

Isle of Wight Pastoral Area Meeting 24th Sept 2009

Key Points Canon Paul Townsend

- a) Gather all clergy and involve all in the process.
- b) Discuss over and over again, how to deal with subjects such as Masses, funerals, weddings and sacraments, to achieve a common mind.
- c) Make sure existing Pastoral Council and Finance committees see themselves as “transitional”.
- d) New structures established to include:-
 - Pastoral Council
 - Finance and Property Committee
 - Leadership Group
 - Worshipping Communities group/s

Questions and Answers

- a) Can Worshipping Communities give away their overdrafts?

Yes, you will find that poorer situations can be helped by better ones.

- b) How many priests and how many houses do you have?

We have 4 churches and 3 priests but can call upon 3 other “retired” priests as necessary.

- c) How have you improved communications?

We have one full time Admin person and have developed our website and newsletters.

- d) How does individual fund raising work with one bank account?

All the funds go into one centrally held and managed parish account. Bids for funds are managed and prioritised through the Finance and Property committee.

- e) What impact upon weekly income and gift aid has this new arrangement had?

None, slight increase and gift aid all managed centrally.

- f) What are the benefits of centralisation?

It allows better support across the whole community.

- g) Why have the pastoral areas taken the names of geographical areas rather than of Saints as is traditional? Is that part of the plan?

No it has been up to each area. Partly it may have been to avoid confusion and to stop bad feeling between the existing communities – not taking the names of one of the existing groups.

- h) How does the whole parish get to know each other, how far are people spread out in your area.

The community is spread over an area of about 20 miles. However we found that the communities are not just spread geographically, but also in time. There are effectively different communities at the different masses. They come together as groups when sharing a common interest, for example catechists.

- i) What happens to the communities that are suppressed?

Suppression is perhaps an unhelpful canonical term. In order to create one parish of Hampshire Downs, all of the existing parishes had to be canonically suppressed, however in reality the churches and their communities did not change.

In his summing up Fr. Gerard made the point that the parish is a geographical area not one specific church.

There were approximately 76 people attending the meeting.

Meeting closed 8:30pm