

Summary of responses to proposals to be presented to Bishop

52 sheets given in, 2 blank sheets, 1 sheet unconnected with questions. Of the remaining 49, 13 were categorically against, along the lines of "you cannot have a parish without a priest". 4 were more anxious than positive. 32 were generally positive although expressing clear concerns and varying degrees of awareness of possible challenges. Some were resigned – "it is what it is", "it's better than nothing", "God's will be done".

Responses from those pro the proposals:

Positive points

- We can grow as a community (6)
- We can continue to serve the wider community and continue to oppose injustice and support the marginalised eg refugees (16)
- Empowerment for more lay people (7)
- Having a 5-person team is good (10)
- Making more use of lay ministers is good (11)
- This is a new beginning, not an end.
- We can serve as an example to other parishes in a similar position

Things we will have to do to make this work:

- Create "a formal set of values" (Mission statement?) to ensure our commitment to structural change in the church and the support of the marginalised
- We need to continue to campaign for married and women priests
- Ensure that we have an experienced leadership team and that there is a control mechanism for them (3)
- Ensure that the key role of pastoral worker is suitably filled and supervised(4)
- Lay people need to start working alongside Richard at once
- Patience is the key
- We will need someone with special training to deal with questions re our support of LGBT community
- We need to be Christ-centred to make this work

Concerns:

- Mass attendance will decline if there is no priest (6) so we need a priest for the Sunday Eucharist as often as possible (There is a concern that some people feel that lay ministers are not good enough) (3)
- Maintaining continuity with lay leaders is hard as they move more frequently
- Time constraints are a problem – we need to take into account the age and availability of volunteers, because time commitment is key (6)
- How will the group of 5 leaders be chosen? Community should be involved. How will they be monitored for abuse of power?
- Our liturgy is special – how will we maintain this?

- Financial concerns:
 - Can we ensure all the funding we will need to keep up ministries (3)
 - What about salaries and on-costs for those we employ?
 - We should keep and use all property if we have the workforce and money
 - The presbytery could be valuable (4) but will be a financial challenge
 - Keeping all the property could end up costing parishioners

Responses from those against the proposals:

Positive points

- We can continue to serve the community
- New people in charge might see things that we currently don't

Concerns:

(there is a degree of misconception that the Bishop is choosing not to appoint a new PP)

- A church has to have a priest (13)
- There are plenty of African priests around, one should be appointed (5)
- People will not trust an "outside" priest after Richard stops as non-resident priest. They might be culturally unaware (2)
- We won't have mass every day
- The presbytery should only be for priests
- We might lose use of all the buildings if there is no priest
- "I will leave the parish" (2) People will stop coming to this church
- "I don't like receiving communion from lay people"
- This lay team system will not encourage close community
- Is it sustainable to have everything run by lay people?
- Our outreach work might collapse (2)
- The new team of five might implement unwanted change
- You could get the wrong people in charge
- How will decisions be made? Will they be efficient? What about conflicts?
- What about confessions? Funerals? Who will visit the sick?
- The lay leaders will not be able to do all the sacramental preparation
- Who will offer spiritual support?