

The Rectory
High Street
Avebury
Wilts
SN8 1RF
01672 539643

March 1st 2013

Dear Bishop Nicolas,

Re: Let's Talk

I am writing on behalf of the Upper Kennet Churches Benefice Council in response to the 'Let's Talk' initiative and enclose a copy of the Benefice Strategic Plan. The council felt very strongly that the whole plan be submitted, as it contains SWOT analysis, comparative data on common issues, our 5 year plan for mission and ministry and a detailed account of what each parish is hoping to achieve. This letter is attached to the 5 year Big Dreams section. The plan is a working document and will be fully updated to show progress or lack thereof in July each year. A key named person in most of the parishes has responsibility for co-ordinating an update for each PCC meeting.

During our discussions the following points were raised for sharing with you

- That the Benefice Council welcomed the initiative and felt it needed to be approached as a two way process, with an equal emphasis on listening to each other at parish and diocesan level
- That the level of bureaucracy faced by parishes in respect of changes to church buildings/facilities was daunting and seriously hindering the mission aims of the churches. We are blessed with able people willing to tackle the paperwork and still find it daunting and downright disheartening when faculties for facilities designed to encourage growth takes years to gain approval.
- That the diocese gives consideration to the funding of a Deanery Youth Mission Officer to enable and facilitate well-planned and effective ministry to young people between the ages of 13 and 20 across a very wide geographical area.

In addition, the Council wishes you to know that we believe one of the key callings on us as Christians and as leaders is to challenge injustice, and to be vocal in politics and within the financial world, questioning ethics and work practices.


We are encouraged by the appointment of our new Archbishop of Canterbury and the stance he is already taking with financial institutions and government.

The preaching team in our benefice is focussed on making the gospel message relevant to the lives of our local people and challenging complacency in matters of social justice.

While recognising the work you are already doing in respect of social justice issues, we wish to encourage all our Diocesan Bishops to be **more** vocal and proactive in questioning the ethical underpinnings of political decision making and within financial institutions.

Please be reassured of our continued prayers for your ministry amongst the people of the Diocese

Yours sincerely


Maria Shepherdson

Priest-in-Charge