

EAST LOCAL MINISTRY GROUP

Notes on open meeting of East Group Local Ministry Group held on Wednesday 8 June 2005 at 7.30 pm at Churchill Methodist Church

PRESENT There were ninety-seven people present, representing the majority of the worshipping communities of all Christian denominations in the area.

WELCOME Hilary Hagen, Reader from St James's, Winscombe welcomed everyone and gave the background to the vision of Bishop Peter of Bath and Wells for setting up Local Ministry Groups explained in the document "Changing Lives – Changing Churches for Changing Communities" which encourages working across Parish boundaries and working ecumenically wherever possible to explore new visions for the church.

The Revd. John Abdy and Mrs Libby Cook encouraged seeking God's guidance to discover opportunities to work together and to reach out with God's love to everyone in the area. A prayer meeting in St Mary's, Langford had been held where those present sought God's will for the LMG and how it is to be organised. John then led the meeting in Bible study and prayer.

The Revd. John James, Methodist Minister, was thanked for his hospitality and his attendance at the meeting despite having to alter a prior engagement.

GROUP DISCUSSION The Revd. Matt Thomson and David Colbourne, Reader from Banwell, explained that each group would discuss two questions, taking into account the responses made at the first East LMG Meeting in November, and suggestions arising from a meeting of church leaders held on Saturday 23 April, and as a result of the prayer meeting held on Saturday 21 May.

1 What is the purpose of the local church? This is a time to seek God's vision and purpose for the Church in the community, in the workplace and in the nation and including all ages.

2 How do we best deploy our resources including four stipendiary Anglican ministers to achieve this? How can we work together to best meet the vision?

After an hour of discussion, during which time the clergy served refreshments, a plenary session was held, and feed back from each of the ten groups was shared. A copy of the feed-back is attached to these notes.

- Everyone was encouraged to go and visit each other's churches to sample the variety of worship.
- As God calls all of us to be his witnesses and ambassadors, we have hundreds of ministers in our churches, who can be encouraged and equipped to be effective ministers to each community that we touch.
- Through the professional training of individuals from churches throughout the LMG a counselling service is being set up to be available to the whole community.
- Appointing a Youth Chaplain is not enough. We need to share the journey with young people in our churches and outside. Many young people are genuinely concerned with world issues, and we must be willing to take on their enthusiasm and passion for change.
- Regarding the reduction in clergy numbers and their allocation across the LMG, there still needs to be opportunities to consider various options in consultation with all ecumenical partners.
- Suggestions for a better name for the area would be welcome. Ideas to David Colbourne
- The Gate House, East Street, Banwell 01934822902
- **A further Open Meeting has been booked for 22 September 2005 at a venue to be decided** when it is hoped that the way ahead is clearer.

MAKE POVERTY HISTORY Details were given of a Cycle Ride around the East LMG to take place on Saturday 18 June, culminating in an encircling of St John's Church, Churchill at 4.00pm to express support for this campaign.

The meeting closed with Bible reading and prayer by the Revd. Stephen Newell.

Open Meeting – responses in no particular order

1. What is the purpose of the local church?

- Evangelism, witness, encourage Youth Groups
- Cure of all souls – very “Anglican” not shared by other denominations
- Pastoral care for all, safe haven
- Faithfulness to the word of God
- To be made fit to be disciples
- Secure fellowship to allow growth
- Bring Christ into community & opportunity for worship
- Focus & service for those not regular attendees
- Facilitate worship of God in community
- Social centre for community
- Should be place of Christian worship teaching & praise
- Bring together people of like mind
- Be people of God
- Baptisms weddings & funerals
- Teaching spiritual development of whole community
- Mission, community
- Embracing non-regular church goers
- Bring message of Christ to people by various means
- Partners with God
- Reach out to community with God’s love
- Provide environment for corporate worship
- Identify what God is doing where he is & the needs of the community
- Prophetic ministry in society
- Reach out to children and young people and encourage them in faith
- Pastoral care
- Nurture faith & fellowship
- Be integrated in our community
- Channels of God’s peace
- Take Christ into community
- Somewhere to go and pray at any time, open to all
- Facilitate personal spiritual growth

2. How do we best deploy our resources including four stipendiary ministers to achieve this?

- Support having youth worker
- One stipendiary position should be used for youth specialist
- 5-3 preferable suggestion
- Close churches and use school buses to attend Wells Cathedral
- 2nd suggestion to alleviate the burden on Matthew and other clergy who have additional responsibilities in the Diocese or Deanery
- Children’s work
- Look to the future where are we going? Types, frequency and where services could be
- Too many buildings or too few people?
- More lay involvement
- More ecumenical working
- Identify other suggestions as well as the two stated
- 4 areas – plus funded youth worker
- Team ministry - HQ and three others
- Discern other needs for specialists as well as youth/training
- Greater emphasis on lay involvement focusing on need for training
- LMG should be dynamic and responsive to needs throughout the area
- 7 active retired clergy in LMG who welcome and would like to contribute to the LMG – not licensed to a particular Parish, but could work throughout the LMG. One member is collating data to help in supporting this work. Would like to be part of the process, not just a fourth emergency service.
- Retired clergy, Readers to help with occasional offices if 1st suggestion is followed
- Training of lay people
- Reassure people that churches will not be closed.
- Vacancies give lay people opportunities for developing their gifts
- Need to be positive, but gentle with people reluctant to embrace change