

The Diocese of Southwark - structures and strategy

Depending upon where we might be located we each have different views of the Diocese of Southwark, what makes it work and how it ticks.

We asked various people with roles within the Diocese to tell us something of what they do. As well as that we wanted to bring you up to date with some exciting developments which

are happening within the Diocese as a result of the Strategy for Ministry.

The work of the Diocesan Boards and Councils is detailed in the Annual Review each year but it is not always easy from a parish point of view to know how everything fits together.

Episcopal structure

The Episcopal structure of the Diocese (as most people will know) is that there is a Diocesan Bishop – who is the Rt Revd Christopher Chessun

at present and three Episcopal Areas: Kingston, Croydon and Woolwich. Each Area has an Area Bishop and two Archdeacons.

Kingston then has eight Deaneries each served by an Area Dean and Lay Chair and sometimes an Assistant Area Dean too. Woolwich has ten Deaneries and Area Deans and Lay Chairs and Croydon has eight.

Each Deanery is a grouping of a number of parishes. The exact

number varies from Deanery to Deanery. The smallest (Bermondsey and Dulwich) each have 7 parishes and the largest (Reigate) has 23 parishes. The clergy in the Deaneries meet together in Deanery Chapters in order to share ideas and work collaboratively and support each other. The clergy and elected lay people from each church in the Deanery meet together at the Deanery Synod.

The Deanery Synods can and

do put forward agreed motions for discussion by the Diocesan Synod and if agreed and where appropriate the Diocesan Synod can send these motions onto

the General Synod for debate. In this way we each can help to change things within the whole of the Church of England.

Synodical government

The Episcopal and administrative functions of the Diocese are brought together in Deanery and Diocesan Synods where clergy and laity can work together to facilitate debate and formulate policy. In addition, the Bishop's Council often debates things before they go to Diocesan Synod.

The Bishop's Council consists of the Bishop and his Area Bishops; the Archdeacons

and the Dean of Southwark as well as elected clergy and laity from Diocesan Synod representing each Archdeaconry. Diocesan Staff such as the Diocesan Secretary and the Deputy Diocesan Secretary and various Diocesan officers also attend the meetings as do the three Diocesan Canons who work at the Cathedral but have roles related to Ministerial Training, Vocation and Mission within the Diocese as a whole.

The Diocesan Board of Finance sets the budget for the Diocese for approval by the Diocesan Synod and seeks to raise that which is needed to fulfil the mission and ministry of the Diocese. The Board consists of the Bishops and Archdeacons, elected clergy from archdeacons and laity from Deaneries. The staff of the Board of Finance manage the budget, look after Diocesan properties and help parishes to think about their stewardship and communications.

At the Diocesan Office you will also find the staff of the Ministry and Training Committee which looks after safeguarding issues as well as all things related to authorised and licensed ministry and vocations to them. Other staff work on issues to do with Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns, Public Policy and Spirituality and Mission. Finally the Board of Education is responsible for the Diocese's work in schools and colleges of Further and Higher Education.

'Breathing new life into Deaneries'

Bishop Christopher has made 'breathing new life into Deaneries' one of the priorities for his episcopal ministry and a key part of the Strategy for Ministry. The other two priorities are 'renewal of vocation and discipleship' and 'empowering the laity'. They are inter-related. In considering these matters, we need to distinguish between 'Deaneries' and 'Deanery Synods'.

'Breathing new life into Deaneries' is important for two reasons. Deaneries offer opportunities for collaborative, flexible and imaginative working within a given geographical area. And they offer similar opportunities for learning from one another's different traditions in prayer, fellowship, and study. Thus they can be a catalyst for building up the body of Christ in love and unity for the work of mission.

'Breathing new life into Deaneries' is not going to happen by edict. It will happen as Christians in the parishes and Deaneries catch a vision that we are stronger together. Our catchwords should be 'Never alone' and 'Doing things differently'. Capacity will increase as more responsibility is given and shared. Already this is happening with the new Deanery Mission & Pastoral Working Groups. Effective and inspiring training, planned and delivered locally to meet local mission and ministry priorities, especially for lay people, will be key. We can learn much from what other Dioceses have done and are doing – including our link Diocese of Bergen in Norway.

The Deaneries Group has identified the 2014 elections of Lay Representatives to Deanery Synods as a crucial step along the way to



Adrian Greenwood
Chair of the Deaneries Group

breathing new life into Deaneries. So, we have produced a leaflet, which will be sent to all PCC secretaries, Area Deans and Lay Chairs. We would urge that this is widely distributed and discussed within parishes and Deaneries.

We need lay people to be elected who will catch the vision and help achieve Bishop Christopher's priorities for an empowered laity and lively Deaneries.

The Group is also inviting some Deaneries to become 'pathfinder Deaneries', which will identify and test new ways of working together, which can be shared with others.

'Breathing new life into Deaneries' is going to require a change of culture amongst us all. I believe that, as Bishop Christopher explains in his introduction to Strategy for Ministry, 'doing nothing is the only option that is not viable' (1.7.2). Instead, he notes a 'widespread desire to nurture an ethos of interdependence between parishes so that all may flourish' (1.8.2) Let's build on this, as we move forward together in mission and ministry, with faith, hope and love.

The Bishop

'So ... which is *your* church?' 'Today – this one.'

In one form or another, that is a conversation I have almost every week. One of the most profound of the many changes in my life since becoming Bishop of Croydon, is that I have become a nomad.

As a parish priest, I was of course rooted in one place, getting to know the people of the parish, there in their joys and sorrows, presiding over celebrations and times of grief. I had a church to look after (well, two, in fact), with all the opportunities for mission, and worries about the roof, that that entails. Now, I am at home in a different church every week, experiencing the full

variety of the worship of the Church of England, always meeting new people – and responding to questions like 'which is *your* church?'

My first year or so in ministry as a bishop has reinforced in my heart what I always knew in my head, that we only demonstrate the life of Christ if we do so as the body of Christ: Christianity is not a religion for individualists. And that is so particularly because none of us have all the gifts we need for our own life of faith: we are not self-sufficient. We need one another if we are to live out our own faith, and the more we are able to work together, to learn from one another, and to appreciate our

differences, the more we can become Christ-like.

It is a great privilege to work together with Bishop Christopher and all those who serve the Diocese as a whole, and with the people and clergy of the parishes. My hope is that what I offer in my own ministry will enable and encourage us to be the people of God for the world.

'Which is *your* church?' – I hope all churches are my church, not because I want to be in charge of them all, but because all churches exist in order to be a spiritually hospitable home for those who come, whether to stay for the rest of their lives, or as nomads whose home moves with them.



Bishop Jonathan,
Bishop of Croydon

The Archdeacon

Anthony Trollope memorably characterised an archdeacon as 'generally a gentleman who is well to do in the world and who can take a comfortable place in the county society among which it is his happy lot to live'. How times have changed!

What has not changed is that the archdeacon is an officer of the Bishop, who has authority in the archdeaconry which is a legal division of the Diocese for administrative purposes. The archdeacon has most to do with the parish clergy and with the churchwardens of the parishes

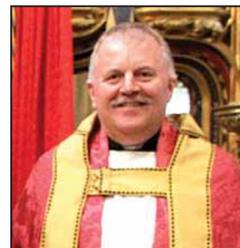
to enable them to take forward the mission of the church locally.

Archdeacons are there to ensure that parishes are administered properly and are usually but not exclusively seen in matters relating to the church building, to church finance and to supporting a parish during a vacancy and the process of appointment of clergy.

These issues matter because the mission of the church depends on good and unobtrusive order and is

hampered when there is not. It matters for instance (to take a small example) that church inventories are kept in order so that in the unhappy event of a theft or fire, a good record of church property can save time and energy at a traumatic moment in the life of the parish.

Archdeacons may need to be good administrators but it is essential that they are also priests exercising these gifts in the context of the ministry and mission of the church for the building of the Kingdom and the glory of God.



The Venerable Chris Skilton,
Archdeacon of Croydon

The Area Dean

The Area Dean is licensed by the Diocesan Bishop for a five year period to maintain a channel of information between the churches of the Deanery and the Archdeacon, Area Bishop and Diocesan Bishop. They are nominated by their peers and it is rather like being a Class Captain for a term!

Area Deans offer support and encouragement to the clergy of the Deanery and they are responsible for calling clergy together for regular meetings of Chapter and with the Lay Chair, organising meetings of Deanery Synod. Area Deans also, in agreement with the Archdeacon, carry out annual

inspections of churches in the Deanery and report back to the Archdeacon on the visits carried out.

In practice, the busiest time for an Area Dean is when there are vacancies in the Deanery.

At that time they maintain regular contact with the Churchwardens to ensure that worship, pastoral care and the day to day running of the parish continue effectively. The Area Dean is also involved in the appointment process but not directly involved in interviewing.

Area Deans are also licensed to carry out any other duties that the Area Bishop requires.

Following the Strategy for Ministry Report Area Deans have now become involved in Ministerial Development Reviews and, through the setting up of the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Working Groups, will play a part in recommending to the Area Bishop and Archdeacon changes to the pattern of ministry in the Deanery to ensure that available resources are used to best effect in resourcing mission.

Area Deans are also parish priests and balance their Area Dean duties with developing and growing their own churches.



Revd Christine Spurway,
Area Dean Croydon South



The Venerable Stephen Roberts

In 2012 three major strands of mission and ministry came together in the Diocese of Southwark: *Faith, Hope, Love: Bishop Christopher's Call to Mission, Signs of Growth* and then last November the Diocesan Synod gave its approval to the *Strategy for Ministry* report, a major piece of work carried out in the course of the year on behalf of the Bishop's Council and personally commissioned by Bishop Christopher.

Its purpose was to discern, in the light of the financial challenges facing the Diocese, how best to match ministry opportunities with available resources, and to provide a process and structure for discussing, forming and implementing a medium to longer term strategy for mission and ministry.

In doing so, the group drew on the results of a thorough process of consultation across the Diocese which informed and shaped its conclusions.

The Strategy for Ministry report begins with Bishop Christopher's vision for our shared calling and confidence in Christ. It sets out 25 recommendations, to be implemented over five years, and these recommendations are supported by six more detailed working papers, which are starting points for further work, each addressing a key area - prayer, stewardship of God's resources, mission and engagement, developing collaborative ministry, vocation and development and Deaneries.

Strategy for Ministry is no longer primarily a report. It is an on-going process, and the Bishop's Council appointed an Implementation Group to oversee the different aspects of the work and to monitor progress, chaired in its first year by the Archdeacon of Wandsworth, who has given regular updates to Diocesan Synod, Bishop's Council and the Diocesan Board of Finance.

You can read and download 'Strategy for Ministry' at: <http://tinyurl.com/csay54y>



The report notes the Bishop's strong commitment to maintaining as many stipendiary clergy as possible. However, in order to safeguard Diocesan finances for the future, the report recommends a carefully managed programme of post reductions - two per Episcopal Area per year for five years, a total reduction of 30 posts – which is now underway. The report makes clear that to reduce posts is not a strategy for ministry, so it asks the question "Where are we being called to discern new ways in which God is calling us?"

Some clear priorities have emerged: renewal of the gifts of the whole people of God, a re-energised focus on mission, including Mission Action Planning, and breathing new life into the Deaneries.

It was evident from the consultation process that the Fairer Shares Scheme should be reviewed, in order to ensure that the way in which the Share is raised and ministry resources allocated are theologically grounded, mission-focused and financially coherent. The report also recommended an external review and examination of performance and management of central Diocesan Administration.

Following the debate in Synod, which gave its strong backing to the report, the November 2012 meeting of Bishop's Council agreed a detailed Action Plan which sets out how the recommendations will be taken forward.

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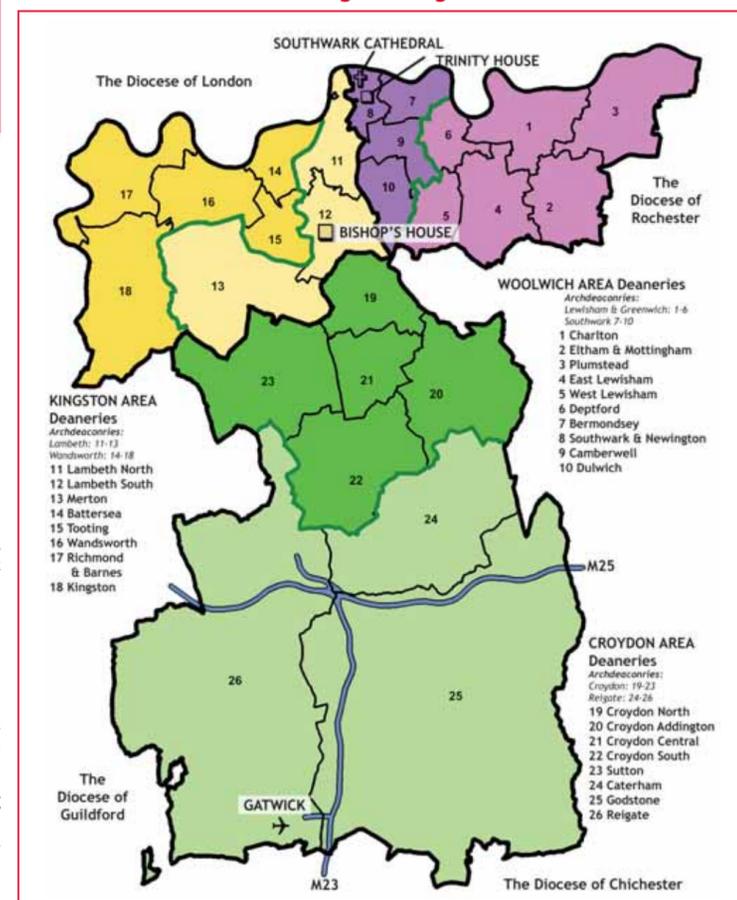
Adrian Greenwood is chairing a newly-formed Deaneries Group to promote the role of our Deaneries and to consider how to enhance lay discipleship and leadership in mission and ministry. Following debate at Diocesan Synod the group has produced material to raise awareness of the 2014 Deanery Synod elections and to encourage people to stand.

A Root and Branch Review of the Fairer Shares Scheme, fully representative in its membership of the breadth of the Diocese, and chaired by Canon Simon Butler, is now well under way.

An external review of Diocesan Administration has been undertaken and will report later this year.

The Strategy for Ministry report fulfilled its brief in providing the Diocese with a process and structure for discussing, forming and implementing a medium to longer term strategy for mission and ministry in the Diocese. The challenge now is to keep faith with the vision which the report promotes and the ongoing process of implementation and development which follows from that vision. If we can do that, Strategy for Ministry will bear fruit long into the future.

Of necessity this can only be a brief introduction to the Diocesan structure. If you'd like to know more please visit the Diocesan website www.southwark.anglican.org



Root & Branch: Is it Bearing Fruit?

For nearly a generation the *Fairer Shares* system has been the way the contribution each parish makes to the mission and ministry of the rest of the diocese is assessed. Over the years it has collected high levels of giving from virtually all the parishes of the diocese, based on the simple principle that the larger and wealthier the parish, the higher the contribution, and the smaller and poorer the parish, the lower the contribution.

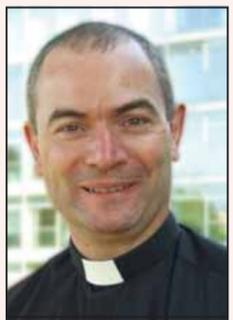
In recent years, in the light of slowly-decreasing levels of collection and the need to ensure that our system is fit for purpose in a changed context of mission and the workings of *Fairer Shares* it has seemed timely to look at the system afresh. A Review, entitled *Root & Branch*, is underway. It is a fundamental look at the way we share responsibility of paying for our clergy – by far the biggest cost the diocese faces – alongside some of the essential central costs to the running of Southwark (our bishops' stipends and expenses are paid separately by the Church Commissioners).

Root & Branch, whose members are mainly lay and clergy representatives from the parishes plus an archdeacon and a few diocesan officers, has been seeking to examine the principles upon which our churches should be asked to make their contribution. Biblical, doctrinal, financial and mission perspectives have all been taken into account. In a day of prayerful discernment, the *Root & Branch* group

established these principles in its mind and is now preparing a revised approach to the way we agree and collect each parish's contribution. As I write, the Review is preparing to report to both the Diocesan Board of Finance and the Bishop's Council, with its recommendations for the future. It is anticipated that these findings will be presented to November's Diocesan Synod.

Is *Root & Branch* bearing fruit? From my perspective as its Chair, I think the answer has to be 'yes'. There is no

magic solution, of course, no perfect system. But I hope that what we offer will be seen as a genuine Christian solution to a challenging problem, one where financial responsibility is shared, mission and church growth encouraged and, perhaps above all, our sense of God's generosity is deepened through generous giving. We are members one of another, according to Scripture. Sharing what God has given us, equitably and generously, is a way of showing that in a tangible way.



Canon Simon Butler,
Chair Root & Branch Review