



19th January 2009

Dear friends,

When considering applying for my position within the diocese I talked it through with a good friend – a retired priest with many years experience in parish ministry. I was aware that the role would include visits to many PCC meetings – what advice could he give me? “Just be sure to always remember that the churches business is God’s business” he said. Of course he’s right and perhaps it’s something we don’t always remember when we’re in the thick of parish life and what can sometimes feel like an endless round of meetings.

Through our ‘Crew Wanted’ campaign the diocese hopes to resource you - clergy, parish officers and church councils - in renewing and reenergizing the important work of church council’s and at the same time encourage others to join you.

Our aims (which we hope you share) are:

- To remind people that being a member of the church is personal. Membership has implications for each and every one of us (at different times and in different ways perhaps). *The message being conveyed is not always for someone else or the person in the next pew! – sometimes it’s for us.*
- To reconnect personal discipleship with being an active member and offering ourselves to be part of the church council. *How often do we as church leaders, talk of church council membership in such terms?*
- To facilitate clergy, readers & worship leaders, through the provision of resources, to connect these issues to teaching, preaching & worship. *How often is the church council mentioned in your regular act of worship, other than in the notices? How often does the business of the church form part of the intercessions?*
- To tell people that church is great and that it’s good to be part of it! Just stop and think of all those things that your church does within your community – *How often do we give thanks to God for them and share this good news with others? Did you know that in 2007 together as The Church in Wales, local churches and their members gave over £1.75 million pounds to home and world mission causes – the single largest voluntary supporter of charities & good causes in Wales.*
- To remind people that we are part of something much bigger – parishes, deaneries, diocese, a national church, a worldwide communion. *No one is alone in their work for God – there are 80 billion Christians world wide!*
- To celebrate with other people, God’s gifts to each of us and through prayer and discussion together, to find out what God is doing and offering ourselves - *joining in!*

- To give a clear message - that it's about what we can achieve for God together – it's teamwork – *being part of an effective team for God's mission in his world.*

'Crew Wanted' doesn't pretend to have all the answers. The recruitment of new church council members is a challenge in many churches, but we would do well to remember that such challenges face the whole of the voluntary sector and are not specific to the church. Pressures of work and home, time and money affect the lives of us all.

God does not expect the impossible from us! – Finding a team of officers and church council members from a very small elderly congregation might not be possible – but should that be a matter of disappointment and regret? Most other organisations couldn't do so either! It may be that God is calling us to a more radical approach – sharing officers across parishes, working together on a deanery basis or sharing our skills & resources more effectively through a benefice or minster model of working. There is no doubt that in many ways the church of the future will look very different indeed and our structures and business models will have to evolve to effectively serve such a church.

However, we can begin to renew this aspect of church life by using the resources enclosed – to renew connections between the church council and discipleship, mission, belonging, vision, prayer and praise.

I do hope you find these resources helpful and commend them for your use in the run up to your annual church meetings. To be most effective I suggest choosing a specific Sunday sometime before your annual church meeting, to use these resources. 'Sermon Starters' & an All Age worship plan are offered for four different Sundays during the next three months. An A3 poster is enclosed – please display it prominently (enough for one per church) and A5 leaflets * (enough for every member of your congregation) – perhaps give them out with your Sunday news sheet.

I am particularly grateful to all who have so readily contributed to these resources – Revd's Nigel Cahill, Caroline Downs, Irving Hamer & Ian Reed – and to Canon Val Hamer & Briony Davies for the preparation of the lent and discipleship resource booklets.

Further assistance with all aspects of parish development & resources is available from your team of diocesan officers. Please contact them (see 'Who's Who booklet enclosed). They'd love to hear from you!

Kind regards,

Richard D Jones

Parish Resources Adviser – The Diocese of Llandaff

* A5 leaflets may be delivered to you separately – depending on the quantities required at each church.