

## **PARISH VACANCY BRIEFING – 01/12/20**

As you know, our Vicar Peter will be leaving us soon to take up a new appointment in the Church, during January 2021. Peter's resignation has set in motion a formal process for finding a replacement. We want to explain a little about this process here: there is some church jargon involved, but hopefully this will make sense!

First, while it is with a great sense of sadness that we see Peter, Ruth and the family leave us, life must go on and we are very fortunate that Reverend Chris will assume responsibility for the spiritual leadership within the Parish during the interregnum (the period between one incumbent/vicar leaving and the other starting). It is important that we give Chris our full support so that we may continue to grow together.

As a Church of England Church, the process of selecting a new incumbent is overseen by our Diocese, in partnership with our PCC. The patron of our parish, the Bishop of Chester, has delegated responsibility for managing the appointment of Peter's replacement to the Archdeacon, (the Venerable Dr Mike Gilbertson). As required, to start off the process, Archdeacon Mike chaired a special meeting of the PCC on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020. The Diocesan template for the agenda in this situation was followed. Full minutes from the PCC meeting are available as normal, however, to summarise, after opening in prayer and explaining the process and PCC responsibilities:

- It was noted that we had received notification of the vacancy from the Diocesan designated officer (Director of Human Resources)
- The wardens, Bob Fiddaman and Robert Moots, were appointed as representatives from the PCC to act in connection with the vacancy.
- It was decided that the vacancy would be advertised initially electronically (on the Chester Diocesan and Church of England websites) with the option of advertising in the Church Times later, if required.
- In relation to agenda item on the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1983 the Archdeacon explained the current practice whereby if, on theological grounds only, a parish wished to limit applications to men only, this measure would be triggered and there would be a discussion with the Bishop. The alternative is to accept applications from both male and female candidates. It was noted that a previous PCC had considered that appointments should be open to both men and women however, after

discussion, it was decided that the PCC needed a little time to reflect, pray and seek the views of the wider Church Family on this.

- Four volunteers were identified to produce the first draft of a parish profile. An important part of the process of identifying a new incumbent is the production of a Parish Profile which sets out the values, ambitions and hopes for the church family. It describes the parish, the church activity and what characteristics and gifts we may wish to identify in a new incumbent. It is a little like a job profile and description.

The four members of the PCC who kindly volunteered to produce the draft Profile represent a broad age range, come from both ends of the Parish and comprise three women and one man. It is hoped that the PCC will have sight of an early draft to consider before Christmas.

- Two PCC members volunteered to produce the Fact Sheet. The fact sheet is a short summary that describes key aspects of the Church, including finances, age distribution and services

Subsequent to the meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> November, Archdeacon Mike has kindly offered to chair a further meeting of the PCC on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020 to focus on the potential for the post to be open to both men and women and has arranged for two speakers, both Evangelical to present a brief case and answer questions:

- Nikki Eastwood (Vicar of St. Mary's Upton), will speak in favour of the egalitarian view, with women and men serving together in Ordained Ministry
- Mike Smith (Vicar of St. John's Hartford) who will speak from a complementarian view, where men have overall leadership.

After their short presentations and questions, the speakers will leave, to allow the PCC to consider its position with the aim of reaching a consensus. The outcome of this will feed into the parish profile and Person Specification.

We know there is a spectrum of views and opinions on many issues in our Church Family and we are keen to listen to your thoughts. If you would like to make your views known, please send them to the Parish Office, for forwarding to PCC members. Please understand it may not be possible to reply to all who submit comments but be assured that they will be taken into consideration.

We will continue to issue briefings, to keep you informed of progress, as milestones are achieved. Please remember us all in your prayers, especially that we can discern who God is choosing to lead us and that we are open to what is right, without preconceived and blinkered ideas.

**Bob Fiddaman | Rob Moots**

**Church Wardens.**