

*Woodbridge
Deanery Plan
2011*

Draft C1

Draft for comment

Vision

As part of the world wide Church we are called to be God's people alive and at work in His world.

- This we do by:**
- **Telling the Good News of the Kingdom of God**
 - **Teaching ,baptising and nurturing new believers**
 - **Tending to human needs by loving service**
 - **Transforming unjust structures in society**
 - **Treasuring the integrity of creation**

In this Deanery of Woodbridge we commit ourselves to these tasks of mission as a:

- **Christ centred community**
- **Committed to God and one another**
- **Celebrating the work of God among us**
- **Co-operating and collaborating across parish and benefice boundaries**
- **Communicating the opportunities for growing in discipleship and vocation**

The Deanery Today - Geography

Woodbridge is the largest geographical Deanery in the Diocese – 25 miles between furthest points, with a population of around 27000. It splits into three areas:

- **Central** – the market town of Woodbridge, with closely surrounding villages of Melton, Ufford and Bredfield (total population 14 thousand,) is served by 3 benefices, each with full-time stipendiary clergy, in a Group ministry.
- **North West** – the rural area to the west of the A12 has 3 benefices, with one full-time and two part-time stipendiary clergy ministering to a total of 4½ thousand people.
- **Peninsular** – the rural area to the east of the A12 bounded by the rivers Deben, Alde/Ore and the sea, is arranged as a Team ministry with three full-time and one part-time stipendiary clergy serving a population of 8½ thousand people. This area includes Rock Barracks & a large prison.

The Central and Peninsular Areas look towards Woodbridge as the focal point for local government, transport links etc., but the more westerly parts of the North-West Area tend to look towards Ipswich.

The Deanery Today - Church Involvement

- The 35 churches are served by a total of 10 stipendiary clergy, 2 full-time sector chaplains, assisted by 9? active retired clergy, 3 OLMs, 1 NSM, 2 pastoral assistants, 19? readers and 34? elders, with others in training for various ministries.
- The electoral roll of the Deanery is around 3300?, and the churches provide 134? Sunday and 58? weekday services each month. Sunday Holy Communion is the most popular service with over 1000? adults and about 150? children attending across the Deanery.
- About 100 adults attend weekday communion services, and there are 54? study groups of various kinds.
- Across the Deanery there are about XX Occasional Offices each year.
- Deanery is now working much more in the three areas (action from last Deanery Plan) although the Central Area tends to do this in collaboration with the other denominations as part of Woodbridge and Melton Churches Together.

Trends

- Slight growth in population.
- Numbers attending church during the year slightly down but Remembrance and Christmas services up.
- Existing church members becoming more elderly and dying, not being replaced by younger members in most churches.
- Becoming more difficult to recruit church officers and lay leaders, especially in smaller parishes
- Uneven distribution of non-stipendiary Clergy and Readers requires more flexibility of deployment across the Deanery

Aspirations

The Deanery has:

- a full range of small and large, rural and urban parishes with a breadth of churchmanship and styles of worship
- Churches within the villages which are seen as important part of village life, even by non-attenders, resulting in support & goodwill for the building.

However there is:

- massive disparity between large and small Churches
- a lack of critical mass in some Churches leading to a struggle for mere survival.

The proposed solution is:

- increased communication leading to increased cooperation and collaboration in the use of resources. This requires greater flexibility from people, Parishes and the Diocese.
- possible implementation of Local Experts eg in children's work, to advise and support across part or all of the Deanery.

Discipleship – Teach - Adults

Aim to make available to everyone in the Deanery, five strands of Discipleship opportunities:

- Teaching within sermons as part of weekly services
- An opportunity to join a regular Small Group within your Parish, Benefice or Area. Appropriate publicity and Clergy support for this.
- A Lent Course, run alternate years by the Deanery, and by each Area.
- A set of individual single day events eg Quiet Days, with the aim that each Area and the Deanery would run one each year.
- Some form of modular course, at a level between introductory (eg Alpha, Emmaus, Christianity Explored) and advanced (eg DMC), possibly using something from Gloucester Diocese.

Discipleship – Teach - Children and Young People

- Make children welcome at all services
- Specific children's provision in each Benefice at least once each month.
- Ensure structured learning opportunities on a regular basis in each Benefice or area.

Discipleship – Tell

Continue and develop the use of six methods of proclaiming the Good News:

- Written – eg Parish Magazines to all houses in Parish
- Work in schools & community – eg Assemblies, Governors, “Open the Book”
- Welcome Ministry – Availability of Enquirer’s course eg Alpha, Emmaus, Christianity Explored
- Witness through occasional offices, festivals
- Worship – across the ages and traditions including Fresh Expressions, Taize, Alpha at Costa, social/church events
- Community – eg pastoral support and networking

Discipleship - Tend

- Celebrate and share good practise
eg Community lunches, Street Pastors
- Engage with the issues and challenges that the BIG Society presents us with, being alert to the opportunities these changes may bring for the churches

Discipleship - Transform and Treasure

- Encourage raising awareness of issues at global and local level.
- Publicise and support local church initiatives
 - eg Fair Trade
 - Christian Aid Week
 - Wildlife churchyards

Vocation

- All clergy are encouraged to use the Diocesan material to promote developing the vocation of each member of their congregation.
- Pilot a Deanery Vocations Fair to provide greater knowledge of vocation opportunities.
- Use the Epiphany Season as a “Vocation Season” with sermons, workshops and Deanery events to enable people to explore what God is asking of them.

Resources - Reorganisation within the Deanery

- **NW Area** – Proposal to move from one full-time and two half-time posts to one full-time and one half-time post by combining the Benefices of “Boulge with Burgh, Grundisburgh & Hasketon” and “Clopton with Otley, Swilland & Ashbocking”.has already been through informal discussions, and is with the Diocese for drawing up a formal scheme.
- **Other part of the Deanery** – The growth and change of social make-up of the Sutton Heath and Rock Barracks poses a challenge to the Deanery in terms of ministry and pastoral care. We have told the Diocese that further stipendiary clergy reductions would be very difficult, however we will continue to encourage vocations to all aspects of ministry, and the review of clergy numbers will be an ongoing part of the work of the Deanery.

Resources – Finance

The very large Diocesan share increases in this Deanery at present are a considerable challenge, especially for many smaller rural parishes, where local people are often more inclined to support the maintenance of the building and churchyard than they are the ministry. Many churches are supported by a small and elderly group of faithful people, yet there is considerable resistance to the suggestion of closing any church. There has been a long Deanery tradition of financially stronger churches helping those in difficulties, but funds for this are now starting to run out.

However we commit to:

- Strive, as in previous years, to pay 100% of the Parish Share requested, but ask the Diocese to note that this is an increasingly difficult struggle.
- Encourage the Clergy to encourage their congregation to respond to God's generosity as part of their discipleship.
- Use the Diocesan resources to promote generosity.
- Encourage the Theology of Giving, stressing the importance of Parish Share to maintain Ministry.

Major Building Works planned

Urgent major Tower and Roof repairs:

St Mary's, Woodbridge

Ufford

Bawdsey

Totalling **£300k - £400k**

Toilet facilities for increased Mission opportunities:

Boyton

Grundisburgh

Sutton

Ufford