

**DIOCESE OF GLASGOW AND GALLOWAY
ST NINIAN'S CHURCH, CASTLE DOUGLAS (SC011079)**

REPORT OF YEAR TWO MAP REVIEW WITH BISHOP GREGOR HELD IN ST NINIAN'S RECTORY

Wednesday 22nd June 2016

Present:

Bishop Gregor Duncan, Canon David Bayne,
Mr Fred Coulthard, Mrs Stephanie Dewhurst, Mrs Ann Gault, Mr Clem Gault,
Miss Sheila MacKenzie, Mr Ian MacQuarrie, Mr Ian Mather, Mrs Jenny Wright

Apologies from: Mrs Sue Beddows Mr Patrick Little

1. Resumé of the past year:

- a. The Rector explained that our MAP team comprised the Vestry plus Mrs Ann Gault, who had substantial previous experience of outreach into the community. He outlined the reasons why our Year Two MAP never got started: Sandra Walsh, our facilitator, had become a member of the congregation though had indicated her willingness to lead and co-ordinate our Year Two MAP; also extra responsibilities placed on the Rector by the Bishop had meant that he had lacked the time for any structured planning. Bishop Gregor expressed his gratitude for all that David had done in the past year, especially as it was in the lead-up to his retirement. He was certain that, with a new facilitator and Sandra's help, work on the MAP could resume, allowing David to stand back and let others take it forward. He added that any work that is done for the next part of the MAP could count towards the parish profile which would need to be carried out during the forthcoming vacancy. David added that, with the exception of the Men's Group, which had taken a break, everything this year had continued as normal.
- b. Jenny Wright distributed copies of her Castle Douglas Community Audit (attached) and outlined some of the more significant factors:
 - i. 25% of children live in families that were classed as being in poverty, i.e. on benefits. (The New Life Church had quoted these statistics which were released by the organisation 'END Child Poverty'.) The New Life Church had started a food bank, to which St Ninian's contributes.
 - ii. The New Life Church minister had described Castle Douglas as 'a community with a big heart'; the Catholic priest had described it as 'retired'. Jenny felt that both statements were accurate; the former was the more positive description but the fact that so many people, especially in our own congregation, were very elderly meant that they were as likely to need support from others as to be able to offer it themselves. Bishop Gregor said that he could understand this but felt that elderly people, while offering companionship to others, also benefited from it themselves. Jenny Wright mentioned that the Bible Study Fellowship was thriving, and that half the membership was from Abbeyfield sheltered housing next door but commented that they had a lot to offer in terms of experience and willingness to reflect and share.
 - iii. Drug and alcohol related problems were the same here as anywhere else, including big cities.

The Rector augmented Jenny's comments, saying that there was a lot of hidden poverty due to low wages e.g. in farming, and unemployment, partly due to changes in the fishing industry. (The Machars area of Galloway was reported to be the poorest part of south west Scotland, including Glasgow). In Castle Douglas Primary School some children had been identified as needing supplementary feeding. Often it was in the 'extras' where the poverty was more obvious e.g. buying equipment for sports activities; also some families often could

not afford school trips and would keep children off school on the day when outings were planned rather than admit that they could not afford to pay. The head teacher of the High School was creating a fund to help children who may not be able to afford their uniform or pay for outings. He wondered whether this was something that St Ninian's might support, in the future, using money from the Simon Ingall Bursary Fund.

2. Plans for the future:

- a. David indicated that later this year he intended to step down as Chair of the Vestry but would then be able to give assistance with planning. Bishop Gregor suggested that the story of how we got to where we are should be included in the parish profile.
- b. The Bishop also suggested that we should consider forming some sort of pastoral visiting team, which could involve taking communion to the housebound and sick. Currently the Rector was just doing it himself; allowing others to help, on a rotation with him, would enable him to step back.
- c. David was to get in touch with the Dean again, re finding a replacement facilitator for St Ninian's.
- d. Bishop Gregor mentioned the new Canon Missioner, Audrey Stewart from the USA, who had been appointed to replace Anne Tomlinson, the former Ministry Development Officer, and she would be commencing her duties in August. She would be getting all the facilitators together for a meeting. Bishop Gregor commented that she was in sympathy with what we were trying to do and he thought that she would be very good.
- e. It was agreed that a separate social committee might be formed to arrange events such as the annual ceilidh, which had been held the previous evening but arranged by Alison and David (with help from other members of the congregation). Ian MacQuarrie commented that he felt that this year's ceilidh had been far better than in previous years because of the wider mix of ages. Whereas previously it had been held for the children and their families only, last night the invitation had been widened to the whole congregation. Rosie MacQuarrie was planning to hold a harvest supper for the congregation in the autumn and Audrey Stewart was to be invited to it.
- f. David said that in the next year we hoped to work on the 'Numerical Growth, Welcome and Integration' strand, inviting the WINGS team to speak to the congregation. Bishop Gregor suggested that asking Drew Sheridan to preach at a service, followed up by his presentation and lunch in the hall would be a good way of engaging the whole congregation. David said that there had already been some growth, demonstrated by an increase – sometimes a doubling – in the numbers attending the 8.30am service of Holy Communion on Sundays. Jenny Wright queried how this service would be covered during a vacancy and Bishop Gregor suggested use of reserved sacrament and lay worship leaders. Jenny pointed out that our two lay readers, Alan Rumble and Douglas Allison, would find it difficult due to distance and/or health problems and that she would not be prepared to take the service every week. David said he had other lay people in mind for training/licensing and would follow that up before the end of the year.
- g. Bishop Gregor indicated that the church should move its focus from membership to discipleship but commented that it could take a long time to establish this pattern. Most churches need an active core but, in a small congregation, it is not possible to do too many things. He added that any progress would be something that we could demonstrate to a new rector.

3. Re the forthcoming vacancy:

- a. Bishop Gregor explained that, late this year or early next year, either he or the Dean would come to outline to the Vestry what would be required. Next year we would need to start working on a parish profile and job description. It would be necessary to

formalize a linked charge with Christ Church, Dalbeattie so that the new rector would be appointed to one charge. The Bishop would appoint an interim priest to work with the Vestry during the vacancy to ensure that pastoral cover was maintained, but he would not undertake any other role of a rector and retired clergy would be required to take services. Finally we would need to advertise e.g. in the Church Times/on the SEC and diocesan websites, or the Bishop might suggest someone he thought might be suitable. A timetable for all of this would need to be established. Bishop Gregor felt that it should not be difficult to appoint someone as it would be a very attractive position, though would not suit everyone. He was hopeful that we might have a new rector in post around Easter 2018. He still anticipated the possibility of a curate either for Dalbeattie/Castle Douglas or for the four charges to include Kirkcudbright and Gatehouse, but with the probability that he/she would live in the Rectory in Dalbeattie. There were two people from the diocese entering training at present, and one of them might be suitable and it would be a good training ground for them. The Rector mentioned that the Vestry at Christ Church would quite like to sell the existing rectory and replace it with a more modern property, but this was still under consideration.

- b. Fred Coulthard enquired whether the stipend of a new rector should be enhanced and Bishop Gregor replied that there was a formal obligation to pay the standard stipend. Some charges did pay an enhanced stipend although this was not encouraged, except perhaps after a rector had been in post for some time.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 12.40pm.