

## **STROUDS' MOTION TO REVIEW THE PROCESS FOR FILLING CLERGY VACANCIES**

### **PERSONAL REJOINDER TO BISHOP ROBERT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2018 MOTION**

AS the only surviving Synod representative from Holy Trinity Amberley that has served throughout the 5 years since the Motion was first suggested by Amberley in 2018, I would like the opportunity briefly to respond to Bishop Robert's Letter of June this year that was written on behalf of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Group. This has to be my sole view as our Parish Priest the Reverend John Spiers has now retired due to ill health, leaving Amberley in another Interregnum and therefore relevant to the Motion seeking improvements to the procedure for filling clergy vacancies .

Various points arise from DMPG Response namely:

1. First the DMPG state their objective is to fill Clergy vacancies "in the best possible time "and "with the best outcome ". Clearly these are excellent objectives but this is nothing new and must have always been the objectives of the Diocese .
2. Secondly the DMPG advocate that each Benefice should keep it's Profile "as a living document" to be ready for a vacancy and to inform other priorities . While this appears to be put forward as a new initiative it is more likely to be a reminder . Again this is nothing new as most Parishes would be doing their best to keep the Profile up to date in any event .  
In essence we seem to be back where we started with nothing new from the Diocese to improve the vacancy procedure
3. This Synod put forward the Motion with unanimous support in 2018 so one would hope that tonight's Agenda would offer an opportunity for discussion by our members to consider whether this Synod was willing to explore new ideas . This is against the background that our Rural Dean Sue Murray and our Chair Margaret Sheather were somewhat pessimistic about continuing the debate when they emailed me on 29th June this year regretting that "we do not expect any further response " from Bishop Robert and the DMPG.
4. To demonstrate a current example of the extent of the problem at Amberley - just consider this .
  - Feb 2023 Rev Spiers announces his retirement due to ill health
    - no notice of retirement in Diocesan News Letter
  - June 2023 Four months later the Rev Spiers leaves the Parish
    - official interregnum starts
    - no notice of the retirement in Diocesan News Letter
    - no notice of the potential vacancy
  - October 2023 - Ten months have now elapsed since notice of retirement with temporary clergy valiantly conducting 2 services each Sunday in addition to funerals and weddings . The Parish has its first meeting to be told about the options in a month's time
- 5 .The question remains can we offer to the DPMG some practical initiatives that would ease the burden experienced by Parishes to reduce the length of each Interregnum or are we stuck for the time being .

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