

Different parishes have initiated a variety of enquirers courses from Alpha to Start:
Emmaus to Christianity explored.

We have worked more ecumenically - particularly with
Peninsula Youth Ministries looking to extend their work into Harwich.
Parishes have supported "The Hub" a drop in Manningtree.

There have been two major parish days on Transforming Presence.

Our ministry at the Tendring Show has been developed and the church tent is now a central (and welcome) feature a place where people can meet their local church.
TRANSFORMING PRESENCE. What's happening now - continued

One parish runs a local pub once a month and has their church open with refreshments freely available.

Messy church has taken off well in unexpected places.

There have been new prayer groups and a Christian meditation Group.

There have also been developments in different types of music including alternative worship, "To God be the glory."

This is in addition to what already happens by the way of normal parish mission and ministry. We have only just begun and Transforming Presence is at the forefront of our planning. As a deanery we hope to enable parishes to develop their own ideas. Our "news from the parishes" part of our agenda is quite busy!

We also have a monthly email news to inform each other of what is going on around the deanery.

Lay volunteers have refurbished the seafarers' centre at the port welcoming seafarers from around the world to a Christian environment giving them a place to relax and phone home.

TRANSFORMING PRESENCE. THE FUTURE:

A food bank is being explored with the Salvation Army.

Looking for developments at the Hub

More Christian nurture groups

Lay ministry training

Want to know more?
Contact: Rev Peter Mann (Rural Dean) email: cookbird@gmail.com
Mrs Laura Garnham (Lay Chair) email: landm.garnham@virgin.net
Rev Francis Mason (Missioner) email: revmason@btinternet.com
TRANSFORMING PRESENCE IN ST. OSYTH DEANERY

INTRODUCTION

Our context here in St. Osyth Deanery (16 parishes and 13 benefices) is of a number of small villages (Gt. Bentley, Alresford, Frating, Thorrington, Thorpe-le-Soken, Little Clacton, Weele, Gt. Holland), a few rather larger villages (Brightlingsea, Frinton, Walton, Kirby-le-Soken and St. Osyth) and one town, Clacton-on-Sea (which has 4 Anglican parishes, if you include Holland-on-Sea).

We are very much on the North-Easternly margin of Essex and of Chelmsford Diocese — but we take great comfort from the fact that Jesus spent most of His ministry on the margin!!

1. INHABITING THE WORLD DISTINCTIVELY

We recognize that we live in challenging days, when many people are ignorant of the Bible stories. We need to pass on the stories and the truths as best we can, and much effort is devoted to this, particularly in our church schools (Thorpe-le-Soken, Great Clacton, Weele and St. Osyth). We need also to pray specifically for the communities in which we are set and this is a particular focus at St. Michael’s, Thorpe and at St. Paul’s, Clacton.

We are becoming increasingly aware of the immense gulf which lies between the believing and the unbelonging communities, and the effort required to bridge it. Great sacrifices of time, effort, reputation and resources are required. We thank God for the greatest resource which the Lord has given us — the faithful service of so many Christian believers. Another major resource is our buildings and St. Osyth and St. James’, Little Clacton see their buildings as a resource which can point people to God.

Objectives are many and various —
AwayDays (Thorrington)
CAP Money Course to help people budget (Gt. Clacton)
Debt Counselling (Alresford)
Post-funeral visiting (Brightlingsea)
Food Bank (Walton)
Bereavement lunches (Holland)
Ministry to the lonely (St. Mark’s, Gt. Clacton)
and to the house-bound (Holland)

2. EVANGELIZING EFFECTIVELY

In terms of acting and praying differently, those who live and work in Clacton are finding that the changes in the benefit regime are beginning to have an effect and there is a growing number of very needy people in the town. Many people have serious financial problems.

There is also a need to bridge the enormous gulf between the church and the ‘world’. St. John’s, Great Clacton leaflets 11,000 homes every year at Christmas and St. James’, Clacton is planning to leaflet new houses.

Implications for Christian communities are that we will have to look outwards more than hitherto (Alresford), set up new services in secular venues (Cann Hall School, Gt. Clacton), open our buildings to more outside groups (Internet cafe at Alresford) and get out more into pubs (Brightlingsea).

Resources we use are Alpha (Gt. Clacton), Discovering Christianity (Holland) and developing web-sites (Frinton).

Our objectives are to spread the Word of God more widely (Bibles presented to all Year 3s at Gt. Clacton Jun’r School).
3. SERVING WITH ACCOUNTABILITY

Many of our churches have prayer groups and see the need to develop prayer. In terms of developing and nurturing faith, quite a number have regular weekly house groups (Alresford, Frinton, Walton, Kirby) and run courses – Called to Serve, Alpha, START (Frinton) and Emmaus (Walton).

Please refer to the plastic folders to see how our churches see themselves as being a blessing to their communities and what more they desire to do.

In terms of working with other Christian communities – Walton is partnering with the YMCA to employ a Youth Worker: St. Bentley joins with the Methodists for a joint Lent Course: the Child Contact Centre has recently moved from St. Paul’s to Pier Ave. Baptist, although St. Paul’s still supports it: St. Bart’s, Holland works closely with Baptists, Methodists and RC, sharing resources. David Tiley (St. Paul’s) is Chairman of Christians Together in Clacton.

As for working with the local community, St. James’, Brightlingsea is integrally involved in community life and the faithful at Thorlington deliver the local news sheet to everyone in Thorlington and Frating.

4. RE-IMAGINING MINISTRY

We recognize that change is in the air and seek to identify and nurture vocations. Growing Leaders and Called to Serve courses are run and Frinton have run a series of Preaching Workshops.

We recognize that we need to encourage our folks to move away from the dominant focus on ordained ministry and explore other ministries.

We recognize, also, the need to share resources across parish boundaries and to communicate better with our neighbours what we are doing. The newly-formed Deanery Youth and Children’s Team has conducted an audit of youth and children’s work across the Deanery. Walton is organizing a Youth Bowling event and Alresford are inviting Deanery Youth Groups to a Youth Praise service.

CONCLUSION

At our November Deanery Synod the 4 areas of Transforming Presence were addressed by 4 different speakers and we intend to continue to build on the progress we have made thus far, to the glory of God.
**Ethos change:** As a deanery we are committed to increased transparency and consultation. This has led to:

- Meetings with church members and PCCs to discuss the Transforming Presence Agenda.
- An openness when dealing both with frameworks that constrain us and the areas where we have flexibility.
- A recognition of both, the great challenges we face and in the belief that God is guiding and equipping us.
- A review of the allocation of Parish Share has been initiated.

**Deanery Planning morning:** Alongside the Transforming Leadership agenda we have worked hard to consider the structures we need in place to thrive and grow. On this morning we have looked at the possibilities for larger mission groups within the Deanery. This generated more than a dozen possibilities.

**Locally:** Churches and PCCs have been working with the material. This has been dealt with in different ways:
- Bible study
- Sermons
- Away days
- PCC meetings etc.

**Synod:** has received local presentations of Transforming Presence in action

**Chapter:** TP has been a regular part of the agenda for discussion

**Gathering information:** Information from the churches of the deanery has been drawn together.

**Commitment to training:** Within the last year we have run
- Wings for Worship
- Reconnecting Community and Church
- Preaching & intercession workshops
- An evening exploring the theology of Transforming worship
- Safeguarding training etc....
19. Braintree Deanery

Transforming Presence was used in a variety of ways across the deanery, primarily for discussion at PCCs, sometimes with congregational groups and on away days. For some the material was familiar territory, for others it was too much to take in as a whole. In some parishes the decision was made not to introduce it as a specific topic, but to tackle it more subtly, simply allowing its themes to influence ongoing conversations on growth and direction.

What is already happening that you want to celebrate?
- Developing our buildings with the introduction of sound-systems, toilets & kitchen facilities etc.
- Developing lay ministry teams and people growing in confidence
- Exploring new ways of working together collaboratively
- Evangelism taking place in a variety of ways: successful wedding and baptism ministries, outreach via Parent & Toddler groups and lunch clubs, holiday clubs and weekly school Bible clubs, courses such as Christianity Explored.
- Joint deanery service last summer
- An annual Chapter away day at Pleshey, last year with Elizabeth Jordon speaking.

What new planning or action has started or is being considered?
- A Deanery SHAPE course
- Exploring new forms of worship such as Café church and Messy church, especially to reach out to families and young people.
- Developing further areas of engagement with the local community such as a bereavement support group.
- Quarterly afternoon children's service, starting with a 'Baptism Welcome service' and then a Harvest Service
- Exploring ideas such as: opening the church building more, having a market stall, having a corporate Facebook account, using the local press who are often starved of news, evangelism via our football team, and more contact with parents of our church school.

What is causing anxiety?
- Lifestyle changes over the years means there are fewer people with time to offer for all that is needed.
- Further depletion of clergy numbers
Report on progress in the Dunmow and Stansted Deanery of Transforming Presence.

The Transforming Presence material is being used in various ways in the deanery and at different levels where it is influencing thought and action. The Lay Chair and the Rural Dean have met twice those who went to the day at Brentwood in January 2012 to continue to encourage them to hold the vision they received that day. The changes range from having coffee in proper mugs after church in Stansted (and bacon sandwiches), to having another key-holder for the church to TP really impacting on the whole strategic plan for some parishes.

Using Transforming Presence to move strategy forward in Parishes
Many of our parishes are using this as a tool to think into the future of how ministry is expressed in their parish or benefice. In the Five parishes there will be task group under each heading to move forward the mission and ministry of the parish with practical suggestions coming back to the PCC.
In Dunmow and Barnston it is one of the driving forces behind their ‘Vision and Plan for 2012-2015’ which will cover a vacancy and the appointment of a new incumbent so it will feed into the Benefice Profile. The preaching there has been raising awareness of TP.
In the Stebbing benefice the meetings, with supper, held under each of the four TP headings, have engendered enthusiasm and energy which are at the moment being worked through as to what this will mean for the ministry of the church there.
Many parishes have raised awareness of TP through PCC discussion, preaching and homegroup discussions.

Using the heading ‘Inhabiting the World Distinctively’
At least two of our benefices have prepared prayer sheets to enable people to pray in an ordered fashion more regularly through the day. Takeley and Little Canfield parish have delivered a simple prayer card to every home in the parish to enable people to pray on their own or with others. The clergy use it in their daily prayers and when they visit people at home. There are examples on our table.
In Stansted, Birchanger and Farnham a sheet has also been prepared as an everyday prayer book.
One church is having a ‘School of Prayer’ month later in the year and another as a result of studying TP has put prayer boxes in church porches after writing an article for the parish magazine, with the promise that any name written down will be prayed for. The Five Parishes pray regularly together on Mondays and Thursdays.

Using the heading ‘Evangelising Effectively’
We do have trained evangelists in one or two of the benefices which is suggested in TP and would like to expand this. Locally offered training would be a helpful move for the deanery.
Stebbing has run Alpha courses and from these people have come to faith and are being nurtured in the church. Felsted has ‘Open to Question’ as a vehicle for people to ask questions and to explore Christianity as well as ‘Christianity Explored’ and there are other examples in the deanery.
There are other evangelistic events such as the suppers and breakfasts held in Felsted and Stebbing where people have experience of the Christian community in an informal way eg the pub.
The two groups of churches (The Easters, the Rodings and Gt Canfield (ten in all) who are in vacancy have been evangelising through their children’s work in the summer holidays and at festival times. This has been led by a Reader from another parish who is building up the local expertise in children’s work. Many other churches do this too and their youth and children’s work is about enabling the church to make connections with the young of the community and some have had large numbers through their hands. Messy Church, in Dunmow, does this too and another church is beginning children’s work during the sermon for the first time.

Using the heading ‘Serving with Accountability’

I think that as a deanery we have not nurtured ministries sufficiently, though there are honourable exceptions. Many of our church leaders in the form of Churchwardens are getting older and are faithful and good but not ready to do all that is entailed in having a licensed ministry, but many of them will take Morning or evening prayer services. One of our parishes, Takeley and Little Canfield has had 15 people doing the SHAPE course and another is doing ‘Wings for Worship’ with Jenny Tomlinson. We do however have lay and ordained representing the church as they take assemblies in many of our schools, both church and community, and this is appreciated by the schools. There is a very close connection between the Church School and the church in Great Easton.

After hearing a speaker, the deanery synod decided that many of our churches wished to support Food Banks and this is now the case with food being collected and taken to our nearest one, in Braintree.

This heading we feel is a very important one for our churches to reflect upon as it is asking ‘are we doing what we are supposed to do?’

Using the heading ‘Re-imagining Ministry’

One of the advantages of having vacancies has been the freedom with which people have generously moved about to minister in different places and have shared their particular skills. This seems to be a continuing move towards proper collaboration in ministry right across the deanery and includes the courage shown by lay people in taking services and carrying out the pastoral ministry and we see them growing in the process. An aspect of the schools ministry mentioned above is that the team takes assemblies in another benefice, again crossing the normal parish boundaries but ideally we would grow more people on the patch to carry out this vital role.

A way of re-imagining ministry is the fact that several benefices are going to employ administrators for the first time although we have some in the deanery already.

We have an interesting arrangement about to begin in those 10 parishes mentioned above where one priest-in-charge will be haltime with his other hat being the Rural Evangelism officer for the Colchester area and so we hope that he will be able to teach and encourage us in the deanery about good habits of evangelism. He will be in a group ministry with a house-for duty priest and together they will work among the 10 parishes so will show cross parish collaboration as they minister together.

Some of the changes we have made in response to ‘Transforming Presence’ may seem small or obvious to people in other situations but they are significant in our deanery and we are pleased with them and want to continue developing work under the headings so that the churches here may grow the Kingdom of God in Essex.

Belle Beszant (Lay Chair) and Cilla Hawkes (Rural Dean)
Firstly

The Hinckford Deanery can be found in the most northerly area of our Diocese and is very rural. The take up of places at the initial conference in Brentwood reflected the time of year and difficulties some parishes had in identifying representatives between PCC meetings. However the overall response very much reflected the growth of team and group ministry that has developed so successfully over the last few years.

Initial responses at Parish level have included:

- workshop days to consider the four main headings,
- the drawing up of strategy documents
- the production of summaries of thinking and planning.

Focus

In the process of preparing a more focussed response across the Deanery:

- use has been made of Pleshey for a lay led team clergy day
- all Deanery synod meetings have included items reflecting responses to the Transforming Presence document
- a focused Deanery Synod session drew together strands of thinking and provided guidance to others.

The most significant challenge facing many parishes is the low numbers on their rural electoral role. Whilst group and team ministries can help in maintaining Sunday services other initiatives do prove challenging where there is a lack of youth, children and facilities, and often single figure attendance at services.

However the following practical activities have occurred, not necessarily because of our focus on Transforming Presence but certainly encouraged by it.

- A five week ‘Wings for Worship’ course run specifically to develop lay ministry in leading services
- The introduction of a monthly informal worship entitled ‘Ignite’ designed to encourage links to those who might not engage with a more formal service
- The introduction or expansion of more contemporary style services including quieter and more reflective elements and focussed prayers.
Forward

Perhaps most significant has been the depth of thought evident in the summaries and discussion documents PCCs have already produced. Common features have included:

- Celebrating some of the positive things that are already in place but sometimes overlooked.
- Expanding the Parish Magazine to educate and share with the wider community.
- Recognising and reaching out to the number of people who make use of the Church at significant points in their lives but who are not otherwise involved.
- Identifying opportunities to educate our congregation.
- Building on the existing skills of our congregation.
- Extending purchasing powers to save money.
- Active participation with other religious communities.
- Recognising opportunities to reach out more often to other village communities by involving them in significant events such as the annual carol service.

In reviewing responses from the various parts of the deanery some of these replies included ‘small things’ in the wording, although when shared at Synod it became very apparent that the number of ‘small things’ had the potential to make a significant impact. Cited were asking representatives from secular organisations to read lessons, providing refreshments for parents when school services were being held in church and adding contemporary style services on a more regular basis. The local pub has also been a common element including men’s and women’s evenings with a guest speaker, an Alpha course and annual beer and carols events.

Furthermore

One of the bigger challenges has been ensuring that all those involve recognise that the whole process is very much on going with a longer timescale than many are used to. Balanced with that has also been the need to identify a starting point and appreciate the need for change. Where parishes have prepared a constructive and prayerful approach to the four headings the next steps soon become apparent. Furthermore the recognition that the timescale is double or even treble the norm of five years has helped people to realise the need for small careful steps rather than instant answers.

Future

There is much evidence across the Deanery that the sharing of ideas and parish responses both within our meetings and through channels of communication across teams and our website has stimulated a fresh approach. Examples have been provided for those for whom the original document looked daunting. Over the last year implications of defining the way we live distinctive lives, how we reach out to others and serve them and imagine how the Church will do so in the future has been responded to positively and with vigour. Next steps includes running a ‘The Faith We Share’ course within one team and extending the ‘Wings for Worship’ course in other parishes.

There is much to encourage us as we recognise the challenges the future holds.

Brian Vidler, Lay Chair.  
Revd Laurie Bond, Rural Dean  
February 2013
The Deanery Mission Weekend - 18-20 May 2012

At the Rural Dean’s invitation with the full backing of the Deanery Standing Committee, Bishop Stephen came to lead a Deanery Mission Weekend. Two training events prepared teams in each benefice to put on an attractive evangelistic event on or around the May weekend. The whole exercise was productive with a wide and varied range of events from “Big Dinner, Big Questions” – a dinner for parents of young children to think about the difficult questions of life – to a “Forest walk” with a talk and reflection on the wonder and beauty of God’s creation. The Deanery is eagerly anticipating the Mission in 2014, and is striving for every benefice to “regularly put on an evangelistic event” in Evangelising effectively.

Creating Sustainable and Collaborative Ministry and Mission Units

On 1st January 2012, the Saffron Walden and Villages Team Ministry was established with Great and Little Chesterford, and Debden and Wimbleshare, parishes joining the Saffron Walden Team. By maintaining the parochial structure under the overarching Team Council and Clergy Team, the goals of strong local autonomy, allied to collective responsibility and mutual collaboration, were secured. This year, Quendon and Rickling parishes are to join with Newport and Widdington, and Manuden and Berden parishes are to join with Clavering and Langley w Arkesden and Wicken Bonhunt. With the incumbents of the resulting benefices asked to and determined to work together when appropriate, this seems another propitious development. Exploratory talks about combining Thaxted parish with the Sampfords & Radwinter w Hempstead have begun, whereby another promising unit is within reach. As a result of these changes, all in line with our Deanery Plan, our target of a full-time stipendiary allocation of 7 should be achieved in 2014.

Conclusion

The Transforming Presence agenda has energised the Deanery and given us a clear focus for future years. All the work over the last four years in forming co-operative and supportive relationships at all levels of the Deanery through productive meetings, social events and engaged one-to-one encounters has given us a strong basis on which to rise to the challenges. The Deanery is cohesive and relatively united, and has a coherent plan for implementing the four diocesan strategic aims. My colleagues, lay and ordained, and I are seeking to embrace the future imaginatively and courageously, as we share in Christ’s mission and ministry in North West Essex.

Saffron Walden Deanery
Transforming Presence

Introduction

Saffron Walden Deanery is engaging vigorously with the Transforming Presence agenda. Alongside work on the four strategic aims through the established structures, Synod and Chapter, and in the benefices, there are ad hoc meetings and special events, and an innovation: our biennial Transforming Presence Conference.

The First Transforming Presence Deanery Conference
Saturday 29th September 2012

All licensed clergy, readers and the lay chairman, along with lay delegates from each benefice were invited. Those representing the benefices were selected locally on the basis that they would take forward the Transforming Presence agenda. The Diocesan Director of Mission and Ministry, Roger Matthews, gave the keynote address. Groups with representation from across the deanery worked on Inhabiting the world distinctively tackling the topic “teaching people to pray” and the questions “What are we doing to teach people to pray?” and “What can we do?” Then new groups were formed to look at “Serving with accountability: Being a blessing to the community we serve. How is our church witnessing to God’s kingdom of justice and peace, and what can we do?” After lunch, Jenny Tomlinson, Mission and Ministry Advisor gave a reflection on Acts 2:42-47, before the delegates met in their benefice groups to reflect on what was learned through the Deanery Mission and the next steps in Evangelising Effectively.

Worship and prayer, plus refreshments and, of course, lunch, were woven into the day.

David Tomlinson
Rural Dean

21st February 2013
Deanery Chapter and Special Meetings of the Licensed clergy

In order to work on the Transforming Presence agenda we have changed our meeting pattern with four rather than eight meetings of chapter which includes the retired clergy, and four special meetings of the Licensed Clergy, Readers and the Lay Chair at which one of the four strategic aims is explored. Among many possibilities and proposals generated by the discussions, three have general approval and seem feasible. These are:

⇒ Inhabiting the world distinctively
A project called “Pathways in Prayer” is aimed at helping people to pray and to encourage benefits to innovate: annually there will be four events located at different churches across the deanery when a particular experience of prayer will be offered, for example a “Taizé service.” The event will be introduced beforehand, and there will be time for discussion and reflection afterwards, and an explanatory handout will be available.

⇒ Reimagining Ministry
Saffron Walden and Villages Team Ministry have run the Growing Leaders’ course (CPAS) successfully within the Team three times in the last four years. Besides helping the participants to learn about leadership and to discern what God is calling them to do, the graduates from the course formed the core of the Christian Studies courses at a centre within the deanery that started in September 2010 and 2012. Incidentally, the Deanery Priest, the Rev’d Angela Want has been a tutor on these two courses, fulfilling an aspect of her role, “to facilitate the development of lay ministry.” Building on this solid and encouraging experience, this Growing Leaders’ course is now to be run with and for the whole deanery.

⇒ Evangelising effectively
Helping local Christians to have the understanding and assurance to share their faith was recognised as essential to our churches Evangelising effectively.” Hence our next Deanery Conference, on Saturday, 27th September 2014, will have “Evangelising Effectively” as the theme, and will be a training event “for people to be able to talk with more confidence about their faith.”

Serving with Accountability – being a blessing to the community and witnessing to God’s Kingdom of justice and peace.

In July 2012, the Rural Dean was appointed chair of the Uttlesford District Council’s (UDC) Children and Families Group whose vision is “that all children and young people and their families in Uttlesford be encouraged and supported to reach their full potential”, and in this role is on the UDC Local Strategic Partnership that co-ordinates policy and action across the full range of local government responsibilities.

The Transition Project in Saffron Walden continues to offer support and practical help (job searches, interview skill and CV writing) weekly to those who are unemployed.

Deanery Synod

Each of our meetings has one of the four strategic aims as the theme. For example, at our last meeting, the Rev’d Dr Julie Nelson, Environmental group member, gave a presentation on Inhabiting the world Distinctively: Treasuring God’s creation. Her talk, along with the accompanying questionnaire on recycling and our carbon footprint, prompted discussion on our individual habits and what our churches are doing to reduce energy consumption. This year’s speakers include Pete Hillman, of Legacy and currently Director of St Mark’s College, on Evangelising Effectively and Elizabeth Jordan, the Lay Development Adviser, on Reimagining Ministry.

A constant feature of our agendas is a report from a church or benefice about recent developments in their ministry and mission, with a particular focus on increasing the number of people involved in church life. Thereby, the imperative for creative and sustainable change at the heart of Transforming Presence is underlined and Evangelising effectively kept to the fore.

The Deanery Service

Since 2010, there has been an annual service in the autumn. The themes have resonated strongly with Transforming Presence, and the sermon has been allied to a sharing of local praxis or wisdom. The first year, in a service of wholeness and healing with anointing, the laying of hands and “prayer ministry”, Andy Colebrooke, Rector of the Icknield Way Villages, preached on “Christ’s healing ministry.” In 2011, Elizabeth Jordan preached on “lay ministry” and participants on SHAPE, Growing Leaders and Christian Studies – all of which are being run in the deanery - spoke about the content and value of these courses. Last year, Bishop Stephen preached on Evangelising effectively, and representatives of each benefice spoke about what they had done for the Deanery Mission Weekend, 18-20 May 2012.