

Dear Fellow Readers,

Liverpool Diocese Readers Association Committee January 2016 Meeting – Important Information update

I write to share with you some important outcomes arising from last week's Reader Association Committee. This special meeting was called to consider a discussion paper on the subject of 'Diocesan Readers Organisation Structure'. (A copy of this discussion document will be shortly be available on the Diocesan Readers web page). The discussion paper, which I had prepared, was written against the background of numerous Diocesan publications on strategies for Mission e.g. 'The Growth Agenda', 'Fit for Mission'.

Throughout last year I had begun to sense the Spirit moving the Diocese into new directions which then led me to look again at how we as Readers are responding or not, to the renewed call from God to his mission. I became aware of a nagging question in my mind that would not go away! Am I 'Fit for Mission' as a Reader first and foremost? Are we as Readers in the Association 'Fit for Mission'? In particular I was challenged in my role as Warden to consider my leadership role in answering these two questions.

Committee members heard again the words from **Isaiah Ch43**

'Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.'

We **learned** that there was much we could do to improve what we do, and how we do it. It is my belief that we need to **change and adapt** in order that, as an 'army' of Readers, and as committee members, **we are fit for mission**, in this diocese.

The key outcomes of this very well attended committee meeting followed on from a full and very frank discussion undertaken in the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and with the support of the Bishop of Warrington. It was agreed that:

1. **The Reader Committee** will meet twice a year and will be supported by two specialist focus teams. One team will focus on a 'Marketing Recruitment Strategy' whilst the other team will focus on 'Improvements to Reader Communications' which will look in particular the use of social media as part of these improvements. The teams consist of a small number of Reader Committee members.
2. **Deanery Reader Chapter Meetings** will continue to meet where they are working well. Those Reader Chapter Meetings that struggle to bring their Deanery Readers together will consider merging with neighbouring Chapter meetings. The committee also agreed that once a year Readers would meet together in their Archdeaconries. Deanery Reader Chaplains were encouraged to regularly promote Deanery Chapter Meetings and also this new venture into the Archdeaconries
3. **Summer Study Evenings 2016**. The discussion on this proposal focussed on the current demands being placed on many Readers. The competing demands of local church life, i.e. pastoral work, preaching/leadership roles the demands of personal employment, demands of family life particularly caring for children, and older relatives.

I also believe that the themes for the next 3 years, should be focussing on the scriptures for guidance and example, to enable Readers, as lay theologians and church leaders, to share their God given gifts in the parishes, in order to reflect, learn, be prepared for change and to adapt using the examples of faith, trust in the experiences and examples of others in the scriptures.

As a result of our discussions and the concern for Readers welfare the Summer Study Evenings have been reduced to three evenings instead of four. The dates for this year are Tuesday 14th, 21st, 28th June Select Stadium Widnes. There will not be any Thursday evening sessions this year due to the stadium being unavailable.

Committee members were agreed that this discussion paper was very timely. It was also noted that there was a need to continue ensure that, as the Diocesan Mission agenda progresses, the Readers Association continues to review its approach in supporting all Readers in this challenging yet inspiring time.

Spem Webster
Warden of Readers

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