

## **A few words from the Vicar ....**

*What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said, 'See, this is new'? It has already been, in the ages before us. (Ecclesiastes 1:9-10)*

Progress continues to be made on the Ainsworth & Radcliffe Team front. In July the PCC held a special meeting to discuss the draft legal paperwork that will establish the new team. The PCC examined the scheme in detail and, following a wide ranging discussion, agreed to support it.

I am writing this article before the deadline set for receiving comments from interested parties has expired (15<sup>th</sup> July), so I do not know yet how the other three PCCs (St Andrew's, St Thomas & St John's and St Mary's) have responded.

However, by the time you read this we will know and, hopefully, their responses will be positive. Assuming this is the case, the draft scheme will be finalised before being sent to Bishop David for approval. Then it will be published by the Church Commissioners and, providing there are no objections, the new team will come into effect.

I suspect of more immediate interest to you all is whether the creation of the team will make any difference to church life here in Ainsworth. Well, in the first instance at least, I expect the change will be marginal at most – so marginal in fact you probably won't notice any difference at all!

I will retain responsibility for Christ Church. Debra, Elaine, Venitia and I will continue to lead worship here as we do now. And as now, occasionally Elaine or I will lead worship in one of the other team churches. The only difference will be that, very occasionally, one of the other team clergy will come here.

Our traditional middle of the road Anglican style of worship will remain the same. Indeed, firm promises have been made that the Churchmanship (i.e. style of worship) in each of the four parishes will not change.

You might notice a degree of change in that, in addition to my parish role, I will have responsibility within the new team for some aspects of ministry in all four parishes, as will the other team clergy.

But I don't think this will mean I will devote any less of my time to this parish than I do at the moment. The fact is, I am currently the Town Centre Chaplain for Bury and I have already picked up some responsibilities in Radcliffe.

Change will become more noticeable in the longer term when one of the stipendiary (i.e. paid) clergy moves on or retires. The Diocese has made it clear there will not be a replacement. Nonetheless, with two Ordained Local Ministers allocated to this parish (Debra is likely to be ordained by then) we need not be too concerned about this.

Whatever the future holds for us, we can be certain that Christ Church will always remain *'The Parish Church of Christ in Cockey, otherwise Ainsworth'* with all of our history and all this entails. We will continue to be the friendly, welcoming church that we all know and love. Indeed, we can be optimistic about the future, for we will continue to thrive and grow if we continue to:

- do the things we do so well;
- be faithful in implementing the mission God has set before us in this parish; and
- be intentional about growing this church and about praying for growth.

Every Blessing

*Dave*