

Archdeacons' Parish Visitation

Information and Guidance

Introduction

The Archdeacon's Parish Visitation is a statutory Visitation and should take place every 5 years. In the Diocese of Manchester, such visitations are shared between the Archdeacon, Area Dean and Lay Chair, who will expect to meet with the Parish Priest and Churchwardens. The main purpose is to ensure that everything is in good order and that the legal requirements are being properly adhered to. However, it is also an opportunity for you to reflect where you are up to in terms of the life, mission and ministry of the parish and to share something of that with your Archdeacon/Area Dean. Hence, the second part of the paperwork is based on the three key elements of Bishop Nigel's vision for the Diocese: that congregations grow, that giving increases and that communities be served.

In order for our time together to be as helpful and constructive as possible, please take some time to look through this leaflet and to prepare carefully for the meeting. We would recommend the leaflet is shared and worked through with the Churchwardens, Treasurer and Gift Aid Secretary where applicable.

Part 1 – Inspections

Church

We will want to look around the Church, both outside and inside, and consider the state of the building in relation to the latest Quinquennial Inspection.

Please be prepared to discuss

- the fabric and general state of the building
- progress made on the recommendations in the QI report
- access to the building for those with disabilities
- any surface water charge you may have incurred
- security and insurance
- health and safety
- procedures for banking and the handling of money

Please have available on display your

- Child Protection policy
- insurance policy certificate
- certificates for any faculties that have been granted
- certificates for the electrical inspection, the lightning conductor, the servicing of the boiler, the fire-extinguishers
- Electoral Roll
- a list of any archived Registers and Documents

We will also want to see

- Terrier, Inventory and Log Book and check silver and other major items against the Inventory
- All of the current registers
- The PCC minute book
- The APCM minute book
- The parish's table of fees
- Any contracts and/or paperwork related to the employment of staff (organist, youth worker etc)
- Any licences for the use of music/videos etc in church
- Check condition of Hymn books, Service books and Bibles

Church Grounds and Boundaries

We will want to check the general maintenance, care and safety of the grounds to ensure that all is in line with the Churchyard Regulations, and, if you have one, discuss any issues relating to the graveyard.

Hall (if applicable)

We will want to look around the Hall/Community Centre both outside and inside, and consider the state of the building

As with the Church building, please be prepared to discuss

- the fabric and general state of the building
- any work that needs doing and its costs
- access to the building for those with disabilities
- security and insurance
- health and safety

Please have available the insurance policy certificate

Parsonage House

We will want to be assured that the house is in a good state of repair and that it adequately meets the needs of you and your family. A conversation about general fuel costs and the level of efficiency would be helpful.

Other Properties

We will want to know of any other properties for which the parish has some responsibility, such as a curate's house, church school etc.



Part 2 - Your Church's Vision, Mission and Ministry

...THAT CONGREGATIONS GROW

1. How healthy is the worshipping life of your congregation?

Alive and growing?

Alive and static (those leaving balanced by those coming)?

Ticking along happily

In decline but can be saved

In decline with no hope of revival

Very roughly on an average Sunday what are the numbers in the following ages groups:

0-16 -

16-25 -

25-60 -

60-80 -

80+ -

Baptism policy - Open / conditional?

What is approx the average annual baptisms?

Children under 16 -

Adults -

Do you receive children to Holy Communion prior to Confirmation?

At what age?

Is it a success?

What is approx the average number of confirmations each year?

Children under 16 -

Adults -

Is that trend up? down? level?

Have any Fresh Expressions of church been developed in the parish?

What opportunities might there be?

2. Worship

Is the worship based on Common Worship?

If no - what is it based on?

Do you still use the BCP?

What other services do you hold? Healing Service? Taize?

Might there be opportunities for more?

When was the last time a critical look was taken as to whether the pattern of worship here is relevant today?

Do you have an organist? paid?

Do you have a music group?

Do you have a 4 part choir? Size? Age range?

What opportunities are there for people to explore, grow and develop as Christians?
Prayer groups? Study groups? Christian nurture courses? House groups?

3. What organisations and activities are there for children and young people?
Sunday School? Uniformed Organisations? Youth Group?

Has the PCC discussed the Diocesan Course being recommended as a requirement for all Sunday School Teachers?

What elements of worship are your young people involved in?
Junior choir? Crucifer/Servers? Helping to create or lead worship? Young Sidespersons?
Any youngsters on PCC?!

4. What links are there with local schools?
Are they fruitful for church? Are they fruitful for the school(s)

5. How are the laity empowered and enabled to exercise their ministry?
Lay assistants?
Accredited Pastoral visitors?
Reading the lessons?
Interceding?
Leading acts of worship?
Server / crucifer?

Is it an OLM accredited parish?

Are there any lay or ordained ministries being actively fostered?
Is anyone currently training as a Reader?
for ordained ministry?

Have any of the diocesan officers been to talk to the congregation or PCC about fostering vocations?

What other groups make up the church's life?

Are there any issues of concern that relate particularly to race or inclusion?

...THAT GIVING INCREASES

1. How healthy is the congregation's giving – poor, generous, sacrificial?
2. How tax efficient is regular giving?
3. Have the envelope scheme details been cross-checked in the last 12 months
4. Would your gift aid system withstand an Inland Revenue audit?
5. Has the Diocesan Stewardship Officer visited your parish in the last 5 years?

6. When was your last Stewardship Campaign? How effective was it?
7. Is your parish paying its Parish Share?
8. If not, what prevents it? What might help?
9. Do you tithe money to charities over and above the parish share?

...THAT COMMUNITIES BE SERVED

1. What place does your church have in the local community?
 Community life is rooted in and revolves around the church?
 Being important to the community life?
 “Just there” - no pluses or minuses
 Irrelevant?
2. Roughly what percentage of your normal Sunday congregation live outside the parish boundary?
3. What links are there with other denominations?
4. How could that be developed?
5. What other agencies do you work in partnership with?
6. How well is your church and/or hall used by the local community?
7. Are there any plans for developing or re-ordering the church?
8. Is there potential for sharing buildings/plant?
9. Do you have overseas links? Mission partners?
10. Does your church have a website – that’s regularly updated?

The Future

What is the mission statement of the church?
 If you don’t have one what do **you** think it is?!
 Do you feel the life of this church meets that mission statement?

What are your greatest hopes and dreams for the future?
 What do you fear most about the future of the church here?
 What are the greatest frustrations for you?

What do you do really well and feel that you could share with other churches
 What do you feel you are weak at and would like others to help with?

In light of the review undertaken by the parish and then the Deanery Pastoral Committee,
 what has changed since the report and what effect has it had on the parish?

Can / should this church continue to exist here? Might there be other options?

Where, realistically, do you see this church being in the next 15-20 years?

Please add anything further you would like to talk about so we remember to cover them as well.