

Estates Ministry Network

Diocese of Oxford



Estates Ministry Network

16 January 2025, St Peter's Aylesbury

- Pete welcome
- +Steven prayer
- Activity leading to prayer:
 - Mountain challenges
 - Prayer Wall (what will support your mission and ministry?)
 - Sharing stories
- Lunch
- Pete: Network for all, welcoming people from other teams e.g. from Education team. Everyone supposed to be here!
- Discussion:
 - Not seeking to answer questions. Seeking to come up with the right questions including questions for +Steven and wider questions which to support and encourage estates ministry across the diocese
 - Clergy conference up in May: next network meeting at the clergy conference + seminar, possible on youthwork on estates. Plan for this network – 4 times a year
 - Questions (transcribed from sheets gathered from tables):
 1. In the same way that we train LLMs can the diocese train children and youth workers so they can have a certificate? (We have resources/staff for this in diocese already)
 2. How can we deliver appropriate training that connects with shift workers?
 3. Peer mentoring (time limited 6 wks/6 months?)
 4. How do we “attach” church & the children and youth workers to parts of the parish where the physical building is not present? How do we link people back to church?
 5. How would funding be made available for housing for key workers?
 6. How would money be provided to employ some person with fundraising expertise to help churches get grants?

7. How do we record numbers of people on benefits so church can apply for grants
8. Recognition that some churches can't access funding because of "postcode lottery" means they seem affluent. Example – estate parish in Windsor in top 25% parishes (wealth) but this isn't representative of church
9. (Can we develop) A hub for grant searching, grant specimen applications and practical tips (at the moment taking a lot of time going backwards and forwards)?
10. Grants more useful for regular resources rather than for people
11. How do we find fund matching? Need lists and time to find funds e.g. contactless giving
12. Estates ministry (equivalent to) the church of the poor so majority on universal credit hence very little giving
13. Clergy gifted in estates ministry need accommodation. Can we buy property and charge below market rate (cover mortgage) to enable church workers to afford these roles? (e.g. children and youth workers and children's and families ordained ministers)
14. Housing is an issue for everyone, not just key workers.
15. Transparency/register of what people are doing so we don't reinvent the wheel.
16. Single issue estates ministry newsletter termly, fundraising, safeguarding, employment.
17. Help one another to discern, set goals, keep accountable
18. Encourage one another, help discern steps
19. Church partnerships could be really useful, depending on how relationship with the other local churches work
20. Partnership work if remain very locally based
21. Working with other churches for mission – networking – how can cross deanery border/ecumenical partnerships be facilitated and supported?
22. Celebrate the small
23. Seeing more young people outside/socialising out of home – church detached youth work
24. What does "estates ministry" consist of? Multicultural – how to connect Muslim/Hindi/Punjabi – meeting points

Other points/feedback/reinforcing points above:

- Some churches prevented from accessing e.g. Urban fund because of the affluence of the wider area that is not representative of the estate
- We don't want to use our C&YP bid to delay action e.g. training doesn't need to wait until we've got SDF funding! We've got the people (Phil Cooke, Andrew Hayes, Kathryn Aboud and other DEs) who can provide
- If churches/clergy are interested in grant funding how do we train people in appropriate data collection to enable access. (Grants are in decline)
- There are ways to be creative e.g. grant from waste company to refurbish windows in hall resulting in increased hire of hall resulting in income that funds youthwork
- Whatsapp group – talk about at conference whether to set up one group/individual deaneries or something in between
- Understanding what all the initiatives are – could we develop a database of what those in the network are doing so that those involved in similar initiatives can work closely together e.g. enable those who are running community gardens to learn from each other.

20/1/25 Added via email from Sophia Popham:

Keep in view and celebrate/value the idea of doing things small and cheaply with what you've got.

Because we tend to focus on big and paid for stuff: the idea of paying someone to do the work, getting funding for that, which is a perfectly valid model, but has some disadvantages: it's short term and brings in people who don't know the area and maybe don't live there either.

And one advantage is of DIY is it fits the culture you are in, and people do it themselves, often in little teams, because no one person can do it on their own and that can make it easier to keep going.

It's often small, and it's fragile in a different way, depending on people rather than funding. It can look rough round the edges (or at the centre!) to the institution.

I really liked what Bishop Steven said about resourcing, I came across a church in Hull who asked a neighbouring church if they could borrow some soft play equipment, and the richer church gave them some spare bits for their new group.