

Our Ref: +RT-ADs/ajh

18<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**To: All Licensed Clergy, All Chaplains, Churchwardens and Chapelwardens, Parish Officers, All Readers, PTO, Honorary Assistant Bishops, Area Deans, Assistant Area Deans, Lay Deans, Deputy Lay Deans, Diocesan Staff, Diocesan Registrar**

Dear Brothers and Sisters

Many of you would have been looking forward to the lifting of restrictions in this coming week. Sadly, we have to wait a little longer, so as to be in a more secure place in regard to vaccines and variants. We want to thank you for your continued patience and faithful service in seeking to keep all safe at this time of challenge. Thank you! There have been a few concessions made. You will be aware that it is now possible for weddings and funerals to be held with more than 30 people if appropriately physically distanced. The latest update to what this means for churches can be found here <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance>

This week has also been one of important meetings for the diocese with Bishop's Council, Bishops' Staff and Area and Lay Deans all meeting. There has been some significant progress made by a small group in focusing some of the priorities from the vision and strategic plans we have been working to over the past few years. The Bishop's Council affirmed this direction of travel which seeks to ensure that all our work will be as local, sustainable and positively impactful as we can make it. The diocesan support services will therefore be reshaped in line with our diocesan strategy and focused on the threads of work that have been identified as most significant.

Alongside the reshaping of the support team based at Flourish House, there is also work continuing on the discerning of all ministries lay and ordained and the development of further pioneering, chaplaincy and lay, focal ministry. Three of our deaneries have been piloting work in this area and during the autumn we will be encouraging all deaneries to consider how this will impact their mission plans and enhance them.

Cont'd ...

**The Rt Reverend Ruth Worsley**  
Bishop of Taunton  
The Bishops' Office | The Palace | Wells | Somerset | BA5 2PD  
01749 672341 | [bishop.taunton@bathwells.anglican.org](mailto:bishop.taunton@bathwells.anglican.org)

[www.bathandwells.org.uk](http://www.bathandwells.org.uk)

Page 2  
18<sup>th</sup> June 2021

It is clear that some changes are necessary due to reduced Common Fund contributions and yet we are also aware that there are increased possibilities in terms of additional lay and focal ministry in our local communities and in engaging with other partners beyond our diocese.

Change is always challenging, and we invite you to join with us in prayer for all that is taking place just now. In particular, we ask for your prayers for the immediate next steps. We are very grateful for all that Sharon Kindleysides has brought us as CEO/Diocesan Secretary for the diocese since her arrival last year. However, having re-considered her own position and the challenge of commuting from Ely etc., she has decided to leave her role. She goes with our thanks and blessing.

This will require some interim measures in terms of leadership of the reshaping of the diocesan support services. In regard to this, Archdeacon Adrian will give some of his time over the next 4 months to this with support from others. This is sensitive work and affects many of our support staff and will result in some redundancies as well as reshaping of roles. Your care and prayer will be much appreciated.

Archdeacon Simon will be overseeing some of the governance work and communications in all its spheres. He also chairs the Vacancy in See Committee which is undertaking the work around appointing a new diocesan Bishop. Wide consultation is required for this and you can find details as to how you can join in, here <https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/who-we-are/how-the-diocese-works/new-bishop/>

Archdeacon Anne will be overseeing the safeguarding work and take an oversight role for all aspects of well-being across the diocese, an area which we will all recognise has been most challenged due to our current circumstances! These changes will all require others to step into new responsibilities both within Flourish House and in the wider diocese, so please pray for all concerned.

During this coming week, our deacons will be going on retreat prior to their ordination as priests on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> June. We are delighted that this can take place in the Cathedral together this year. On 1<sup>st</sup> July we will be welcoming our new cohort of curates who will be licensed as lay curates before being ordained deacon in September, at Michaelmas. Your prayers for them and for all of us, as a Church, as we emerge from this pandemic, are really appreciated. Thank you!

Cont'd ...

**The Rt Reverend Ruth Worsley**  
Bishop of Taunton  
The Bishops' Office | The Palace | Wells | Somerset | BA5 2PD  
01749 672341 | [bishop.taunton@bathwells.anglican.org](mailto:bishop.taunton@bathwells.anglican.org)

[www.bathandwells.org.uk](http://www.bathandwells.org.uk)

Page 3  
18<sup>th</sup> June 2021

At yesterday's Bishops' Staff Meeting we reflected on the Lord's Prayer and those important patterns and practices of prayer in our lives. We recognised that many of those patterns have had to adapt in recent times for all of us across the diocese, but our awareness of God's grace and presence remains as a constant. The words from the Morning Prayer liturgy come to mind...

*'... the day lies open before us, let us pray with one heart and mind... As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and for ever. Amen.'*

We continue to be so thankful for the ministries you continue to offer through these times of uncertainty with all the fears and hopes they contain. May these words encourage us as we seek God's will and pray for God's kingdom to come.

With our prayers

+ *Rue*

*Adrei*

*Aree*



**The Rt Reverend Ruth Worsley**  
Bishop of Taunton  
The Bishops' Office | The Palace | Wells | Somerset | BA5 2PD  
01749 672341 | [bishop.taunton@bathwells.anglican.org](mailto:bishop.taunton@bathwells.anglican.org)

[www.bathandwells.org.uk](http://www.bathandwells.org.uk)