Note of GMC Leadership Group Meeting - 13 July 2024, Kirkstile Community Centre, Dean

Present: Rev Canon Jane Charman (Chair); Audrey Albon, Michael Bonner, Rev Christina Brentnall, Gareth Browning, Catherine Chambers, Clare Chittenden, Brian Furness, Eleanor Gate, Rev Deborah Hoddinott, Stuart Hoddinott, Joan Ingrams, Kris Longshaw, Morna McDowell, Kath Palmer, Rev Barbara Robinson, Rev Ian Rumsey, Rev Wendy Sanders

Apologies: Rev Roy Anetts, Rev Nick Cole, Rev Sue Cole, Jan Collins-Webb, Rev Gill Davidson, Eleanor Ella, David Hallewell, Chris Haslam, Rosemary Riley, Sue Shaw, Rev Alistair Smeaton, Rev Andrea Ward, Pete Ward

1. Wendy Sanders led the opening devotions.

2. Jane welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. The memo of the GMCLG meeting on 23 March 2024 was approved.

4. Matters arising: Jane briefly outlined developments on Living in Love and Faith at the recent General Synod. In discussion, GMCLG agreed the importance of conveying the message that the church is there for all, irrespective of a person's views or gender identity.

See also note below from Rosemary Riley on Big Green Week.

5. News from the churches was exchanged.

6. Update on ministry capacity and discussion to inform next steps
Jane welcomed Rev Ian Rumsey, who was at GMCLG for the first time. She noted that Sue and Nick Cole had completed their ordination training and had been deaconed. Christina Brentnall has served her deacon year and has been priested. Deborah Hoddinott has completed her curacy and will be licensed as an associate priest. Sue, Nick, Christina and Deborah will all serve across the Anglican churches of the GMC. The Methodist ministers Paul and Kina Saunders have retired. Paul's successor, Rev Nick Baker, will be inducted on 1 September 2024. He is supported by his wife, Petra. The Methodists have appointed a family worker, Sam Morris, who will move into the URC manse in Workington.

It has not proved possible to appoint to the half-time clergy post in Brigham, Clifton, Dean and Mosser or to the full-time clergy post in the Cockermouth Area Team. Difficulty in appointing is common across the whole country, especially the north and west. We need to decide whether we wish to use on deploying alternative staff members or in some other way the money not spent on stipends.

Those present discussed in small groups where they considered the gaps were since we have not been to appoint those clergy. The following suggestions were made:

- a named "go-to person" for each church who knows the congregation and its community well

- better pastoral care for older people, especially those who used to come to church but no longer can

- improved pastoral visiting; publicising to congregation and community how to seek a home visit or home communion

- appointing someone to focus on children, youth and families. In this context it was noted that the Deanery Network Youth post is being advertised again. Coordination would be needed with this person, if appointed, and also the Methodist family worker.

- improved communication / administration. (There was disagreement on the need to spend money employing someone for this.)

Jane noted that we are not generally short of people to lead worship or preside at the eucharist. If a church with less frequent services wished to return to weekly provision, this should be possible.

7. Working with the Garden Planner: This was allegedly developed by the Diocese in collaboration with ecumenical partners. However, it had not filtered down to URC and Methodist representatives present. Jane handed out copies of the planner and accompanying booklet for each church so that they can discuss in their respective council how it might be used in their fellowship/community. The Garden Planner is less prescriptive with regard to Mission Communities than were the earlier Archway criteria, instead promoting six ideal "ingredients" for a Mission Community. Discussion on how the GMC might make use of the Garden Planner will be a key item for the September GMCLG meeting.

8. "Good Grief" Café (name as yet to be decided!): This is an initiative by Linking Lives, with the assistance of Karen Dutton, who has been providing training in bereavement care for a number of years. The proposal for a "café" for the bereaved, to be run fortnightly or monthly was circulated with the papers for today's meeting. A planning meeting involving various CTiCA clergy and other interested parties was scheduled to take place on 24 July. The bereavement group currently run by Hospice at Home is likely to join in the proposed café. It is hoped that funding may be available and that the café might start in September.

9. Approaches to Safeguarding: This item was postponed to the next GMCLG meeting.

10. Future events:
- 14 July: Paul and Kina Saunders' farewell service and lunch
- 27 July: Buttermere Camino
- 2025 Gathering: around the same time of year as the last one, i.e. April. Suggested theme = Artificial Intelligence.

11. AOB:
- A free framed photograph of King Charles III is available for each church. Jane to circulate details.
- Eco Church are updating their forms and the criteria for each level are changing. Churches were urged to complete their current level before the change if possible.

12. Date of next meeting: 21 September 2024 at St Cuthbert's, Lorton. Loweswater to take the notes.

13. Closing Prayer: The Grace was said.

Note on Big Green Week

What a week it was - the Big Green Week is now officially over and I think residents of Lorton Vale can be proud of the efforts they made. We began with the wildlife survey in St Cuthbert's church yard where we identified a great number of species, particularly flowers - 44 to be exact. This was followed the next day by an Eco Service in St Cuthbert's and then on Tuesday we held The Big Green Quiz in Loweswater Village Hall. This was a hotly contested evening, won by just a point or so by the team led by Barbara Robinson - they won a hedgehog house kindly donated by the Melbreak Communities and Linking Lives - a charity from Cockermouth that teams up volunteers with lonely people - https://linkinglives.uk/project/cockermouth/. During the evening we were entertained by the Sing Owt/Wild Chorus - a very talented group of singers.

The highlight of the week was the Big Green Fair held in Lorton on Saturday 15th June. Unfortunately we were not helped by the weather (it poured with rain all day!) But those that did manage to attend were rewarded with some highly informative talks by:
Cumbria Council Waste Reduction Team
Lee Jackson - the Climate Emergency
Cumbria Master Composters
Let's Eat SLOW (Seasonal, Local, Organic, Waste free)
Cumbria River's Trust.

In tandem with the fair we also held a Swap Shop in the school playground which proved popular, especially the plants. Anything left over was donated to charity shops.

The week concluded with another Eco Service at St Bartholomew's Loweswater.

Many thanks to all those who helped including members of the Melbreak Communities Wildlife Groups (too many to mention them all here), Deb Watson who organised the school surveys and presentations and was my right-hand man in all matters to do with set up and dismantling and Jane Charman who oversaw the Swap Shop.
There were wonderful wildlife displays presented in St Cuthbert's. These included the results of the wildlife survey carried out in the churchyard the previous Saturday and many displays from the various Melbreak Communities wildlife groups - Curlews, Swifts, Barn Owls and Hedgehogs. There were also a number of Bird and hedgehog boxes on display. We were also thrilled that 4 local schools (Dean, Braithwaite, Paddle and Lorton) took part in the week by carrying out bio-diversity surveys in the school grounds and then came along to St Cuthbert's on Friday afternoon to present their findings. Barbara Robinson also led a short climate change service for the schools.

Rosemary Riley