

Parish discussion paper regarding establishing a Team Ministry between the parishes of King Charles the Martyr and St Mark's in Tunbridge Wells. (17th February 2020)

Introduction – the story and conversations so far:

On Easter Day 2019, when the former incumbent of St Mark's stepped down, the Archdeacon suspended St Mark's living and asked KCM, which had three licensed clergy, to support the church through an emergency time.

This was an interim solution and it is now time to move forward. The experience of working together has gone well. The Revd Claire Allwood completed her Curacy at KCM and was licensed in September 2019 as Associate Vicar to both parishes. In March 2020 Claire took up residence in the St Mark's vicarage under a house-for-duty status. This means she offers two days per week plus Sundays on a self-supporting basis. In January 2020 Jennie Cuthbert was licensed to work across both parishes as an Anna Chaplain. Though a tricky time, the Covid-19 pandemic has further strengthened the relationship, with both congregations having shared access to Sunday and midweek services both online and in person. The Community Larder was set up as an equal joint project and a number of aspects of church life and worship have been shared.

The Road ahead:

The Ministry team are keen for the co-operation to continue, on a more equal footing. This would recognise that whilst St Mark's is not financially able to support a full-time stipendiary minister, both churches contribute towards shared worship, pastoral and missional goals.

Following discussion between Archdeacon Julie, Laurence and Claire, a number of options were considered but the one favoured was that of a Team Ministry where each church would have authority in its own parish, particularly in regards to governance, finance and maintaining their distinct church traditions but continue to share ministry and other resources.

As things stand, Laurence is currently the Vicar (incumbent) of KCM and Priest-in-Charge of St Mark's. Though Claire holds the title of Associate Vicar her legal authority is limited to that of an Assistant Curate. Under a Team Ministry structure, Laurence would become Team Rector and Claire Team Vicar. This means both Laurence and Claire would hold equal incumbent status; Claire being responsible for St Mark's and Laurence being responsible for KCM. Laurence would hold the senior role - the Team Rector 'being the first among equals'. Sarah would continue as Associate Vicar of KCM. This would have a number of advantages including clarifying lines of authority and produce a focal minister for each church but with the opportunity of establishing combined working groups, for example family and youth work and care of the vulnerable elderly. Administration and pastoral responsibility could be shared during periods of leave and at busy times such as Christmas and Easter.

Please note that in time both the role of Team Rector and Team Vicar have the potential to become full time stipendiary posts, however this is some way in the future.

This model is only a proposal. However, it seems the best model which most closely meets the needs of our parishes and takes St Mark's out of emergency measures. The clergy are happy to take more feedback and to remodel accordingly – the time is right to move into a new phase of shared mission and ministry.

Our PCCs have considered this and unanimously agreed to open discussion of this potential model to both congregations.

Moving Forward - clarification and questions:

The Name:

A name for the team would need to be agreed. This would most likely be geographical and would not alter the names of the individual parishes.

A Team:

By uniting the ministry team, the structure fosters unity and allows for the ministers to share the workload. Though each church will have a focal minister, under the team model there is a need to have an identifiable leader and this structure provides for a Team Rector post to be a focus for unity and also to give oversight. As it retains 2 distinct parishes, each with their own PCCs and finances, the Team structure enables each church to retain its distinctive identity and tradition.

Joint Council:

Church Representation Rules 2020, now allow for churches at their APCMs to make a scheme for a joint council where parishes are 'connected'. It would therefore be possible once a Team were created for such a council to be established. It is proposed that a Joint Council could provide a lead on areas of mission delegated to it by the PCCs in response to need, such as youth and families work and/or ministry among the vulnerable elderly. This could change as mission priorities evolve.

Separate PCCs:

It is proposed that each parish will retain its own PCC to manage local finances, buildings and fabric and issues specific to their own church or parish.

Finances:

It is proposed that the PCCs will retain their local financial control.

Patronage Board:

(This is a tricky area at present) Current patrons are:

- | KCM - The Trustees of King Charles the Martyr
- | St Mark's – The Bishop of Rochester

We are advised to create a Board of Patronage, to ensure an equal role for both parishes in appointing team clergy. Clarity is needed on the situation at KCM and we are in discussion with the KCM Trustees. The chair of the Trustees, Richard Hardingham, is aware of the situation. The secretary to the Trustees, Fiona Taylor, will provide the legal

documents which relate to the formation and responsibilities of the trustees which will be examined by the Archdeacon and Diocesan registrar. Once clarity is obtained on a way forward, Laurence, Trustees and Archdeacon will meet. The PCCs will be kept informed of the progress.

Clergy Deployment:

The intention would be:

- | A focal ordained minister in each parish.
- | The Team Rector post to be full-time thereby allowing enough capacity for the associated administration and leadership functions that will be exercised on behalf of the whole team.
- | The Team Vicar will remain a Self-Supporting House-for-Duty post at present. This has the potential to become a stipendiary post. This will however depend on the person in post, the financial situation of the parishes and the diocesan deployment strategy.

Growing Lay ministry:

Key to the missional success of this team would be the encouragement of vocation and the growth of lay ministry. Good examples would be:

- | Running joint nurture groups e.g. Lent Courses, Bible study and introductory Christian courses.
- | Running discipleship programmes such as Pilgrim or Growing Leaders.
- | Training and equipping the children's work volunteers.
- | Training pastoral visitors and growing our teams of pastoral volunteers.
- | With Jenny in post, there is a possibility of training Anna Friends and developing dementia friendly worship and activities.
- | potential of employment of a salaried children/families/youth worker for the Team. (future aspiration)

Housing:

It is proposed that the Team Rector will reside at the KCM Vicarage in Rodmell Road and the Team Vicar will reside at the Vicarage in St Mark's Road.

Both clergy houses would be retained though only one could be allocated as the parsonage house for the Rector and the other would be transferred to the DBF for 'Diocesan purposes.' This is a legal necessity when creating a Team as there can only be one parsonage house. However the scheme would state that the St Mark's Vicarage be the place of residence of the St Mark's minister.

Training Curates:

A Team like this would provide a very good curacy opportunity – the Diocese are seeking settings for curates to be trained where they will experience a rich variety of traditions and pastoral and missional opportunities. While a Team curate will always have a single allocated Training Incumbent, they can also work closely with the other clergy and lay ministers and thus have a diversity of role models. The Training Incumbent need not be the Team Rector and could be a stipendiary or self-supporting minister.

A Process:

Comments and questions are invited through a variety of means, including telephoning or writing to clergy but also via attending extraordinary Zoom Meetings in early March (online or by telephone). Feedback is invited up to Easter Sunday.

As a clear idea emerges from our PCC and congregational conversations and the patronage issue is clarified, we would then work with the Area Dean and Lay Representative on the Archdeacon's steering group (TASG) to bring a paper forward to TASG. If TASG approve it, the Bishop's Council would be advised. The Diocese would then consult the interested parties. After that (depending on the feedback) the Church Commissioners would be asked to prepare a formal scheme and to conduct a public consultation.