

**Stroud Deanery Diocesan Synod Motion**  
**Response from the Bishop of Tewkesbury,**  
**Chair of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Group**

As has been previously stated, we engage with each vacancy to deliver the best outcome we can for each in the best possible time. Both Archdeacons, who lead this process, are very committed to this and are working hard with an increased number of vacancies at present. We certainly don't do anything to slow down the process.

The work of Ali Mepham as Senior Interim Minister is also significant in working with Benefices where change is needed – Stow on the Wold has been a good recent example and has led to an excellent appointment of a new Incumbent with a renewed vision. St Paul and St Stephen in Gloucester similarly. In other cases where there are no or few issues to be addressed we simply progress to advert and interview.

Part of the Deanery Strategic planning will we hope lead to each benefice keeping their 'profile' as a living document not just in case there is a vacancy but to inform the missional and pastoral priorities.

I do also have to add that the context is challenging – numbers of stipendiary clergy are still declining despite an increase in vocations and ordinations as there are still more retirements. In some cases we are getting few, if any, applications and it is therefore taking a number of attempts to appoint but this is achieved eventually.

*June 2023*