

CITY CENTRE CONSULTATION MEETING
7.30 PM TUESDAY, 6th MAY 2008
ALL SAINTS PAVEMENT, YORK

Chair: the Venerable Richard Seed (in the absence of the Rt Rev Martin Wallace, Bishop of Selby).

Attendance:-

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| The Venerable Richard Seed | Roger Simpson | Very Rev Keith Jones |
| Helen Robson | David Rhodes | Sue Wallace |
| David Titchener | David Simpson | Malcolm Wallace |
| Revd Andrew Horsman | Sharon Whittington | Alan Hardwick |
| Tony Hunt | Sue Norton | Dorothy Lee |
| Ann Hall | Joan Sargeant | Kingsley Boulton |
| Col James Finlay | Jeni Farnhill | Julies Brookes |
| Joan Marshall | Simon Watterson | Christine Tuck |
| Andrew Hingston | Jill Marshall | Dorothy Lee |
| Rev Simon Stanley | Ron McLone | Kathryn Knibbs |
| Rev Allan Hughes | Mary Brooks | Philip Smith |
| Annette Hughes | Chris Humble | Chris Cullwick |
| June Brookes | Terrence McDonough | Andrew Stoker |
| Roger Simpson | Mike Bulmer | |
| Father Michael Ryan | David Lord | |

1. Ven Richard Seed opened with prayer.

2. +Martin has supplied notes of his thoughts.

This is expected to be one of several meetings of this kind.

The necessary Anglican dialogue should and will be in conjunction with Ecumenical partners across the city.

QUTOES:-

"In 15c there were 39 churches within the city walls - each place had a distinct reason for its purpose."

In 2002 the Shreeve report was written. This is a report which may still be worth referring to despite anyone's disagreement of its contents. Much has been achieved since the Report was presented.

In the city there are more that 50 Christian groups and organisation operating.

York has an active faith community, more that 150 people attended the Taste and See day recently, though the majority were from outside the city centre.

It was announced yesterday that Revd Tony Hodge will retire from St Olave's (and therefore St Martin's and St Helen's) in summer 2008. Revd Simon Stanley will retire from All Saints Pavement and St Denys in 2009.

Currently the diocese is running at circa £500k expenditure above income. This will have to be addressed as, if not, in 5 years the diocese will not have any realisable assets.

The process is that tonight we can't address the two major vacancies, the Bishop and Archdeacon will visit these parishes in due course, however, +Martin does not wish to impose a top down instruction. He would like the outcome to be in conjunction with Clergy, Readers and the churchwardens. There will also be many meetings with ecumenical partners over the coming months; perhaps a planning meeting will be needed in late autumn. Tonight is an exploratory discussion.

RICHARD SEED INVITED QUESTIONS,

Questions and Comments from the floor:

1. Sue Norton: The financial position could colour the city centre plan. Does the Diocese have access to other sources of funding?

Richard Seed: There is potential to sell Glebe land and other assets but not to the detriment of parishes.

2. Mary Brookes, St Denys: Can you guarantee there will be no closure of churches?

Richard Seed: It is hoped that there will be not closures. Indeed this is not being considered at the moment as the process for that to happen would begin with and in each PCC. Grade I buildings can not be easily converted, therefore, what would become of them? To reiterate the Tourist Board comments, '*the churches make up part of the economic Tourism of the city.*'

3. Chris Cullwick: Coming at this from a different angle, starting at mission – could we look at the needs in the city centre, and then look at the resources necessary to make this happen?

Richard Seed: Yes, this is the purpose of this meeting.

4. Sue Wallace: The number of visitors to these churches represents an opportunity.

Richard Seed: The scope is beyond Sunday worship and should take into account Pastoral needs.

5. Ann Hall: This is an opportunity for a clean sweep and that we should take the opportunity to gear ourselves to welcome the visitors.

6. James Finlay: With all this consultation process he hopes that there will not be a long interregnum.

Richard Seed: The position(s) do not officially become available until notice is given but the diocese does not want a long vacancy but this is the opportunity to identify the right type of City Centre Ministry and proceed with energy together with ecumenical partners.

7. Sharon Whittington: If what is going to happen is not going to be purely driven by finance there needs to be significant analyse of the provision needs in the city.

Richard Seed: This may be possible using Local Government contacts and we shall need to discuss some issues with the City Council and Civic Leaders. (This has now become a very

exciting prospect as since the Meeting Cllr Andrew Waller has become the Leader of the City's Lib Dem Party and might therefore become Leader of the City Council – he is very keen to foster closer links with the Churches.)

8. Joan Sargeant: Ministry comes out of the needs and the vision. There is dialogue already going on, if we lay down our preconceived ideas we can celebrate together.
9. Keith Jones: He hopes that there is recognition that there are a number of churches with large congregations but we have to find ways to make those who do not have large congregations viable.
10. Roger Simpson: Having read David Goodhew's paper (discussing churches as far back as 1948) the combined congregations was 9k and in 1958 it was 7k, the population is now 184k, therefore how do we reach the 173k* we are not reaching? Since 1999 there are over 12 new churches reaching 2200 new people. The biblical model is to plant new churches. (reference to Mongolia).
Richard Seed: Does he see 'new churches' in old buildings?
Roger Simpson: Yes, there is no point trying to revive old congregations.
*check quoted figure

Then Richard Seed then asked, "What are the churches currently contributing?" and invited the representatives of the churches to comment.

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| All Saints Pavement: | Guilds/Civic role Common Prayer 'Casting bread on water' |
| St Olave's: | Offer a high standard of Liturgy and preaching, different to other churches and are open to new ways of Ministry, but are still steeped in tradition. |
| St Martin's: | Its history and theme of Peace and Reconciliation, making it increasingly prophetic. |
| St Helen's: | They are a resource and have an excellent location within the city. |
| St Michael-le-Belfrey: | A gathered church and very popular with some 40k visitors, who visit for a variety of different reason. St Michael-le-Belfrey provides both church groups and outreach facilities. |
| All Saint's North Street: | A place that wears its history on its sleeve; its mission is delivered with an eye to the future but an eye also to the past. |

Annette Hughes: speaking in general said she believed the greatest resources are the unpaid resources there should be a service of celebration of these people. More could be done to welcome

visitors, she suggested that perhaps there should be 'brolly lady tours', ghouls and graveyard walks etc?

St Denys: Provide a specialist ministry to the deaf, an outreach ministry to businesses and 'travellers' services, and has a growing local congregation. Allan Hughes added the growth of new congregations should not be at the expense of existing congregations.

St Mary's: People like St Mary's and go to pray.

Visions: Have exclusive use of multimedia – artistic expression of prayer. This is a small group with a large impact.

ECUMENICAL GUESTS

Father Michael Ryan, St Wilfrid's RC: the mission needs to be explored. People come from all over the world to participate in their Masses. Providing provision for the children brings in the families. Twining of city centre and suburban churches is happening in the York area.

Revd Chris Humble, Central Methodist: 'Centre's of excellence' need nurturing and developing. Ecumenical relationships in York are the best he has ever known.

York Baptist Church Hope '08 has led to a meeting of the other churches, providing opportunities from them to compliment each other. There is a recognised contradiction between the people, the mission and the appreciation of the buildings.

Apologies were received from Revd Graham Maskery, St Columba's URC.

Other comments:-

Joan Sargeant:

The Spurriergate Centre has become good at self supporting themselves financially. Their mission is to share God's love.

Ann Hall: There has been little mention of children. We could work together on youth activities and children's projects.

Terrence McDonogue: No specific comments from the Deanery but, there must be openness to change.

Dorothy Lee: St Crux, the parish hall of All Saint's Pavement remains open due to substantial support from the team of volunteers.

The Bishop sent three questions for discussion and response:-

Q1: Is this the right time for the Consultation process to begin?

A1: Those present agreed unanimously.

Q2: Should this consultation be the proposed three stage process?

A2: Again, those present agreed to this process.

Q3: What process should the consultation with Ecumenical Partners take?

A3: Contact through Clerics/Ministers, however, those with covenants will have something more formal.

Richard Seed added: the rural dean/deanery has a legal role when a parish is vacant to ensure that whatever is decided is in keeping with the Deanery Plan.

WHAT NEXT?

A chat room facility to enable discussion will be set up on the www.coreyork.org website, see section – City Centre Consultation.

Confidential comments to be in writing to +Martin and cc. Archdeacon and marked 'Confidential'.

Bishop Martin and Ven Richard Seed will make contact with the individual churches