

EAST LOCAL MINISTRY GROUP

Notes on Open Meeting of East Group Local Ministry Group held on Thursday 22 September 2005 at 7.30 pm at Churchill Methodist Church

PRESENT There were over sixty people present, representing the majority of the worshipping communities of all Christian denominations in the area. There were a number of apologies for absence. Thanks were extended to Churchill Methodists for the kind use of their hall and facilities.

WELCOME David Colbourne, Reader from St Andrew's, Banwell welcomed everyone and spoke of his optimism for the future for the spreading of the Good News of God's love for all people within the area through participating together within the East LMG.

MEDITATION AND PRAYER A Powerpoint presentation encouraged a time of reflection and the Revd. John Abdy opened the meeting with prayers.

INTRODUCTION David Colbourne explained that since the then Archdeacon of Bath, the Ven. Bob Evens came to Synod in May 2004, this Deanery had pursued the setting up of Local Ministry Groups through consensus by prayer and consultation. East Local Ministry Group was formed from the Parishes in the main catchment area of Churchill Community School, and including all Christian denominations represented in that area. Since September of last year the clergy have been meeting on a weekly basis for prayer and in August met to discuss the implications of Local Ministry Groups.

THE CLERGY PERSPECTIVE

The Revd. Mike Slade, Rural Dean of Locking Deanery, explained that an outline Deanery Pastoral Plan had to be submitted to the Archdeacon by the end of June. At that stage there were still several parts that still needed to be clarified. Since then, things have moved on in the East LMG and the following proposal will be submitted to the Archdeaconry Pastoral Committee for its approval:

That on the retirement of Revd. John Abdy :

§ **Holy Trinity, Burrington** comes under the jurisdiction of the Revd. Nicholas Maddock, Rector of Wrington, Butcombe and Redhill

§ **All Saints, Sandford** remains an LEP with the Methodists, and comes under the jurisdiction of the Revd. Mike Slade, Vicar of Winscombe, together with the Revd. Pam Pembro.

§ An ordained priest be sought as Vicar of **St Mary's, Langford and St John the Baptist, Churchill** with the added responsibility of being a Youth Research Officer to develop links with the Governors of Churchill Community School regarding the provision of a **Chaplain/Chaplaincy team** as well as supporting, initiating, encouraging and training for youth work ecumenically, across the East Local Ministry Group. **Churchill and Langford** would remain together and would offer spiritual and practical support to the new incumbent.

§ No decision needs to be made about **Banwell** until the retirement of the Revd. David Lockyer.

§ No change is envisaged in **Congresbury** during the implementation of the Vine Counselling Services which is intended to operate throughout the East LMG on an ecumenical basis. It was also noted that the Revd. Matthew Thomson is the Diocesan Healing Advisor.

There has been an enthusiastic commitment throughout the church communities to explore all these possibilities. It was noted that no formal approach has yet been made to the Governors of Churchill Community School. A formal approach can only begin once someone has been appointed. It was noted that there is already a link with the School through local clergy and youth workers.

FORUM

Although it was not felt desirable to create another layer of hierarchy, it was felt advisable to create a Forum consisting of clergy, Readers, Worship Leaders, Deacons and one lay member of each worshipping community throughout the ELMG to take matters forward. From this Forum, a focus group will be formed to look at the Job Specification for the position of priest at Langford and Churchill who will also be Youth Research Officer for the ELMG. **PLEASE SEND DETAILS OF REPRESENTATIVES, with e mail contact addresses to DOROTHY BALDWIN 1 Well Close Winscombe e mail les@baldwin2664.freemove.co.uk**

COMMUNICATION

David Colbourne reported that a website has been set up www.elmg.org.uk which will have information about all the churches in the group, a map and invites ideas and suggestions. All minutes of open meetings will now be accessible to anyone who wishes to read them.

GROUP DISCUSSION

It was felt that the success of the East LMG is largely because the laity have been involved from the earliest stages and their views have been taken into consideration. Focus for discussion at this meeting was:

1. What do we expect a youth co-ordinator to do, bearing in mind that he/she will also be priest of Langford and Churchill?
2. How do we communicate? Should there be a paid Administrator/Co-ordinator? How would such a position be funded?
3. From the suggestions offered at the previous ELMG meetings which ones would you most like to see progressed, and how could this be achieved?

The meeting then broke into ten groups to discuss these questions during which time refreshments were served.

Feed-back suggestions were as follows:

1. **What do we expect a youth co-ordinator to do, bearing in mind that he/she will also be priest of Langford and Churchill?**
 - A support group for the new priest needs to be set up as a priority and these people should be included in the job specification and selection process to ensure spiritual and practical support for the new incumbent.
 - The actual needs of the young people should be met, not perceived needs by adults.
 - Should the school be involved in the selection process?
 - First priority to make an audit of current youth provision across the ELMG and ecumenically, both Christian-based and secular, discerning strengths and weaknesses.
 - Prepare a five-year plan for meeting needs.
 - To encourage young people already involved in churches.
 - To train and encourage more adults in working with young people in their own area and to encourage "best practice", sharing resources where possible.
 - Liaise with Diocesan Youth Officer, Tony Cook.
 - A suitable house for the priest needs to be found that will provide an appropriate meeting place, preferably within easy reach of Churchill Community School.
 - Make contact with other schools in the area.
 - Focus initially on the 11-18 age group.
 - Need for a regular meeting place/coffee bar/mini-bus/activities/holiday club/concerts.
 - To have contact with local Scout/Guide units in the area.
 - To work towards a full-time youth chaplain.
 - A query was raised as to any one person being able to fulfil the role of priest to two parishes plus instigating youth provision throughout the ELMG.

It was felt that another Open Meeting dealing solely with youth provision may be a useful option.

**2. How do we communicate? Should there be a paid Administrator/Co-ordinator?
How would such a position be funded?**

- § With the reduction in clergy numbers an Administrator/Co-ordinator, financed at least partially by the Parish Development Fund, could be used to book events, book venues, co-ordinate clergy availability for funerals, weddings, holidays, sickness and during vacancies, etc.
- § Produce a newsletter periodically or ensure articles in all church magazines.
- § Operate a directory of people/resources/talents available.
- § Organise occasional combined services to encourage congregations to get to know one another, e.g. Wrigton Open Air Service last June where the invitation was extended to all in the ELMG and included contributions from the local Primary School and Youth Group.
- § To up-date the web site on a regular basis and respond to any queries and suggestions.
- § To help parishes to set up web-sites.
- § To act as Press Officer.
- § To ensure all events within the ELMG are widely advertised.
- § To liaise with clergy and nominated representative from each worshipping community, calling meetings perhaps on a quarterly basis.
- § To develop links with PCC/Deacons meetings.
- § To develop links with and between church magazine editors.
- § To call regular Open Meetings of ELMG to monitor progress and discern the way forward.
- § Organise an annual social event, eg pig roast/ barn dance for the whole ELMG.
- § There was some feeling that such a position was not necessary, not a priority or an extravagance. Reliance on volunteers is quite sufficient.

3. From the suggestions offered at the previous ELMG meetings which ones would you most like to see progressed, and how could this be achieved?

- ✓ Church magazines circulated to all churches in the group.
- ✓ High-light ELMG items in each magazine.
- ✓ Increase of lay involvement in ELMG.
- ✓ More active ecumenical working across the churches.
- ✓ More administrative support in each parish.
- ✓ Financing new initiatives should come from reduction in paid ministers, ie. via the Parish Development Fund.
- ✓ More combined worship opportunities eg Open Air Services.
- ✓ Circulate details of events to the whole population, not just in churches.
- ✓ Centralise training opportunities.
- ✓ Pool technical equipment and knowledge.
- ✓ Capitalise on economies of scale.
- ✓ Organise social activities eg an ELMG day for all ages each Spring/Summer
- ✓ Ensure that each worshipping community has a designated contact person.

VINE COUNSELLING SERVICES – AN INTRODUCTION

The Revd. Matthew Thomson and Mrs. Lydia Avery gave a presentation using Powerpoint to explain the background to setting up a listening and counselling service within the ELMG, but also including Yatton. This will be a professionally-trained group of volunteers who will work alongside local GP's and Health Care professionals in the area where access to counselling is at present inadequate. The scheme will provide child-care facilities to enable young mothers to take advantage of the service. It will cost in the region of £3000 to set up and approximately £14000 p.a. to run. It will be free at point of access, but clients will be encouraged to make a donation. Initially it will be based in the Refectory in Congresbury, but hopes to have bases in other villages throughout the ELMG as need arises. The launch date is 1 March 2006 and will give all worshipping communities within the area the first opportunity of working together to the mutual advantage of the whole community.

DATE OF NEXT OPEN MEETING 19 January 2006 St James's Church Hall,
Winscombe at 7.30pm