

Renewing Ministry

Update

Spring 2005

Moving towards the goal

Since 2003 many have been meeting and working together to realise a vision for revitalising the way in which churches bring Christian care and witness to communities throughout Derbyshire.

In order to meet the challenge of living and sharing the Good News on tighter resources, a restructuring programme has been taking place within the churches in this Diocese under the project banner Renewing Ministry.

The project aims to release churches from the restraints of lack of time, money and resources, which hinder mission and service to communities. The project proposals ask churches to work in partnership with one another serving communities larger than a single parish. Communities that churches may collectively serve are being called Mission and Ministry Areas (MMAs).

This newsletter brings you the latest news on how the Renewing Ministry project is shaping up.

First launches of MMAs in 2005

During 2005 MMAs will come into being. The first step will be the appointment of Area Vicars, i.e. those members of the clergy who will lead and co-ordinate the mission and ministry of an MMA. It is expected that they will be identified and in place soon after Easter.

As soon as MMAs feel ready, they can 'launch'. The Diocesan Worship Advisory Group is working on a liturgy that can be used for an introductory service if wished. This liturgy will be available to clergy as a Toolkit document during the summer months.

The financial workings of MMAs may not start until 2008, though there will be shadow figures available from 2006.

Renewing Ministry Project Officer The Rev'd Michael Mitton is pleased with progress to date: "We now have plans in place to meet the challenges of the reduced number of available stipendiary clergy from 2008 onwards. Parishes have more than risen to this challenge, and we now move forward with God to work at new ways of delivering mission and ministry to the areas we serve," he said.

Plans 'beginning to settle'

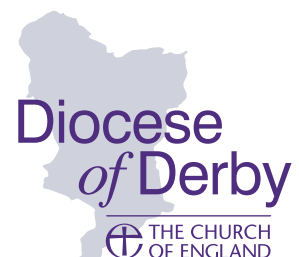
During the final months of 2004, plans for Mission and Ministry Areas were being finalised. By December the plans were offered to the Bishop of Derby for his approval and he wrote to all parishes in response to their plans. There are still a few parishes where the plans are awaiting completion, but for the great majority of parishes in the Diocese, MMA plans are now clear and settled.

In all there will be around 60 Mission and Ministry Areas. These range greatly in size: some are single-parish MMAs, many are new units of mission and ministry where several parishes are coming together, and in some cases the MMAs will be large gatherings of

parishes. For example, Ashbourne Deanery has opted for a single deanery MMA, dividing its parishes into subgroups to help clarify areas of ministerial responsibility by each of the stipendiary clergy. Most of Repton Deanery will operate as a single MMA with subgroups, and they have exciting plans for working with the Methodist church.

A full description of how MMAs are mapped and shaped will be published later in the Spring in time for the Archdeacons' visitations.

We are now entering a training phase of the project. Over the coming months there will be various training events and more specific Toolkit papers to help MMAs come into being.



Find out what God is doing - and then join in!

What people say

It has never been presumed that change brought about by Renewing Ministry would be easy. Change is demanding, testing and sometimes complex. But it brings new opportunities for growth in faith and discipleship. Here are just some comments about Renewing Ministry from people in the Diocese who are looking ahead with hope.

"I will not pretend I am not looking forward to a rest in my retirement, but I am very sad to be leaving at this point when so much good work is in progress...work which I would want to follow through."

The Rt Rev'd Jonathan Bailey
Bishop of Derby, retiring May 2005

"Some things, loved and cherished and depended upon, will die - but let them die. There will be sorrow, and mourning and uncertainty. Yet, "joy comes in the morning" - God is a God of becoming, of renewal, of new life - and his grace is free!

"It is not our churches which have to be attractive, not our ministers who have to be superhuman. It's God who is attractive - we just have to sometimes get out of the way, letting him leapfrog over us, and join in the game. Let us pray, but also, in that delightful quality in Proverbs 8: let us play. Not take our ball home, but move the goalposts together and sit lightly to the result, with God, our source and guide and goal."

Sr Julie, the Convent of the Holy Name
Oakwood

"Just because we might only just be able to afford one or two ordained people in our area today, doesn't mean to say that we shouldn't aim to employ all sorts of other people in the future, such as administrators, evangelists and youth workers. Hopefully this possibility will not remain theoretical and the appropriate legal and financial frameworks will be put in place for MMAs to staff the mission they foresee. This to me will be the test of the credibility of those leading us into MMAs. We all have a long way to journey yet. However, if we can, in our many different ways, journey, learn and consider the many issues before us together, I am sure we will be stronger for it."

Andrew Race, Churchwarden
St Peter's, Belper

"The leviathan is stirring! The membership, networks and commitment of the Anglican Church are the envy of other voluntary organisations. It has tremendous potential if its efforts and resources can be focused effectively at local levels. Let's see what we can achieve now!

Dawn Lonsdale, Chair of the House of Laity
Diocesan Synod

Available resources

Michael Mitton has developed a range of resources to help parishes through the transition to MMA formation and operation. This includes a series of help sheets which together form a Renewing Ministry Toolkit. The latest of these is called 'Getting Started' and provides the nuts and bolts of launching and operating within an MMA.



Photo by: Tim Gossling, Derby Church Net

The Rev'd Michael Mitton
Renewing Ministry
Project Officer

Toolkit documents, along with all other available resources and background information, are available from:

Sharron Howarth
The Diocesan Council for
Developing Discipleship &
Ministry,
Derby Church House,
Full Street,
Derby, DE1 3DR

or can be downloaded from the diocesan web site.

See www.derby.anglican.org and click on the Renewing Ministry logo on the home page.



Find out what God is doing - and then join in!