

Ginger Group meeting Notes:
Saturday 12th August 2017, 11.00am
At the Church of the Holy Spirit, Great Bardfield

Notes (Agenda in black font, notes in blue font)

Present: Fr Richard, Linda, Robina, Janet, Josie, Anne, Alf, Neil, Michele, Fiona, Damian (chairing)

Apologies: Phoebe, Jo & Pauline, Amanda, Mary, Roger, Celeste & Phil, Megan, (Adele)

1. Opening Prayer
Robina, at Fr Richard's request, recited a prayer to the Holy Spirit – 'Come Holy Spirit, Fill the Hearts of your Faithfull..., etc'
2. Notes from last meeting & matters arising
Notes not sent last meeting as GG Newsletter replaces
3. Update: 7th August 'Draft Working Plan' paper to Stewards of the Gospel from Steve Webb, Diocesan Director of Development (available on Brentwood website from Monday 7th August)
Copies printed for GG Meeting participants. Presented two large boards with the entire 28 page Draft Working Plan. One version to be located at Great Bardfield. If Thaxted have room, a second copy of the boards can be made for there. Janet to advise requirements.

Reminder that the **Draft Working Plan** '*Working Together to Evangelise Our Diocese*' (Summer 2017) was published on 7th August, and is now available in booklet form in parish churches and online at <http://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/news/>

4. Feedback from DSPG Meeting 13th July 2017
Incorporated into other points.

The message is that reduction down to 3 priests for the North Essex Deanery is 'probable', rather than 'possible', so the need to plan for this contingency is as urgent as ever!

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Seeing in the **Draft Working Plan** that our parish does not obviously 'qualify' for a priest out of the pool of declining numbers of priests, according to the defined criteria of (a) proximity to a hospital, (b) proximity to a school, (c) volume of parishioners in congregation, or (d) value of plate offering contributions, then what alternative compelling case to have a priest assigned to our parish can the parish make, whether either for a 'working' pre-retirement priest, or alternatively for a retired priest(s).

Regarding the seeming suddenness of 'decision day', Damian reminded the meeting that the Ginger Group has now been working since early 2015, over two years, so we have had plenty of opportunity to consult internally, and to formulate a Formal Parish Proposal.

Damian has prepared a spreadsheet showing the key dates of meetings, events, decisions, milestones and documents relating to the diocesan change initiative, dating back to early 2015. This spreadsheet shows three parallel work-streams at Diocesan, Deanery and Parish level, and the interfaces between those work-streams. Displayed on a cork board next to whiteboard.

5. Discussion: sharing of perspectives - participants at this meeting take opportunity to share their so-called 90 second Personal Proposals (see May Meeting Notes 5.a)

Alf read his Personal Proposal at the meeting, which was recorded live for upload to the GG DropBox. Amanda also emailed theirs earlier today, which will also be uploaded to GG DropBox. Those who have not yet provided their Personal Proposal, and who still wish to do so (whether recorded, written, or spoken) are encouraged to do so while the window is still open, and certainly before the next (additional) Ginger Group Meeting, now arranged for Saturday 16th September.

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The GG Members who were tasked with approaching non-present GG members at the June meeting, are requested once again to follow up with their 'list' of folks, encouraging them to contribute with their 90 second proposal, before the 'window closes'.

6. Starting merging of 90 second Personal Proposals into Formal Parish Proposal – discussion, and conclusion timelines awareness...

Each Ginger Group member is invited to not only present their own **Personal Proposal**, but also to look at all the other GG member **Personal Proposals**. Then, based on this overview, each GG member is now invited to summarise into a few short bullet points their understanding of what the **Formal Parish Proposal** should contain/ include/ state. Please send these bullets to Damian asap, who will synthesise the various bullet points into a draft **Formal Parish Proposal**.

This draft **Formal Parish Proposal** will be sent to the Parish Council, in time for the next PC Meeting scheduled for Thursday 7th September 2017. This gives PC members some time to review the draft. Then the **Formal Parish Proposal** will be finalized on Saturday 14th October at a combined Ginger Group Meeting/ Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting, planned at today's GG Meeting.

7. Communications: Ginger Group Newsletter draft to finalise.

The **Ginger Group Newsletter** was read out and approved, with requests to reinforce the urgency that all parishioners should read it. The **GG Newsletter** is printed onto two A3 onto pages on a whiteboard with colourful felt pen comments around it to draw people's attention to its salient key points. This board will be positioned at the rear of Gt Bardfield church, next to A4 double sided printed version of the same, for people

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to take away.

(If we have enough copies printed and time to do so, we would also staple copies to the normal Sunday parish newsletters. It is also attached to this email. GG Members present volunteered also to distribute these GG Newsletters as people leave Mass.

8. Robina item: Mission!

Robina made several creative and positive suggestions about measures the parish could be taking to reinvigorate various aspects of parish life, in support of the wider diocesan strategy of **Renewal**, which runs in parallel to **Restructuring**. We had a lively discussion as to where these items are best progressed, and agreed that there is a healthy overlap between Parish Council roles and GG roles in this regard.

9. Any other points not covered above:

a. Stewards Retreat Day Saturday 14th October 2017

b. SHIPS diocesan Stewardship prayer initiative

Tuesday 20th June

There is a Stewards of the Gospel meeting at Braintree Parish church this evening after the 6.00pm Mass, at 7.15pm in their parish hall, to which neighbouring parish Stewards are invited. Linda and Alf expressed intention to participate, as well as Fiona and Damian going.

10. Date of next GG meeting(s) (Sat 14th October 2017)

Due to the pressure of timelines and the need to finalise the Formal Parish Proposal before the mid October diocesan deadline, we arranged an extra GG Meeting in September: Saturday 16th September, 11.00am Great Bardfield.

The following meeting on Saturday 14th October remains, but will be coupled with a new, extra,

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'Extraordinary' Parish Council Meeting, so that the Formal Parish Proposal can be completed, approved and finalized for submission to Brentwood.

- Closing Prayer, & thanks
Fr Richard closed with a prayer from St Ignatius of Loyola. Meeting closed at 13.10h.

The A3 version of the Ginger Group August Newsletter.

GINGER GROUP: AUGUST Newsletter 2017

GINGER GROUP Newsletter Summer 2017

The Ginger Group is our parish response to the diocesan **Stewards of the Gospel** (once in a generation) diocesan strategic planning and change initiative. We are an open group, tasked by Fr Richard, to address the issues confronting all parishes in the diocese, arising from the Bishop's lead on change for the areas of Evangelisation and Administration.

Drivers for change include the predicted changing demographic situation in our clergy population, with a community of priests declining in numbers, whilst conversely the number of Catholics within the diocese is increasing. In parallel the diocese – including our own parish, as identified in the recent **Quinquennial Report** – faces financial challenges, the essence of which questions the affordability of some existing church premises in relation to their plate offerings.

The **Stewards of the Gospel** change initiative involves all parishes in the diocese, seeking to work together across parish boundaries, anticipating likely changes, influencing the design of proposals and plans on a consultative basis, and shaping the destiny of the diocese and parish life.

Although the diocesan change process has been running for over a year, we have been warned that many parishioners are 'dramatically underestimating' the probable degree of change coming our way in the diocese, and we are being encouraged to 'get real'. Instead of feeling the situation as a threat, we are invited rather to embrace the challenge as an opportunity for growth and development.

The Bishop has created a new role – **Diocesan Director of Development** – a salaried professional role, and appointed Steve Webb, who took up the role in April 2017. Steve has been active in bringing the disciplines of organisational development, change management and professional planning to the **Stewards of the Gospel** initiative, all within the ethos of Catholic principles and spirituality.

The spirit of the process set out by Bishop Alan is one of consultation and discernment between the lay of the diocese and their clergy, rather than a top-down style. Typical of this method is the convening of conferences on a quarterly basis, to which all **Stewards of the Gospel** and all **Clergy of the Diocese** are invited to attend, participate and support. The most recent of these conferences was in Brentwood on Saturday 24th June, and the next conference will be Saturday 30th September.

So far Steve has outlined a method of working, and a timetable of milestones and deliverables within that method. In summary, the key points are as follows:

TIMEFRAMES

- Short term: Now (summer 2017) to 2019
- Medium term: 2020 to 2025
- Long Term: 2025 to 2035

OUR VISION

Our vision is of a diocese working together with joy to evangelise our diocese, recognising the Church's deepest nature and relying on the productive dialogue between priests and people.

OBJECTIVES

- Maximise the opportunities to evangelise our diocese
- Maximise sacramental provision

In order to attain our Vision, we shall need to work together to achieve two objectives.

STRATEGY

- The Renewal of Our Diocese
- The Restructuring of Our Diocese

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GINGER GROUP Newsletter Summer 2017

So far the all parishes of the diocese have taken part in answering a wide-ranging **Parish Questionnaire**, the results of which were submitted during the Offertory at the Chrism Mass during Holy Week at Brentwood Cathedral, April 2017. These **Questionnaire Responses**, including our own, have now been read, scrutinised and analysed, and discussed and debated at the **Diocesan Strategic Planning Group (DSPG)** meetings which take place monthly at Brentwood Cathedral, with Bishop Alan present along with his team of **Episcopal Vicars**, and a small group of lay DSPG members.

Steve's role was to read and analyse the **Questionnaire Responses** and to respond with his **Preliminary Observations** in June 2017. From those observations he crafted a draft **'Working Plan'** which he presents as the **First Consultation Proposal on the Renewal and Restructuring of our Diocese**. This proposal was published and made available in hard copy in parishes for all to read on Monday 27th August 2017, and also online on the **Brentwood Diocese Website** to freely download and read. The title of this document is: **'Working Together to Evangelise Our Diocese'** (Summer 2017).

The **Draft Working Plan** will also be presented at the next **Stewards of the Gospel and Clergy Day** on Saturday 30th September 2017. Then, following an autumn season of continuing consultation, prayer and refinement work, the polished next version of the plan will be presented to the wider diocese parishes as the **First Proposal** during Advent 2017.

Then there follows a period of review by the parishes, reflection, prayer and discussion. Parishes have been asked to schedule formal meetings in January 2018 (our **Ginger Group** meeting is set for Saturday 07th January 2018), so that parish feedback on the **First Proposal** can be collected and then presented back to Brentwood DSPG in February 2018. Using that feedback, the DSPG and DDeD will shape the **First Proposal** into a **First Draft Final Plan** after Easter 2018. The goal is to build up to publication on the Feast of Christ the King 25th November 2018 of the **Final Formal Proposal for the Renewal and Restructuring of our Diocese**! *The Vision for the Diocese of Brentwood 2019*.

What do we need to do in Great Bardfield and Thatched parish?

The **Ginger Group** is fully on board trying to align with and support the challenges the Bishop and our diocese clearly face. Having now completed our **Parish Questionnaire** and submitted our **Parish Questionnaire Response** on time, we now have the work to consider what our own parish proposal would look like. The way we have agreed to do that is that each GG member, having read and reviewed our **Parish Questionnaire Response** booklet which is publicly available for all parishioners to read, will then reflect, pray, discern and discuss, so as to come up with initially their own individual so-called **Personal Proposal**. These are to be captured in a short 90 seconds film uploaded to a dedicated GG Dropbox where we can all see each other's **Personal Proposals**, irrespective of whether we can manage to attend all GG Meetings or not.

Informed with this collective understanding of each other's **Personal Proposals**, the GG members will then shape a **Formal Parish Proposal** to submit to the Parish Council for discussion, review and hopefully approval. Once a **Formal Parish Proposal** is settled upon, this will be sent to Brentwood DSPG before the end of September 2017, in time for its inclusion in the diocesan **First Proposal**.

Urgent next steps?

Meantime we are invited to give feedback on the now available diocesan **Draft Working Plan**, and to contribute with our own **Formal Parish Proposal** to the formation of the diocese's **First Proposal**. Quitting from the **Draft Working Plan**: We would be grateful for your answers to these questions (A, B & C) by 30 September 2017 and certainly no later than 21 October 2017. It is our hope and intention to take your responses to these questions and then to put forward a **First Formal Proposal** for the **Renewal and Restructuring of Our Diocese** in November 2017.

Thank you!

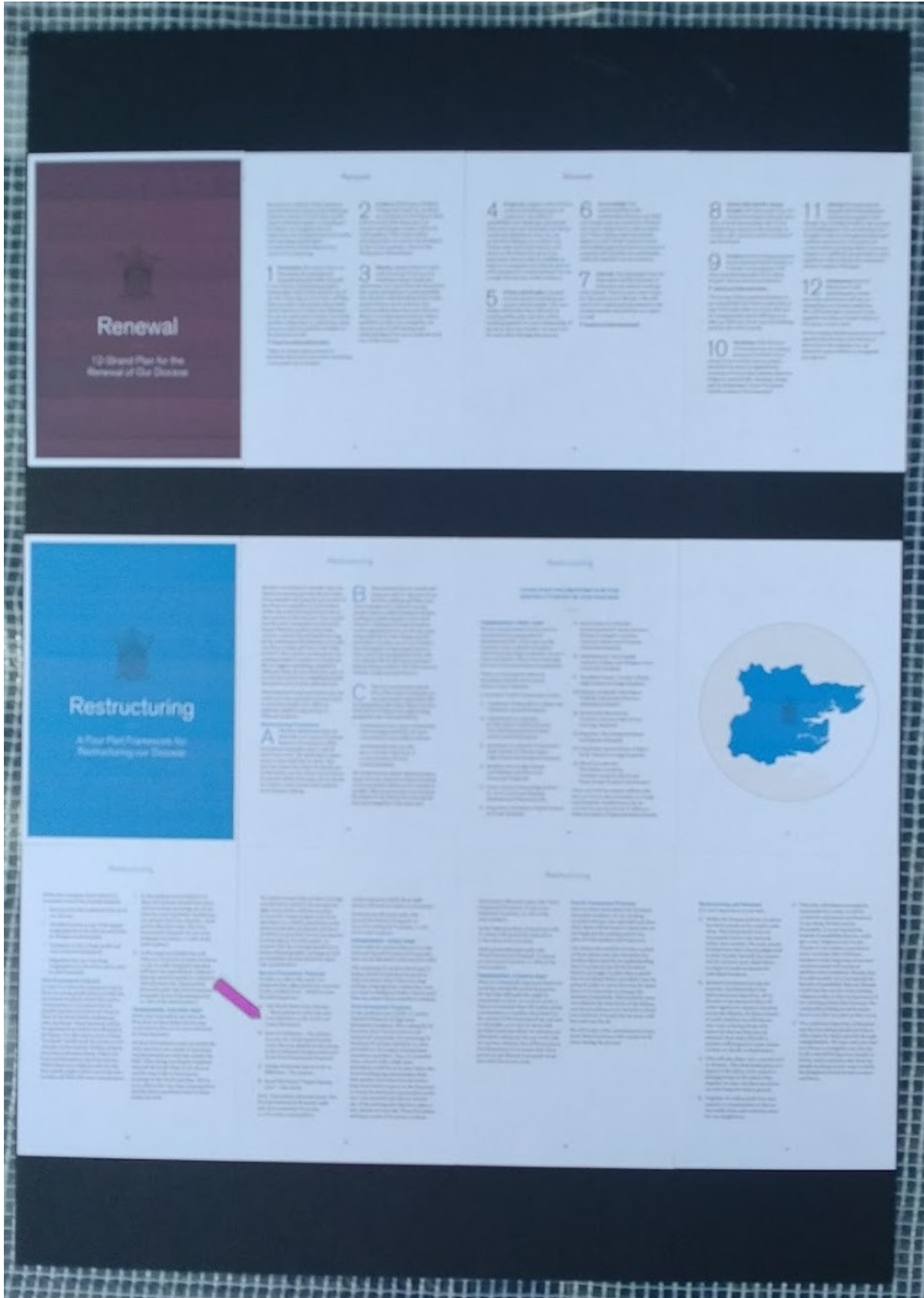
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Handwritten notes on the A3 version:

- GINGER GROUP: AUGUST Newsletter 2017** (Title)
- GINGER GROUP as parish "STEWARDS OF THE GOSPEL" role.** (Left margin)
- Diocesan CHANGE: PLANNING timeline & method** (Left margin)
- PLEASE READ ME!** (Yellow star sticker)
- STRATEGY HAS 2 ELEMENTS.** (Bottom left)
- GREAT JOB DONE ON PARISH Questionnaires** (Right margin, green box)
- GG need to offer Personal PROPOSALS** (Right margin, blue box)
- Need to create FORMAL PARISH PROPOSAL** (Right margin, blue box)
- Need to give our Feedback to Bishop on DRAFT WORKING PLAN** (Right margin, blue box)
- 90 secs!** (Right margin, blue text)
- BY END SEPT 2017!** (Bottom right)

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The Renewal and Restructuring Diocesan Strategy pages from the Draft Working Plan.



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Tucking in to Josie's World Class Rock Cakes!!

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