

POWDER DEANERY 'ON THE WAY 'BRIEFING NOTE

Purpose:

This note summarises the Leadership Team's current thinking in order to make Powder Deanery both fruitful and sustainable. We seek feedback from the Deanery Synod on the proposed approach in order to help solidify plans.

Method:

In order to ensure that the process gained a good understanding of local churches and communities, separate local teams were established to consult with the Probus, Roseland and Truro areas and also to link into the Transforming Mission project. Contact has also been made with the Cathedral.

Extensive consultation has taken place throughout the Deanery and many face-to-face meetings have taken place. The teams have endeavoured to meet with each church congregation and/or PCC and will revisit them with proposals for reaction and amendment where necessary. We have aimed for transparency in decision-making and all relevant documents have been made available to all as the process has unfolded on the powderdeanery.org website. Regular updates have been sent via email for all those who have registered.

Each local team made use of questionnaires, one on-line courtesy of Diocesan resources and other paper questionnaires that have been distributed in churches and in the community.

A number of meetings have taken place with the Deanery Synod, all of which to date have been open to others to attend. These have been used to update members of the Synod and seek feedback - again, this has been captured, fed into the process and published on the website.

A number of other meetings have taken place, both with individuals and with specific groups e.g. retired clergy.

The local teams considered the views that they have heard and thought hard about how these might move forward to ensure the church is both fruitful and sustainable. The leaders of these local groups have then come together as a Leadership Team to work out how this may translate across the Deanery. This paper is the result of this team's considered view about the way forward.

Context:

The 'On the Way 'process occurs in a context where church growth is sporadic and where financial challenges are increasing due to several factors including the pandemic, decreasing attendance at church and latterly rising food and utility prices. Powder Deanery currently falls well short of its Mission and Ministry Fund call, and the Diocese of Truro is called to significantly subsidise the operation of the local church. This is not sustainable in the longer term and so the outcome of the 'On the Way 'process should be an approach that is both fruitful spiritually and financially achievable.

What congregations told us:

The local teams held extensive consultations, and some common themes emerged from these conversations:

- ⇒ There is a real commitment to maintaining and growing the church but that may who had responsibility for running churches e.g. PCC members and church wardens were frequently exhausted and saw no 'cavalry coming over the hill'
- ⇒ There was a desire for inspired leadership – leaders who walked the gospel but also built teams and worked collaboratively with them to deliver both services and the wider mission of the church
- ⇒ There was a desire for named leadership for every church
- ⇒ It was perceived that there was very little support from the Diocese when leadership was not available
- ⇒ Financially, many churches were in challenging situations
- ⇒ Churches were emerging from the pandemic uncertain what the future might hold regarding the return to pre-pandemic numbers in attendance and whether giving would 'rebound' to previous levels

The Deanery Plan

1) Overarching vision:

The Deanery plan seeks to help every church community grow and be fruitful.

- a. Powder Deanery embraces a wide range of theology; this plan honours these differences and seeks to allow all churches to flourish
- b. Our churches are Christ-centred first and foremost: valuing the sacraments, scripture and a spirit-led life to transform our lives and those around us

2) What is needed to deliver the vision

- a. Our consultations heard repeatedly that inspirational leadership was vital if the church was to grow and be fruitful.
- b. Against a backdrop of reducing clergy numbers, it was important that each church had an identifiable leader who took responsibility for leading their community in fruitful mission. They would be responsible for not only the day-to-day running of the church but its mission in the community and the spiritual welfare of its congregation
- c. Where necessary there may be different approaches for the different areas of Probus, the Roseland and Truro
- d. Where possible, a cohesive approach across the Deanery to matters which affect each church community to stop duplication, increase support and increase effectiveness

3) Three missional communities

It is intended therefore to group the deanery into three missional communities:

Probus,
The Roseland, and
Truro

4) A sustainable deployment of resources

The Deanery needs to be able to fund the ministry resources which are deployed. A decreased number of clergy leaves options of spreading scarce resources even further and risks leaving worshipping communities even more isolated.

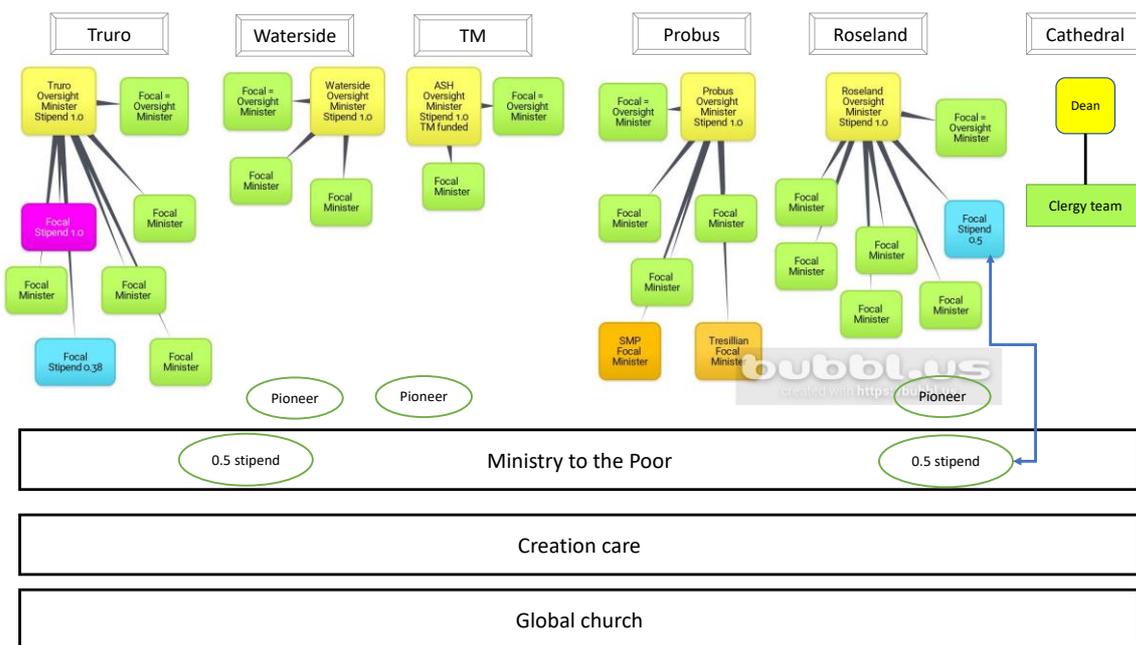
A model of 'Oversight Ministry' is our way of mitigating against this risk and aims to support each church with a 'Focal Minister' who is responsible for leading each congregation.

By moving to a model of Oversight Ministry and Focal Ministry, each church and worshipping congregation is appropriately led, sustained and supported.

This, of course, has major implications for how ministry is delivered. A small number of Oversight Ministers, all ordained, will have the legal responsibility for a number of churches or congregations each of which is led by a Focal Minister. In some cases this focal minister may not be ordained. Oversight Ministers will themselves also have direct responsibility for one church as its focal minister.

Key to the success of this structure is the identification, nurturing and release of focal ministers.

The structure of the churches in the Deanery is represented below:



It is proposed that the Deanery establishes a 'guild' of focal ministers who learn and train together, support and pray for each other and hold each other accountable as well as each coming under the authority of an oversight minister. This is an on-going process which does not end on appointment to the role but which carries on throughout the Focal Minister's time leading a congregation or church. The 'guild' will operate in the background and provide a home for focal ministers, developing their skills and deepening their faith. Funding is sought to support this initiative - whilst this is modest in relative terms it is key to bed the 'guild' into being.

From the congregation's perspective, many churches have expressed a desire to have a named and consistent leader who is responsible for providing both direction and support to congregations. The focal minister model provides this structure and continuity and allows ownership and accountability for growth in faith.

5) Four cross Deanery strands

In addition, we also want to create four new strands: Four main ways in which the Deanery could collaborate effectively:

1. Pioneer Ministry
2. Ministry to the poor
3. Creation care
4. Global church

CROSS DEANERY - STRAND ONE

Pioneer Ministry

Truro benefits from the establishment of a Transforming Mission site at All Saint's Highertown. Each of the Mission Areas identified by the 'On the Way' process has highlighted an intention to take forward pioneering ministry in one form or another and opportunities for this vary from area to area.

It is proposed that this is nurtured and resourced from the current Transforming Mission team, and whilst the bulk of opportunities may lie in Truro, there will be other avenues in both the Roseland and Probus to establish pioneering ministries there as well.

Led by the Pioneer Minister, the team will identify, in consultation with individual churches across the Deanery, where a pioneering approach may most likely bear fruit and begin to resource accordingly. It is proposed the TM hub provides training for lay volunteers to reach out to untouched communities and supports them as they begin their work. A cohort of individuals will be identified who have the necessary depth of faith and life skills to connect with those who are unlikely to cross the threshold of a church. This cohort will be trained together and provide mutual support and on-going development as experimental sites are explored - not all will flourish but it is believed that where God is at work, much fruit will be seen.

It is proposed that there is a dedicated link between the TM programme and the Deanery

plan. This would be funded as part of the Transforming Mission project for the lifetime of the project (until 2025) and so be of no cost to the Deanery. Beyond 2025, the self-funding element of the TM project may be able to continue this work.

Pioneers will not just be based in Truro. We will be seeking to raise new funds to appoint a Pioneer Minister on the Roseland (£25,000) asking the Diocese to partner with us in the appointment providing a house at Gerrans.

CROSS DEANERY - STRAND TWO

Ministry to the poor

It is sad to say that, in order to future-proof this plan, it is necessary to take account of the deteriorating financial circumstances of many families over the coming years. Increasing fuel costs, increasing food costs, and increasing inflation are very likely to push many more individuals into poverty.

The church in Powder deanery believes that it has a special place in ministering to those in need. The Social Justice minister post under Transforming Mission is already orientated in this direction, and this plan seeks funding for two 0.5 stipendiary posts through LICF funding to support this effort, again across the deanery but inevitably primarily focused on the Truro area. This funding is sought from the Diocese under LICF for a period of three years in the first instance.

One 0.5 post is combined with the 0.5 stipendiary post in the Roseland. This would have a deanery-wide remit in regards of service to the poor, focusing initially on the Hendra, Malabar and Trelander areas of Truro and expanding to take in pockets of deprivation in the Roseland and Probus. It is likely that this work would be closely allied to the work of the current Social Justice Minister role, funded under TM and due to terminate in 2025.

The other stipendiary 0.5 post funded under LICF would support this work and offer distinct support to those with debt and addiction issues. The bid would be for the Diocese to support this post for a minimum of three years.

CROSS DEANERY - STRAND THREE

Creation care

Many churches and the Cathedral, under the auspices of Rev. Canon Elly Sheard, are already working hard in this area but the Deanery recognises that there is a long way to go. Some churches are only beginning to address this issue, and it is believed that a Deanery-wide programme, where those who are more advanced can encourage and advise those further behind, can move this agenda forward more quickly.

There is excitement and enthusiasm for this in many quarters and it is believed by harnessing

this energy churches and congregations can move quickly forward.

CROSS DEANERY - STRAND FOUR

Global church

The Deanery seeks to formalise and strengthen link with the local church. In the first instance we will do this through advancing nascent links with Compassion UK in dealing with our sisters and brothers in Kenya. By marshalling all the churches across the deanery, a more substantial and influential relationship can be built both with the charity and the receiving Church of Kenya. This would not seek to replace other international links that individual churches may be involved in but would supplement this and bring added weight to one particular initiative.