

Benefice planning group

S. Aidan's S. John's S. Paul's

Bulletin 2

10th July 2022

We hope you found our first bulletin useful. If you haven't seen it, please ask your wardens for a copy.

The planning group is now at full strength with a membership now comprising Neville Fowler, Debbie Wood and Maxwell Bladon from S. John's, Lynda Cooper from S. Aidan's and John Woolley, Sue Ganley and Colin Dawson from S. Paul's, facilitated by Richard & Charles Dean, with Fr. Michael Freeman by invitation. Please share your thoughts about anything on our bulletins with any of them.

We met again on the 27th June.

We were asked to consider a name for the new arrangement of our parishes into one benefice. After discussing suggestions such as "The brewery benefice" and "North Burton" we decided to recommend the descriptive "The benefice of S. Aidan, S. John and S. Paul, Burton on Trent" – not particularly "snappy" but true!

With the licensing, on 30th June, of Fr. Michael Freeman as priest-in-charge at S. Paul's in addition to his existing role as incumbent of S. John's in some ways we are already acting as if S. John's and S. Paul's were linked. We hope that this period before Fr. Michael retires will prove helpful in paving the way to a full merger under the next incumbent.

We decided to recommend that S. John's and S. Paul's should each retain their own

PCCs but should consider some joint subcommittees – for example a social subcommittee and a diary subcommittee.

We discussed whether the post of incumbent should be open to both male and female applicants. Some people in our congregations hold strong views on each side of this matter. We shall need the congregations to be consulted and PCCs to decide whether to pass a resolution to place a restriction on those who are invited to apply.

In the last bulletin we mentioned the impossibility of one priest covering both Sunday masses if they remain at their current times. We see only one fair and viable solution – S. Paul's moving half an hour earlier and S. John's half an hour later. This means Sunday masses at S. Paul's at 9.00am and at S. John's at 10.30am.

We have started work on writing the "Benefice profile" on which the advertisement for the post is based and is the document the diocese sends out to prospective applicants. It is used during the interview to check their suitability. We need to describe our town and our parishes, our strengths, weaknesses, our hopes, fears and plans in an honest, open and attractive way.

The public meeting to discuss the closure of S. Aidan's is at 7.30 pm on Monday 25th July in Shobnall Community Centre (the village hall).

Our next meeting is on 18th July.

Please take this bulletin home with you.