



Parish Vacancy Brief 14/12/20

Following the special meeting of November 12th, mentioned in our previous briefing, the PCC held a follow up meeting on Thursday December 10th to discuss whether the vacancy should be open both men and women applicants or to men only. Apologies were received from four members who were unable to attend.

The two invited speakers, recommended by Archdeacon Mike Gilbertson, presented their respective views. Nikki Eastwood, Vicar of St. Mary's Upton, spoke in favour of men and women working together in ordained ministry, (theologically referred to as the Egalitarian view). Mike Smith, Vicar of St. John's Hartford, presented the complementarian view, where men have overall responsibility for leadership. Both speakers come from evangelical traditions and are known to members of our Church: Mike spoke at our last Parish weekend away and Nikki, whose church is in the same deanery as ours, is a good friend and colleague of Peter Froggatt.

Archdeacon Mike chaired the first session, when the speakers made their presentations, referring to Biblical texts in support of their views, and took questions from the PCC. After this, the speakers were thanked for their contributions and left the meeting. The talks from both speakers were recorded and are available to the Church Family as well as the PCC members that were unable to attend the meeting. Interestingly both speakers emphasised the point that whoever was appointed, the most important factor was that the person was bible based and mission focused to meet the Parish needs and vision.

There followed a discussion amongst the PCC members chaired by the Church Wardens, with the Archdeacon present for advice as required. The PCC were made aware of the views of Church Family members submitted following the publication of our initial briefing and following communications from other PCC members.

Following discussions, during which contrasting views were constructively and respectfully expressed, it became clear that a consensus could not be reached. It was then agreed to hold a non-binding straw poll on the question "Do you agree to the applications for the post of incumbent being open to both male and female applicants..... Yes or No"

The poll took into account the views of those unable to attend, where they had been expressed.

Some members felt it was important to have more time to reflect, pray further and look up some of the biblical texts mentioned before making a decision. It was therefore agreed to postpone the final decision until midnight on Monday 14th December, by which time all members of the PCC were asked to formally advise the PCC secretary of their preference. Both wardens abstained from the straw poll and the final vote, in order to maintain an unbiased position.

Archdeacon Mike complimented the PCC on the manner in which they conducted the business and their depth of biblical knowledge. He then closed the meeting with prayer.

Following the submission of preferences to the secretary the decision of the PCC is in favour of the advert being open to both Men and Women.