

## **Minutes of the Congregational meeting held at the Wilson Room on Tuesday 5 December with Acting Archdeacon of Surrey, Martin Breadmore.**

Churchwarden Tom Murphy firstly welcomed everyone, and particularly Revd. Martin Breadmore (MB), thanking him for his swift work and also for agreeing the new model of a House for Duty priest, which halves the parish share, as well as backdating that change to the start of October.

MB, after having started in prayer, then spoke.

He explained that when there is a parish vacancy the model of ministry is revisited, and is frequently related to what the parish can afford. In a 'House for Duty' model, the priest lives in the vicarage (only paying bills), and in return works 2 days plus a Sunday. The process for finding a new priest is the same despite the model for ministry. In the meantime, the churchwardens are 'in charge' as well as the Area Dean (Roy Woodhams) - the 'sequestrators'.

MB suggested that we should encourage and give help to our churchwardens as much as possible at this time, as they are consequently more burdened than normal. The process for finding a priest is the same throughout the country and laid out in statute.

The first task is to create a 'parish profile' which is a descriptive piece that describes what the parish is like, describes the communities, strengths and weaknesses, whether we have schools, the geography and so on.

The second is to create a 'statement of needs' - the hopes, the vision, the dreams as three churches that work together. A good question to ask is 'where do we hope to be in 3-5 years time?'

The third is the person specification and flows directly out of '2'.

In January, an incumbent will visit us and give the PCC a 'vacancy vision workshop' to tease this all out. After this meeting, the three churches will have to put the Parish Profile together. The Parish Profile is a PCC document but realistically should only be done by 4-6 of the PCC, as a small working party, as it otherwise too cumbersome. Their work goes back to the PCC who comment and refine it. MB and RW would also like to see this document.

The Parish Profile is what any potential applicant would download from the CofE website. Although it is a PCC doc, it is important that other voices contribute, perhaps from the community or schools.

Once the Profile is completed, the PCC holds a 'Section 11 meeting' and they have to decide 3 things: They agree the final version, after which it cannot be altered; they decide whether the post is advertised or not; and lastly they appoint 2 parish representatives from the PCC who will go on the shortlist and interview panel. Generally speaking it is 2 churchwardens.

If the PCC chooses to advertise, they will be in contact with Sarah Bolton from Church House who is in charge of appointments and she will liaise with the Church Times. You can purchase advertising space which is for 4 weeks, or until the post is filled. Although the latter is obviously more expensive it is the more usual route.

All applications for the position will be received by S Bolton who sends all applicants to the shortlist panel. The panel consists of Bishop Andrew (as Bishop and Patron), Mr Evelyn (as patron ), Catherine Mabuza as the Archdeacon of Surrey; Roy Woodhams as Area Dean, and the 2 parish reps.

MB noted that every single applicant will be forwarded to the panel, who then meet approximately one week after the closing date, to decide who to interview.

They will choose to interview 3-4 people maximum and perform these interviews some 2-3 weeks later. The Parish reps will be asked to write 4 questions which are relevant to the parish, and interviews are held over two days. On the first day in the afternoon they will tour the area, look at the vicarage, meet any necessary people, then in the evening meet with the PCC over a bring and share meal. This is the space for the candidates to ask questions rather than for the PCC grill the candidates. Any reflections on the candidates from people they have met during the day are collated.

The formal interviews occur on the second day, and typically last an hour. Each candidate is treated equally. They are asked the same panel questions plus the ones from the parish reps. Each will preach a short homily. The panel will deliberate and hopefully one candidate will rise to the surface. Unanimity in the panel is sought. It is possible to have a future meeting if further 'digging deeper' is required.

This entire process is repeated if no-one suitable emerges.

The reflections are brought in once the candidate is 'chosen' - hopefully there is agreement!

Once one has been chosen, the patron will offer the post verbally. If the response is a yes then there will be a formal letter, a formal acceptance, and then a choreographing of announcement with the candidate's parish and our own. Generally three months' notice is required. A couple of weeks would be needed for moving and settling in, and then a couple more for licensing. Thus from the moment of an announcement of acceptance to the actual starting of the role, is approximately 4 months.

The timeline is roughly advertise after Easter, interview in June, start September/October.

#### Questions from the floor

1. The parish has close links with the school. How can we encourage the school to be involved in the vacancy process?

Answer – On the first afternoon of interviews, it might make sense for each candidate to go into the school and meet the head, possibly a group of pupils. Ask the head what they are looking for in a parish priest. Get some feedback.

2. What is the track record of 'house for duty'?

Answer – It is very common across the country and increasingly in the Guildford diocese. It a very standard post within the Church of England.

3. Can a newly ordained person apply?

Answer – Once you are ordained you serve a 3-4 year curacy, then you can apply for a post. With a house for duty it is unlikely that you would get a new priest, for

financial reasons, given that they receive no income, just the house. More likely you would get someone thinking of retiring, or someone who has a spouse who earns.

4. What is the pool of people for such a post?

Answer – you only need one person! Sometimes you only get one candidate. We will have to wait and see.

5. What will happen to the Rectory in the meantime?

Answer –If possible it is better to rent it out. However, this is Andrew Johnson's (Head of Property) decision.

6. With an elderly congregation who are unable to make the steps up from the carpark, it would be very useful to have access to the Rectory parking again. Would this be an issue?

Answer – You must put that in the parish profile. Make that need clear.

7. What is the nature of the appointment? Can you get rid of them?

Answer – in short, no, which is why the process is vitally important. You don't want to make a mistake in the hiring. Clergy retirement is at 70.