

Chapter

5

Out of the Box: Releasing Resources

Introduction

5.1 It is a fact that ministry needs resources. The most obvious might be money, but there are other types of resource which are important. There is always a feeling that more resources are needed, and often a feeling that resources are not spread equally among parishes.

- The Review Group has sought to be aware of the resources available to the Deanery of Luton and of their distribution.
- The Review Group is also aware of the limitations of resources available from outside the Deanery. This is an issue facing the whole Diocese. Therefore, the Review Group has sought to be realistic in its recommendations about resources.
- However, the Review Group does believe that there needs to be more resources available to support the ministry of the Deanery of Luton. It has sought to suggest ways in which resources can be shared and ways in which resources can be brought in to Luton. It has sought to keep these recommendations practical and possible.

- One of the ways to release resources is to share them. The Review Group believes that there needs to be a greater sense of sharing resources, of all types, across the Deanery. Often the creative sharing and partnership which this involves means that the effect of the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. The Review Group has sought to encourage this sense of sharing by its recommendations.

'Five loaves and two fish'. In all the thinking about resources it is easy to get focussed on amounts and numbers. It is, perhaps, important to learn from the story of the feeding of the 5,000. What matters is in whose hands the resources are and how they are shared and used.

People

5.2 **All Baptised People.** The greatest resource in the Deanery of Luton is the people of the Deanery: the laity. The total Church Membership Figure for the Deanery is 1,926. This represents a wonderful and rich resource.

- The people of the Deanery of Luton have a fruitful and diverse ministry. This is true in the life of the churches of the Deanery and, more importantly, in their own daily lives at work, at home and in their neighbourhoods and communities. It is vital not to lose sight of this ministry and not to forget its fruitfulness. It is both the **foundation** and the **frontline** of the ministry of the Deanery.
- If, then, the members of the congregations of the Deanery are the most important resource; how can this resource be best treasured and developed?
- The Review Group recommends that energy and commitment be put into the encouragement, training and resourcing of the people of the Luton Deanery. It believes that it would be essential to have a Deanery Lay Training Adviser who could act with imagination to encourage and facilitate training within parishes and on a Deanery wide basis. It recommends the appointment of such an Adviser. The Adviser would liaise closely with the Diocesan Lay Training Officer.
- There is a particular need in Luton to encourage and develop **leadership** from within congregations. The group training approach used in the "Growing Together in Christ" course would seem to be especially appropriate.

Lay Ministry. The exercise of training and encouraging is not simply to help people to be better church members but to better equip lay people for their ministry in the world. How do we ensure that the centre of gravity is in the right place?

- 5.3 If numbers of Stipendiary clergy continue to fall, then there will be more and more responsibility falling on Churchwardens and other officers in parishes.
- Training and encouragement will be increasingly important. Much could be done to encourage and train those who are potential wardens, treasurers and other key office holders.
 - The deanery can also offer a forum where, for example, Churchwardens from across the Deanery can meet each other and share ideas and concerns.
 - The Review Group believe that it would be very strategic to consider appointing a Parish Officer Adviser. There is a great deal that can be accomplished by providing support and expertise in this area. An adviser would be able to build contact between officers from different parishes. The Review Group recommends the appointment of such an Adviser.

- 5.4 **Stipendiary Clergy** The Deanery of Luton consists of 22 parishes. It has a population of 193,000 and, at present 26 stipendiary parochial clergy posts. This may be compared with the Diocese of Hereford²⁵ which has a population of 313,000 and 97 stipendiary parochial posts in 351 parishes and with the Diocese of St Albans²⁶ as a whole which has a population of 1,665,000 and 247 stipendiary parochial clergy in 335 parishes. This is illustrated in the table below

	Population	Benefices	Parishes	Stipendiary Parochial Clergy	Stipendiary Parochial Clergy per	
					Parish	1000 Population
Luton Deanery	193,000	21	22	26	1.2	0.135
St Albans Diocese	1,665,000	236	335	247	0.74	0.15
Hereford Diocese	313,000	120	351	97	0.28	0.31

- The table demonstrates the diversity of the mission of the Church of England and the differences in the contexts in which ministry takes place. The Deanery of Luton does not compare too badly with the Diocese of St Albans as a whole but its proportion of Stipendiary Parochial Clergy per population is lower than the average for every diocese in the country apart from Birmingham. It could be argued that this does not reflect the relative needs of such areas such as Luton.

- 5.5 **Deployment.** This begins to raise an important issue. What is an appropriate level of stipendiary clergy posts for Luton? The Review Group is aware of the need to balance at least three important factors.

A. The Diocesan Deployment Targets which envisage a reduction to 24 by 2006 and to 21 by 2011.

B. The present Parish Share system which is proving unmanageable for Luton. In particular, the flat rate stipendiary contribution means that several Luton parishes cannot really afford a stipendiary clergy post.

C. The importance of Luton and of the ministry and mission of the Church in Luton, as has been emphasised above.

Getting the balance between these three imperatives is not easy.

- The Review Group believes that there will probably have to be a reduction in the number of full time stipendiary posts in line with the **Diocesan Deployment Targets**. However this must not be the only factor affecting deployment in the Deanery.
- The Review Group recommends that the best way of handling this reduction is to encourage a new structure in the Deanery which will allow parishes to work together in **informal groupings**. These 'Areas of Mission and Ministry' are described in Chapter 6 and a possible arrangement is described there.

²⁵ The Archbishops' Council 2003

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- The Review Group also believes that there needs to be an **overall increase in the number of licensed ministers in the Deanery**. It recommends that steps are taken; both within the Deanery and in the Diocese to increase the number of first post Curates, non-Stipendiary Ministers and Readers in the Deanery. This is explored further below.

5.6 **First post Curates.** The Review Group believes that there could be a higher number of first post curates deployed in Luton.

- This would have the advantage of bringing an element of **freshness**, new ideas and, possibly, youth into the Deanery.
- There is an element of **funding** for first post curates which, rightly, is shared by the Diocese as whole. This would therefore be one practical way of putting more resources into the Deanery of Luton.
- An increase in the number of first-post Curates would bring a great deal of **encouragement** to the Deanery. It should be possible to develop first-post Curates as a resource for the whole Deanery.
- The Review Group also believes that the Deanery of Luton is a good place for continuing training. There is a variety of **tradition** and churchmanship; there are opportunities to explore different styles of ministry. It is also important for the Church of England as a whole that there are good training posts in deaneries like Luton.
- It therefore recommends that the Diocesan Deployment Group investigates the possibility of increasing the number of first post curates in the Deanery.

5.7 **Non-Stipendiary Clergy and Readers.** One of the aims of the Review Group has been to seek to find ways of creating bigger ministerial teams in which there can be a variety of ministry and style. It hopes to achieve this, in part, by the creation of the informal groupings described in more detail in Chapter 6. However in order for these teams to be a reality there must be a substantial increase in the number of non-Stipendiary Ministers and Readers.

- By grouping non-Stipendiary Ministers and Readers in this section, the Review Group does not want to suggest that their ministries are to be equated. They are clearly different and bring different and complementary gifts.
- An increase in numbers cannot be created overnight. The Review Group believes that there needs to be a partnership between, for example, the Deployment Group, the Assistant DDO, the Warden of Readers and the Deanery itself. One of the key initiatives would be to seek ways of encouraging the deployment of Readers from other Deaneries.
- Non-Stipendiary Ministers and Readers have a great deal to offer. They bring flexibility with them, and often a great deal of experience. They have a particular ability to reflect, symbolise and encourage the ministry of lay people in that they remind people that Christian ministry is not equated with full-time paid ministry.
- It would be a great encouragement to parishes of the Deanery if Readers and non-Stipendiary Ministers were to be deployed into Luton from parishes outside the Deanery of Luton.

- It therefore recommends that the Diocesan Deployment Group investigates the possibility of increasing the number of non-Stipendiary Ministers and Readers in the Deanery.
- It would be a very strategic act for the Deanery to appoint its own Deanery Vocation Adviser. See below.

Deployment. There is an illustrative deployment table at the end of Chapter 6. This is only illustrative but it does indicate what the Review Group believe is a realistic way of creating 10 Areas for Mission and Ministry in which over 50 licensed ministers could serve – making an average of over 5 per area.

- 5.8 **Vocation.** In addition to the deployment of licensed ministers from other parts of the Diocese and across the Deanery, it would seem to be very desirable for the Deanery to be helped in growing more of its 'own' leaders and ministers. The Review Group therefore recommends that a Deanery Vocation Adviser be appointed. This person would be charged with encouraging an exploration of vocations within the parishes of the Deanery, and working with those at the early stages of the exploration process. The Adviser would liaise closely with the Diocesan Directors of Ordinands and with the Secretary of the Readers Association.
- 5.9 **Training.** In addition to the lay training initiative described above, the Review recommends that there is some initiative within the Deanery to encourage the ongoing training and development of clergy. This would obviously need to be in partnership with the Diocesan CME team. It might be a brief held by the Rural Dean or there might be a separate Deanery Ministerial Training Adviser. The Review Group recommends such an appointment is made. The Adviser would liaise closely with the Diocesan CME Team.
- The Review Group believes that one of the answers to the sense of isolation of ministers is to encourage on going training and reflection about ministry. It would be helpful to have someone 'on the spot' to encourage ministers to take this seriously.
- 5.10 **Support.** As has been mentioned earlier in the report the issue of support and encouragement is vital. It is an issue at the moment and will increasingly be one. The Review Group believes that the Deanery needs to develop a sense of mutual support.
- The proposal for the areas for mission and ministry (see Chapter 6) should mean that relationships of trust can be built up in those smaller units.
 - Similarly the proposal to provide support for Parish Officers will help provide support for key people within the parishes.
 - The Review Group also believes that the support of licensed ministers must be taken seriously. It has picked up a sense of clergy feeling isolated and unsupported. It therefore recommends that the Deanery appoint a Deanery Clergy Support Adviser to work alongside the Rural Dean.

- Such an Adviser could spend time with clergy and act in a pastoral role. It would be a key ministry and one which would be much appreciated if exercised by the right person. It is perhaps what a Rural Dean (or a Bishop) would do if there was more time available.
- It also recommends that the Deanery Readers Adviser be given appropriate support and encouragement in that vital role.

Support. The advisers mentioned above are not envisaged as people who will do all the supporting. Rather, along with the Rural Dean, to help to create a culture of mutual support.

The key to support is to ensure that ministers do not work on their own, or do not feel isolated. There needs to be a real sense of relationship and belonging. This is vital and is a major part of the thrust of this report.

5.11 **Portfolios.** There are above several recommendations about the appointment of Deanery advisers. The proposal for the scheme is that people in the Deanery, clergy, Readers or other appropriate lay people, would be appointed to hold a portfolio within the Deanery.

- This idea is described in more detail in chapter 7.
- The Review Group believes that this scheme will help give clergy and others an involvement outside the parish which would be greatly beneficial and rewarding.
- The Review Group believes that the scheme would also encourage some fruitful partnerships between the Deanery and Diocese.

- It also believes that there is the potential for developing the scheme in such a way that it helps to bring some extra financial resources into the Deanery.

Buildings

5.12 **Buildings** are an important resource and also a large item of expenditure in the Deanery.

- The Review Group believes that, in general, the church buildings in the Luton deanery are in a good state of repair and relatively modern.
- It also observes that they are well sited and are an important sign of the commitment of the Anglican Church to whole of the Deanery.
- The buildings of the Deanery are therefore to, a large extent, a good resource for the ministry of Deanery.

Releasing the use of Buildings.

The Review Group asks the question about whether their use can be broadened and developed in imaginative ways. It suggests that with collaboration and mutual encouragement there is quite a bit which could be done simply and effectively.

5.13 **Closures** The Review group consider there are two church buildings which should be closed and more appropriate alternatives found.

- It recommends that the church building of **St Matthew, High Town** be closed.
- This was proposed by the Luton Commission in 1973. The building is very large and various schemes for developing it have been suggested over the years.

- The Review Group consider that the present building is inappropriate to the size of the congregation and its mission in the community of High Town.
- It also recommends that the church building of St Saviour be closed.
- This is also a large building which is totally unsuitable for the size of congregation and the mission of the Church in that part of Luton.

The Review Group recommends that both buildings are closed and that schemes be drawn up to allow for the sale of some or all of the two sites. The schemes should aim to look at alternatives for the provision of alternative centres for the life and ministry of St Matthew's and St Saviour's. Alternatives would include,

- The sale of the site and the provision of a smaller centre on a different site but within the parish.
- The sale of the site and the sharing of the building of another Christian denomination as part of a Local Ecumenical Project. (This would seem to be something which ought to be seriously considered in the case of St Matthew's especially.)
- The redevelopment of the site in partnership with a housing association or a commercial business in a way that would include a smaller centre for the ministry of the church.
- The development of the site in conjunction with another agency to allow for a community project to share the building. Possibilities would seem to include projects working in primary health care, training projects for unemployed people.

A Deanery Scheme. The Review Group recommends that these two schemes be developed in parallel by a joint working group of the Deanery. It ought to be accepted that funds raised by one scheme could be used by the other and that funds could be released for the Deanery as a whole. The schemes for development should be owned by the Deanery as whole.

- This also means that there should be a commitment from the Deanery as whole to support the provision of new centres of worship, ministry and mission for St Matthew's and St Saviour's.

5.14 The Review Group also believes that consideration should be given to the closure of **Holy Trinity Church, East Hyde.**

- It is an attractive building but it serves a very few people. It may well be able to be adapted very attractively into accommodation units.
- The Review Group believes that possibilities ought to be investigated. This ought perhaps to happen after the proposed transfer of East Hyde to Wheathampstead Deanery. (See 6.62).

5.15 The Review Group consider that there is one site which would merit **substantial redevelopment**. It recommends that help be given to **All Saints'** in drawing up a scheme which would see the redevelopment of its church and hall (and possibly also the vicarage).

- Again this ought to be seen as a deanery scheme and could be drawn up in parallel with the two described above.
- The Review Group believes that All Saints occupies a large site in a strategic position and could be fruitfully used as a Deanery centre and as a community centre.

- The Review Group believe that there are some very real benefits to be gained from the resource of a **Deanery Centre**. It could be an office which deals centrally with enquiries, facilitates communication across the deanery and acts as a liaison with other agencies and groups. It could also house resources such as high speed copiers and other equipment which could be used by members of the Deanery.
- There may be many **community groups** which could find a base for offices or meeting rooms in a redeveloped centre.
- There would be very great benefits in a centre which helped to **build bridges** with the Muslim community in Bury Park. This might be done through inter-faith groups, projects which addressed community issues or, for example, training projects for unemployed young people.
- The details of the scheme would be need to be worked out carefully, but the Review Group believes that there is much potential for the site.
- The Review Group understands that the local **Methodist Church** have some plans for quite a substantial building project. The status of this is at present unclear. The Review Group recommends that discussion be held about a joint project on either site.
- A particular possibility is **Farley Hill**. The Review Group believes strongly that there is a strong possibility of a Local Ecumenical Project with the local Methodist church. It would seem sense that this could be based at St John the Baptist Church.
- The Review Group recommends that this be investigated as soon as is possible.

5.17 The use of buildings is an on going question. The Review Group recommends the appointment of a Deanery Building Adviser who would have the knowledge and creativity to help parishes develop their buildings and keep them well maintained.

- Such an adviser could help parishes adapt their buildings to further their mission and ministry.
- He or she could also offer advice about health and safety and about disability awareness issues. These issues are increasingly important.
- It would be a ministry which would help and inspire parishes a great deal.
- Much time can be spent learning lessons which other parishes have already learned. A Buildings Adviser could help information be shared.

5.16 The Review Group believes that there are other churches which ought to consider the possibilities of **sharing a building** as part of a Local Ecumenical Project. This ought to be in the mind of all parishes from time to time.

Finance

5.18 **Parish share**. It is clear from a look at the figures that for a good number of parishes in the Deanery paying the parish share is a real issue.

- The total shortfall in the Deanery for the parish share payments in 2003 was over £100,000. The total shortfall over the last five years is in the region of £500,000.

- There is no evidence to suppose that congregations in Luton are any less generous than those in other parts of the Diocese. In fact there is anecdotal evidence to the opposite effect.
 - The Review Group realises that other parishes in the Diocese are also feeling the pressure of parish share payments. It also applauds the exercise last year to reduce share factors in Bedfordshire and to transfer a little more of the burden to Hertfordshire. This has helped the situation a little.
 - However it strongly believes that the real issue for Luton is not the ministerial component but the **stipend contribution**. The effect of the flat rate stipend contribution on a small congregation is disproportionately steep.
 - It therefore recommends that the Parish Share Committee of the Diocesan Board of Finance **reviews the present parish share system**. It is invited to look as a matter of urgency at the effect of the flat rate stipend contribution on smaller congregations such as many of those in Luton. It should consider the differences around the Diocese of parish share as a percentage of total expenditure of that parish.
 - The Review Group believes that it would be fairer to introduce an element of potential into the stipend contribution. This would reflect the understanding that the parish priest is not simply there to minister to the congregation. Rather, in partnership with the Bishop (and therefore in some sense with the diocese) to hold the cure of souls of the whole parish.
 - In the review of the parish share system, the present system for funding **first post curates** should also be looked at. The Review Group consider the move to ask parishes to contribute towards the cost of stipends as a retrograde step. It believes that it disproportionately penalises parishes in areas like Luton. As has been said earlier in this chapter, there are good reasons for arguing that an increase in first post curates is desirable for the Deanery and for the wider Church.
- 5.19 Secondly, the Review Group recommends that **outstanding shortfalls in parish share payments be written off**. It is recognised that this is a big step.
- There is though little expectation that these shortfall payments will be forthcoming.
 - It would also greatly increase the morale of the parishes affected if this were done.
 - In order to be fair to those parishes which have had the determination and commitment to pay parish shares to the full there would need to be a clear understanding about future payments. The Review Group suggests that parishes would be asked to meet with the Archdeacon, or other person, and to come to some agreement about plans for future budgets and stewardship initiatives.
 - It might be possible for a target payment to be agreed. This would be a positive move and avoid the sense of failure in a shortfall.
 - The agreement should also look at the possibility of a pastoral support grant being provided.
 - The writing off of the shortfall would be conditional on a suitable agreement being found.

5.20 **Giving.** The Review Group believes that there is always a need to encourage and develop giving within the Deanery. As has been said, it is not arguing that the Deanery of Luton is not generous in its giving but that there is an ongoing need to teach and encourage stewardship.

- It recommends that the Deanery consider the appointment of a Deanery Stewardship Adviser to work with Diocesan Adviser in this area.
- A Stewardship Adviser could be a great inspiration and encourager. He or she should not be seen as chaser of parish shares, rather a releaser of resources.
- There is a need to put more resources into Luton, but there is also a need for the Deanery itself to try to release and grow more resources itself.

5.21 **Portfolio.** The proposed portfolio scheme has already been mentioned and is described more fully in Chapter 7.

- The Review Group believes that one way of making the portfolio scheme work is to provide a bit of **incentive** to those parishes which release a minister or other person to take on one of these portfolios.
- The Review Group therefore recommends that funds be sought, perhaps from the Archbishops' Fund for new initiatives, to support this scheme.
- The suggestion is that funds of about £40,000 per year would 'pay for' the equivalent of about 10 day a week posts or 20 half day a week posts. Therefore if, for example, a minister of a parish gave a day a week to the deanery to take on one of the portfolios then the parish would be given a grant of £4,000. If the post was half a day a week the grant would be £2,000.

- The Review Group recognise that this proposal sets something of a precedent for the many ministers and others who take on other responsibilities. However it believes that, in its favour, it means that the scheme would be taken seriously within the Deanery. It also provides a means of putting in some resources into Luton from the wider Church.
- The various portfolios are proposed to be of real benefit to the Deanery and to its life and ministry. The outside funding would act as something of a catalyst to encourage parishes. The Review Group believes that such funding would be 'money well spent' and the long term fruit would be many.

5.22 **Grants.** The Review Group believes that there might be room in Luton for more community based projects which would attract funding from outside sources such as regional and European funding.

- These would be best set up in partnership with others, but could well be based in church halls.
- There would seem, for example, to be a need for training schemes to help to provide skills for unemployed people.
- The Review Group therefore recommends that the Diocesan Adviser for Social Responsibility meets with a small group from the deanery to begin to explore possibilities. See Chapter 7 for more details.

- The Review Group also recommends the appointment of a Deanery Adviser for Community Partnerships. This is described more fully in Chapter 7. One of the roles of such an Adviser would be to advise parishes in applications for such grants. The Adviser would liaise closely with the Diocesan Adviser for Social Responsibility.

Releasing Resources

In this Chapter the Review Group has argued that the Deanery of Luton needs more resources.

First, it has sought to recommend realistic ways in which *resources can be put into the Deanery*.

Second, it has also sought to recommend ways in which *resources can be released from within the Deanery*.

It is vital that these two initiatives are held together. They need to be seen as feeding and inspiring each other.

Resources from outside the Deanery, whether people or funds, are a great encouragement and help to raise morale and build trust. That increase in morale and encouragement should be seen as means to stimulate the release of more resources, funds, vocation, commitment and imagination, within the Deanery of Luton.