

## Chapter

## 7

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# Out of the Box: Growing new Ministries and Partnerships

## Introduction

7.1 One of the very clear things to emerge from this report is that Christian mission and ministry needs to be done in **partnership** and it needs a **diversity** of approach. This is true in any situation, but it is particularly true in an area like Luton. The diversity and complexity of Luton makes this absolutely essential.

- As was discussed in Chapter 4, partnership and diversity are both theologically right and strategically right. They are an expression of the nature of the Church and they reflect a good understanding of the nature of the society in which the Church seeks to witness.
- This is why the Report is entitled, "Growing new Ways" and why this Chapter is called "Growing new Ministries and Partnerships".
- Chapter 5 sought to describe ways in which more resources can be brought in from outside and released within the Deanery. Much of this is directed at helping the Deanery develop new ministries and for ministries to be exercised in partnership and not in isolation.

- Chapter 6 sought to describe ways in which parishes can work closely together. The aim of the proposed new structures is to create the opportunities for much greater collaboration and partnership. In this collaboration and in the larger ministerial teams there is also greater opportunity for new ministries to be developed.
- This Chapter seeks to go on from that. **Ministry needs to be wider than parochial and partnerships need to be wider than just Anglican.**

## Workplace and other Sector Ministry

7.2 **Advantages and Importance.** The Review Group believe that it is vital that ministry of a non-parochial nature grows and develops alongside the present parish based system. The ten areas described in the previous chapter are one important step in building collaboration and creative ministry, in allowing specialist ministries to develop and in responding imaginatively to the challenges of mission. A vital second step is to encourage the development of more non-parochial ministry.

- As described in Chapter 2, one of the great opportunities of non-parochial ministry is the opportunity to bring people together in a broad **partnership**. It can bring together different parishes in the Deanery and different denominations in the town. In appropriate cases partnerships can be formed with civic bodies, other voluntary agencies and other faith communities. This has a huge benefit to the community. An example of this is the broad based Trust which runs the LECT.
- Non-parochial ministry of this sort also has the advantage in that it allows ministers and others to exercise a **specialist ministry**. This can be in a non-stipendiary capacity or alongside a full time parochial post. The Review Group believe that not all sector ministry needs to be full time. For example the Luton Airport Chaplaincy works well with a full time Chaplain leading a team of part time assistant Chaplains.
- Non-parochial ministry takes seriously the social changes which this Report has already mentioned. The parish system is still the foundation of the ministry and mission of the Church of England; but increasingly people are realising that this needs to be developed and supplemented by ministry which is not parish based.
- Therefore this report encourages a multi-layered approach. The Review Group hopes that its recommendations will help the Deanery of Luton to explore a new sense of parish and a new sense of partnership.

7.3 **Workplace Ministry.** Chapter 2 described the need for a wider range of sector ministry in Luton. This is not to down play the importance of the existing workplace ministry in the Deanery.

- The major workplace ministry is the Chaplaincy at Luton Airport. There is a full time chaplain who is a Baptist Minister, he leads a team of four Assistant Chaplains which includes a Reader from the local parish. There is also a Chaplain to Air Observers at the airport.
- In Luton an Anglican priest serves as chaplain to the Police Service and a Methodist minister as chaplain to the Fire and Rescue Service. There is no chaplain to the Fire and Rescue Service at present.
- A Salvation Army Captain serves as chaplain to Vauxhall, working on the shop floor, in the administration and recreation areas.
- The Review Group is not aware of other established workplace ministry in Luton; though it believes there are many fruitful contacts with people in their place of work within the parishes of the Deanery.

**A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Parish.** In years gone by people used to work, play, govern themselves (or be governed), receive education and conduct business in the place where they lived. The geographical parish made real sense. Today the parish can simply mean the place where someone sleeps.

There needs to be a development (not a replacement) of the parochial system which understands that people need to be met also in places of work, education, health care and in places where they play, shop and socialise. A 21<sup>st</sup> Century parish is of necessity complex and diverse.

- The **Workplace Ministry in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire Team** has recently issued a Strategy Document which looks to expand Workplace Ministry in the two counties and to provide extra funding and support for chaplains and chaplaincies. The points for action can be found in Appendix 9. The Review Group applaud the work of the Workplace Ministry Team and recommend that there are discussions between the Team and Deanery representatives.

#### 7.4 Health

- There is a chaplaincy team at the **Luton and Dunstable Hospital**. This is led by an Anglican priest. A member of the chaplain's team visits each ward at least once a week and a chaplain is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- The Review Group understand that there are vacancies in the Chaplaincy to the **Bedfordshire and Luton Community NHS Trust** and at the **Luton Hospice**.
- The Review Group believes that there is room to expand the Church's ministry to the health service and to patients. There is a discussion of health in Luton in Chapter 2. The Review Group recommends that discussions are held between chaplains and representatives of the Deanery.
- In particular, it recommends that the possibility of **community health projects**, in which the Church could have a partnership, should be investigated. The partnership might, for example, be the provision of a building space. There would seem to be some real opportunities for involvement here. The Review Group believe that there would need to be a careful study of the possibilities.

7.5 **Education.** The sphere of education has been one with a long history of fruitful engagement of the Church in the community.

- There is a full time chaplain who is an Anglican priest at the **University of Luton**. The Review Group understands that funding has been agreed for the continuation of this important post. It is understood that the Diocese of St Albans has agreed to provide housing for the Chaplain. At present the Chaplain is living in St Christopher's Vicarage, Round Green.
- As already mentioned, the Review Group applauds the work of the **Luton Churches Education Trust (LCET)**. It is a great example of an ecumenical partnership providing a well run and effective Christian witness and ministry.
- As described in Chapter 2, there is only one **church school** in the Deanery, Wenlock Middle School.
- As discussed in Chapter 2, the Review Group firmly believes that there is more which could be done to support the Church's involvement in Education in Luton. It recommends that the Deanery investigate how, in partnership with others, there can be more support.
- The Review Group recommends the appointment of a Deanery Schools Adviser. Such an Adviser would be able to provide expertise and support to parishes and others in their involvement in local schools and in wider projects.

The Review Group makes two other specific recommendations.

- Firstly, it recommends that the possibility of a **faith based school** be investigated. A Christian school founded on an inter-denominational basis would be a real sign of the Church's commitment to Luton. The Review Group understands a Christian School to be a school for all, not simply the Christian community.
- A very exciting alternative would be an inter-faith school; for example, a joint Muslim-Christian school. This would entail much groundwork and may be difficult to bring to birth but the potential benefits of such a school would be many and long lasting.
- Secondly, the Review Group recommends that the possibility of educational or **training projects** be investigated. It believes that there could be some real opportunities here for involvement with the community. An example would be the provision of training for unemployed young people. It might well be that this could be a creative and positive way to build links with the Muslim community. Such a training project would attract funding and could also be part of a building project or redevelopment as proposed in Chapter 5.

7.6 **Other Areas.** In addition to the spheres of workplace, health and education there are **other areas of life** in which a non-parochial ministry might be fruitful. Two obvious examples are retail and entertainment.

- The Review Group believe that in connection with this the possibility of a Town Chaplaincy is well worth exploring. It recommends that this is explored.

7.7 **Taking this forward.** In order for the Deanery to facilitate the development of non-parochial ministry the Review Group has two recommendations.

- Firstly, it recommends the appointment of a Deanery Sector Ministry Adviser. This would be someone who could help the Deanery to assess where the needs and the possibilities might be. There are, of course, endless possibilities; it is important to discover what can be done and make priorities of what should be done.
- Secondly, it recommends the appointment of a Deanery Community Project Adviser. See below.

## Portfolios: New Ministries and Partnerships in the Deanery

7.8 At the heart of the Review Group's recommendations is the proposed scheme to create a **series of Deanery Portfolios**. This is proposed for several reasons.

7.9 The scheme is designed to **broaden the ministry of the Deanery**. The possible portfolios mentioned in this report are strategic developments which would support and take forward the ministry of the Deanery as a whole.

- The thrust of this report is to take seriously the complexity and diversity of the situation in Luton and in the changes in society in general. Therefore there needs to be a broad ranging response to this. Some of this requires a degree of expertise and specialism.

- The report also argues, in Chapter 5, that there are some deanery wide ministries which would be invaluable in supporting, encouraging and developing the ministries of others. The emphasis is on encouragement.
  - There is also a need to help the Deanery to develop new ministries with imagination and creativity.
- 7.10 The suggested list of Deanery Portfolios is therefore as follows,
- Deanery Lay Training Adviser (see 5.2)
  - Deanery Parish Officer Adviser (see 5.3)
  - Deanery Vocation Adviser (see 5.8)
  - Deanery Ministerial Training Officer (see 5.9)
  - Deanery Clergy Support Adviser (see 5.10)
  - the Deanery Reader Adviser to be included in the scheme (see 5.10)
  - Deanery Building Adviser (see 5.17)
  - Deanery Stewardship Adviser (see 5.20)
  - Deanery Schools Adviser (see 7.4)
  - Deanery Sector Ministry Adviser (see 7.7)
  - Deanery Portfolio Adviser (see 7.14)
  - Rural Dean (see 7.15)
  - Deanery Community Project Adviser (see 7.24)
  - Deanery Interfaith Adviser (see 7.22)
  - Deanery Civic Links Adviser (see 7.26)
  - Deanery Parish Links Adviser (see 7.27)
- The list is in some ways illustrative. Not all appointments could be made at once and they would need to be prioritised. It may also be that other portfolios, not mentioned in this Report, are seen to be more important.
- 7.11 The Review Group believes that the Portfolio Scheme has the potential to **develop the ministry and enthusiasm** of individual ministers.
- The Review Group believes that one of the answers to the **isolation** which some of the clergy in the Deanery feel is to give them the opportunity to have a non-parochial responsibility
  - The portfolio scheme offers the possibility of individual ministers building on existing **interests, expertise and skills** and developing them further. It offers them the chance to share these ministries with others.
  - There are benefits in making the portfolio scheme 'official'. It means that the extra-parochial ministry will be taken seriously.
  - There would be an agreed amount of time to be given to the task. The Review Group suggests that it is either one day a week or half a day a week. This would mean that the minister would be able to spend that time on the portfolio and not feel guilty about 'being away from the parish'.
- 7.12 The Review Group believes that another of the real benefits of this scheme would be to help forge better **partnerships with the rest of the Diocese**.

- Most of the Deanery Advisers would have a **Diocesan officer or board** with whom to liaise. This would be an important relationship. It would mean that there were many more contacts between the Deanery and the Diocese. It would also mean that ideas were being shared between the Deanery and the Diocese in a creative fashion. This will bring ideas into the Deanery, but also give an opportunity for the Deanery to offer its own knowledge and expertise to others.
- Deanery Advisers would also be able to relate to their opposite numbers in other deaneries (where they exist). They could visit other deaneries or parishes to share ideas and information. This would all help to increase contacts and to decrease the sense of isolation which the Deanery of Luton seems to feel.

7.13 The Portfolio Scheme gives an opportunity to bring some **financial resources into the Deanery**. This is also described in chapter 5 (see 5.21) but repeated here for clarification.

- 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.
- £40,000 is about 40% of the present annual shortfall in the payment of parish shares in the Deanery. The Review Group believes that it would be money well spent and would make a real difference to the morale of the parishes and the fruitfulness of the ministry of the Deanery.
- The Review Group recognises 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 fruits would be many.

7.14 Things to note

- **Managing the scheme.** The Portfolio Scheme would of course need to be managed. It would need to be developed gradually and portfolios distributed according to gifts and abilities.

- The Review Group recommends that as a first step a Deanery Portfolio Adviser is appointed. This person would work alongside the Rural Dean to get the scheme up and running and to manage it as it grows. The Adviser would need appropriate skills.
- It is important to note that the scheme is not proposed as just another level of administration. It is designed to be creative and collaborative. It must be developed and operate with a light touch.
- Therefore, the Review Group has gone down the road of the Deanery Portfolio scheme. This will mean that some of the assumed responsibilities of the Rural Dean can be shared. Thus there would be much more a sense of the Rural Dean leading a team.
- The Review Group recommends that the Rural Dean be seen as part of the portfolio scheme and the parish he or she comes from be given the appropriate 'grant' for the commitment of a full day a week.
- The Review Group also recommends that the Rural Dean should continue to be given appropriate **paid secretarial help**. It believes that this should be funded from a deanery levy.

Advisers are not people who will know everything and tell others what to do. Key skills lie in the area of enabling, of building relationships, of making contacts across parish boundaries. Advisers need to be channels of information, not simply givers of information.

## The Rural Dean

- 7.15 The Review Group is very aware that being the Rural Dean of Luton is a **massive job**. There are many aspects to it and in a deanery of 22 parishes the size of the job is amplified.
- The Review Group considered the possibilities of a full time Rural Dean. This would seem to have some real benefits in enabling the Rural dean to have the time to do the job well.
  - However it considers that this would have the effect of making the post rather too 'professional' and separate from other ministerial colleagues. It would also make appointments and length of office somewhat complicated.

7.16 Alongside this the Review Group recommends that the possibility of a **Deanery Centre** be investigated.

- As discussed already (see 5.15 and 6.22) it suggests that All Saints' would be a very suitable base for such a development. (It is just coincidence that the present Rural Dean is the incumbent of this parish.)
- There would be many benefits of a Deanery Centre as a centre of communication and where shared resources could be available.

## Ecumenical Partnerships

7.17 Within Luton there are some outstanding examples of ecumenical activity many of these are project based and more relational than structural.

- As described in Chapter 2. Churches Together in Luton (CTL), founded in 1990 has a role for Christians from all denominations, with Church of England support largely from the more traditional churches.
- The other major and more active grouping is Transforming Luton. Its aim is to bring about “lasting change in our Town through Unity and Purpose”, and it is actively supported by the more evangelical churches.
- Although there is undoubtedly a great deal of other ecumenical cooperation in Luton currently, it has proved difficult to identify in detail. This highlights the pressing need for a “voice” to speak for the Christian community as a whole.

7.18 The Review Group believes that it would be good to see a wider sense of ecumenical partnership in Luton. As already said in this Report, it applauds the work of Transforming Luton but believes that there does need to be some equally energetic and committed way of bringing other strands of Christianity together.

- The Review Group recommends that the parishes of the Deanery seek to play a fuller part in the ecumenical life of Luton, not least those which are not of the Evangelical tradition.
- It recommends that the parishes of the Deanery seek, in partnership with others, to develop the role of **Churches Together in Luton**.

7.19 One particular suggestion that the Review Group would make is to consider whether it would be possible for there to be a smaller body which could speak on behalf of the Christian community in Luton on issues of common concern. This would be very helpful in making a **Christian voice heard** in the media and, especially, with the Borough. The Review Group recommends that the possibility of such a ‘voice’ be investigated.

7.20 The Review Group also recommends that possibilities for **Local Ecumenical Projects** be explored by all parishes. In the Report it has mentioned three possibilities – at Farley Hill (6.17), St Matthew’s (6.40) and All Saints (6.22). The Review Group hopes that these can be explored as a matter of importance and that other parishes will look into the possibility of imaginative ecumenical partnerships.

## Inter-faith Partnerships

7.21 The diversity of faiths in Luton has been described in Chapter 2. The facts that the Christian population is the second lowest in percentage terms in the East Region, and that the proportions of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs all relatively high, all underline the importance of interfaith cooperation. It also means it must be a key factor in any pastoral strategy for the Deanery.

- Luton Council of Faiths (LCOF) is already well established and has gained the trust and confidence of the different faith communities which enables it to tackle sensitive issues.
- Mr Ranjit Singh of the LCOF has confirmed to the Review Group that the Church of England already has a great involvement in the Council of Faiths and the Council enjoys some funding from the Church Urban Fund.

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- Currently the Church of England is represented on the LCOF by the Incumbent of St Luke's, Leagrave.
- 7.22 The Review Group believes that this very important aspect of the Luton Deanery, which is unique within the Diocese, needs to be recognised more formally. It recommends the appointment of a Deanery Interfaith Adviser.
- It would probably be appropriate for the Adviser to be the Anglican **representative on LCOF**. This would give the representation some sort of official status.
  - This portfolio should definitely be seen as a 'one day a week post'. It is a greatly important area and probably merits more than one day a week.
  - The Adviser would be charged with helping to encourage and develop **good relationships and understanding** between faith communities.
  - The Adviser would seek to inform all parishes of the Deanery about interfaith matters and community issues. He or she would, however, spend more time in the parishes which have high numbers of different faith communities.
  - The Adviser would liaise closely with the Diocesan Interfaith Adviser.
  - This appointment would provide an opportunity for the Adviser to develop a **personal knowledge and understanding** which could be shared with the whole Deanery and also more widely.
  - One of the key things which the Adviser could seek to do would be to develop **community projects** in which different faith communities could be partners.
- 7.23 Suggestions for such **community projects** have been made in this report and include
- An interfaith school
  - A youth training project
  - A community centre; possibly based at All Saints'.
- The Review Group recommends that such possible projects be investigated. It would be good to break new ground with a partnership which brought together members of different faiths. Such a partnership would probably take some time to draw together, but the building of relationships and understanding which might make it possible could begin now. This would be building on all that is being done already.
- ## Community Partnerships
- 7.24 On a more general basis, the Review Group believes that there are many opportunities for partnerships and projects in the community. Building relationships and building communities is at the heart of the mission of the Church.
- It recommends the appointment of a Deanery Community Projects Adviser.
- The Adviser would provide a level of expertise, encouragement and inspiration for parishes in considering community projects.
  - The Adviser would provide advice and help in seeking funding from outside bodies and grant making trusts. This help would be invaluable.
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- The Adviser would seek to encourage such projects to be partnerships as far as possible. These could be ecumenical or partnerships with other bodies and community groups where appropriate.
- The Adviser would liaise closely with the Diocesan Adviser for Social Responsibility and his team.
- He or she would be able to help other parishes with involvement with the Town Hall and encourage good communications.
- The Adviser would help to **explain** the Church's position on issues and make clear concerns to the Town Hall. He or she would be a point of contact and an interpreter.
- The Adviser would also offer the Officers of the Borough **support**; if appropriate it could develop into a chaplaincy role.

## Civic partnerships

7.25 In some parishes, most notably St Mary's, there are strong civic links and involvement with community groups.

- The Incumbent of St Mary's is also involved with the Luton Town Centre Partnership.
- Elsewhere, although many church people are undoubtedly involved in numerous worthwhile organisations, there appears to be a lack of coordination and it is the Leader of the Council's view that the Church of England could and should generally adopt a higher profile.
- The Review Group notes that there seems to be a real openness to a greater civic involvement by the Churches, and the Anglican Church in particular.
- It is telling that in conversation with the Leader of the Borough Council, he would not have included the Church of England amongst the most active Christian groups in Luton.

7.26 The Review Group therefore recommends that a Deanery Civic Liaison Adviser be appointed.

- The Adviser would be able to make **personal contacts** with Borough Officers and Councillors and other key people.

## Parish Links

7.27 As has been said, there would be some good benefits from developing a series of links between parishes of the Deanery and other parishes in the Diocese.

- The links would be two way and would help to develop partnerships and friendships between ministers and people across the diocese.
- The links would be educational and would help inform different parts of the Diocese about life and ministry in different areas.
- The links would offer opportunities for resources to be shared. It is not envisaged that this sharing would be one way. There are many different types of resource and Luton has a great deal to offer the rest of the Diocese.
- In order to facilitate these links, the Review Group recommends the appointment of a Deanery Parish Links Adviser.

## Wider Links

7.28 The Review Group are concerned that **the profile of the Deanery of Luton** is raised in the wider Church as well as in the Diocese. It is a unique and important place. It has much to share with the rest of the Church.

- One suggestion which the Review Group have is to arrange a visit to Luton by the Archbishop of Canterbury.
- Such a visit would help to raise Luton's profile. It would be a great encouragement to the Deanery, to the wider Christian community, to other faith communities and to the Borough as a whole.
- It would also be informative and helpful for the Archbishop.
- The Review Group therefore recommends that the possibilities of such a visit be investigated and that it is planned as soon as possible.