
Chapter

1

Introduction

The Luton Review 2004

- 1.1 The Luton Review was set up by the Bishop of St Albans in order to take a long-term look at the shape of ministry and mission in the Deanery of Luton. The Review has sought to look at strengths and weaknesses within the parishes, and other ministries of the Deanery, and to assess the pastoral challenges and opportunities in Luton. *The aim of the Review has been to make recommendations which will help the Deanery to respond imaginatively and effectively to these challenges and opportunities.*
- 1.2 The Review Group has sought to ensure that its report
- is **informed**, intelligent and imaginative,
 - is based on **broad consultation** across the Deanery, with parishes, other interested parties and agencies,
 - celebrates the many and varied **strengths** and signs of life in the Deanery and enables these to be sustained and nourished,
 - recognises and addresses **challenges** and weaknesses.
 - and contains a **clear rationale** which is itself informed by good pastoral theology, and by a good understanding of the changing role of the church and faith in society.
- 1.3 The Review Group has also sought to ensure that the recommendations in the Review
- stand a good chance of being **owned by the Deanery**, (The review has been undertaken through a collaborative process of consultation and reflection. The recommendations flow naturally from this process.)
 - are both **practical and feasible**, (Alongside the imagination mentioned above, there needs to be a strong element of realism about the report. There is little point in making recommendations that stand no chance of being put into practice.)
 - and will, once implemented, **make a difference**. (The Review is not simply an academic exercise. It is set up in order to enable the ministry and mission of the Deanery of Luton to adapt, develop and continue to flourish.)
- 1.4 The **purpose** of the Luton Review, and the recommendations that have emerged out of it, is to provide a pastoral foundation and framework that will serve the Deanery well over the years ahead. The Review Group has sought to suggest, as the title of this report suggests, some 'new ways' of being church; new ways, not to be imposed from above but grown from below.

- The Review has sought to enable the life and mission of the Deanery to be **fruitful, sustained and growing**. (A gardening metaphor is, perhaps, helpful. Any reshaping, planting or pruning is proposed with the aim of enabling growth and life of both new shoots and long-standing branches. It is not about retrenchment or retreat.)
- The Review has sought to equip the Deanery to engage with the **significant challenges and opportunities** of the changing and diverse, and increasingly pluralistic, society it serves.
- The Review has sought to encourage imaginative collaboration with other Churches and agencies. The importance of this is already apparent from the many examples of ecumenical projects and activity that are bearing fruit in Luton.
- In short, the Review has sought to enable the Deanery, with others, to seek the Kingdom and to be signs of the Kingdom making known the love of God in all its breadth and diversity.

Membership of the Review Group

- 1.5 The membership of the Review Group is
- The Revd John Kiddle, Rural Dean of Watford and Vicar of St Luke's Church Watford. (Chair)
 - The Revd Wyn Beynon, Rural Dean of Biggleswade and Rector of Potton with Sutton and Cockayne Hatley. (Secretary)
 - Miss Laura Davies, Assistant at the Diocesan Office
 - Mr Chris Hunt, Deputy Churchwarden at St Peter's, Great Berkhamsted

- Mrs Audrey Meldrum, Reader at St Nicholas, Harpenden and member of the Diocesan Pastoral Committee

Process and Consultation

- 1.6 The Appendices at the end of this report contain records of
- the meetings of the Review Group,
 - consultations with other parties,
 - submissions received,
 - and other information gathered.

The Review Group has sought to ensure that there has been an on going process of consultation and reflection.

The Report

- 1.7 The report is designed to be a resource for further reflection and discussion in the Deanery and in the Diocese as a whole.
- It is hoped that the recommendations are clear and straightforward.
 - It is also hoped that description and analysis in the various chapters will prove useful in understanding the process by which the recommendations have been derived. Equally importantly the analysis provides material for further reflection and study.
 - There is a summary at the beginning of the Report which gives a feel of the ground covered in each chapter.

Implementation

- 1.8 It is recognised that the process of implementation is vitally important and will need to be progressed thoughtfully and carefully, with energy, imagination and mutual trust.
- 1.9 Members of the Review Group will be available to help in the implementation process, but the main responsibility for implementation necessarily lies with others. These include,
- individuals in the Luton Deanery, including Clergy, Readers and others.
 - PCC's in the Luton Deanery
 - The Luton Deanery Pastoral Committee
 - The Luton Deanery Synod
 - The Luton Deanery Chapter
 - The St Albans Diocesan Pastoral Committee
 - The St Albans Diocesan Deployment Group
 - The St Albans Diocesan Board of Finance. (Parish Shares Committee)
 - other St Albans Diocesan Boards

Thanks

- 1.10 The Luton Review Group would like to thank very many people for their cooperation and support during this process. The Group hope that this Report will be seen as a helpful contribution and an opportunity for the Deanery of Luton to reflect and grow not as a burden or an imposition.