

Ginger Group meeting 2015-07-25

apologies: PoB, ND, RR

present: DW, FW, PW, (Kate, lay parish council)?, JY, JY, JB, PB, CMcD, RD, LW, AW, RP

email from ND

Conor approached the diocese directly - contacted Tom King

- unable to give fully comprehensive answers as many decisions are down to the bishop, but had been well briefed wrt the state of the property in Bardfield.

- some discussion of experiences renting properties within the diocese

- suggestion to bring some sort of solution which we could bring to the diocese, supported by the parishioners, unable to make decisions about rentals until the larger decision is made about the longer term direction

observation that 6 month rolling contracts for rentals are fairly standard

A plan showing what the spiritual & financial forecast looks like

Observation/reminder that we are one parish with two Mass Centres.

Fr. Andrew Headon - episcopal vicar for administration - contacted Damian in the knowledge of Ginger, Deanery & professional experience

first meeting of diocesan planning group, Brentwood last Monday:

Bishop Alan

Chair: Andrew Headon pp of Ilford (COO)

Fr. Kevin, Leigh on Sea, vicar general

Fr. Tom Saunders, episcopal vicar for evangelisation

Tim (first winner, of apprentice)

3-4 others, cabinet office, civil servants, lay people, etc.

Crises:

1. Financial - £100,000s debt

- money-saving, closed missions, starting in the curia - starting with the centre, get their own house in order

2. Crisis of clergy sustainability

- 10 yrs' time 3 priests for whole north Essex deanery

3. quinquennial report

bishop has to balance "vision for evangelisation" but also to get financial affairs in order. some lack of alignment present both in terminology and in perspectives.

evangelisation initiative: proclaim15

administration initiative: "the 72" - champions across ~80 parishes to identify problems and build strategy

Bishop to gather clergy again round October to get them on-board. Some discussion of cultural and language barriers.

points (re)raised about twinned diocese, bringing foreign priests or religious orders and whether that would be

we face a deanery challenge rather than a parish one

reminder that the school in saffron walden would potentially be interested in a merger between dunmow, thaxted, bardfield, HBO - benefit from economies of scale

discussion of experiences of being part of a larger parish - ease of worship, social aspects, change

FW raised the rising populations in e.g. Saffron Walden driving reductions in catchment areas for schools.

RR willing to write a letter to parishioners explaining the serious situation the parish is in.

- to include what we're doing
- why we're doing it
- available options
- town hall meeting after Mass

DISPLAY BOARD

- short term income plan
- long term development plan

whatever we do next should certainly be fixing the problems but more importantly directly attached to the root causes of the issues - e.g. to make it attractive for vocations

Should attempt to estimate ballpark figures for rebuilding a church / school

- asset costs rather than "plate" revenue
- also Clare, Haverhill, Stansted may provide representative costs

DSPG next meeting - Thursday 1st October

Diocesan press release 21/6/2015 "Diocese restructures to invigorate its mission"

AW to contact a couple of general builders with no commitment regarding ballpark costs for refurb priest's residence.