

The move towards a single parish in the experience of Hampshire Downs. – Canon Paul Townsend

A Pastoral Area is a geographical area of the diocese within which resources and efforts are shared so as to proclaim more effectively the Good News in the world in which we live

My story:

- The 2005 Conference and the preparatory process was about discerning how we can become more effectively disciples of the Lord and what we need to do so that the Gospel can be proclaimed more powerfully. Describe why this document is important in terms of status.
- I moved to my present parish immediately after the Conference and the first year involved discovering the size and extent of the Pastoral Area.
- Once the work on the boundary had been settled I discussed the creation of a single parish with the Bishop, the Vicar General and the priests who worked in my area. I was convinced that the creation of a single parish would help the development of mission: it would mean having a single parish account so that resources could be applied across the area; everything could be administered by the parish administrator who is now full time; the clergy would work as a team under my leadership. This happened about two years ago.

What did I need to do?

- A lot of discussion and input with the existing pastoral councils explaining that there would be one pastoral council eventually.
- A lot of working with the existing finance committees because they had to work together to the creation of one committee.
- Consultation with the people of each worshipping community and parish.
- Setting up a leadership team
- Responding to the concerns and fears of individuals.

- Issue discussed and approved by the Council of Priests
- The Bishop issued the letter erecting a new parish called Hampshire Downs.
- The new pastoral council, finance committee and worshipping community groups were established and connections between them all and the finance committee established and maintained.

Important ongoing pastoral aspects because becoming a single parish is only a stage on the way.

- A full time administrator who deals with finance, property, personnel and has responsibility for general running eg website
- A part time director of liturgy, adult education and communication.
- A Leadership Team which has responsibility for:
 - The pastoral care of the area
 - Discerning and coordinating the gifts and strengths of the community in the serve of communion and mission
 - Ensuring that the opportunity to celebrate Mass is as many people as possible
 - Fostering the development and growth of all the worshipping communities in the Parish.
 - Monitoring and managing all paid personnel
- The Area Pastoral Council works with the Leadership Team to implement the pastoral plan by discerning the pastoral needs of the parish. The pastoral council advises and supports the Leadership Team in addressing those needs, drawing on the wisdom and experience of the worshipping communities in the Parish.
- The Worshipping Community Pastoral Group addresses the needs and mission of the worshipping community.
- Regular meeting of clergy to decide on the allocation of pastoral responsibilities

Other important items:

- Crucial that the Coordinating Pastor understands the Pastoral Plan and is committed to its principles
- The same has to be true of the clergy who have frequent meetings to pray and to work on the relevant aspects involved the development. They must be united in support of the diocesan plan.
- All groups must meet for prayer and discernment
- Communication