

# **ANGLICAN CHURCH IN LUXEMBOURG**

## **VISION DAY - 20 MAY2017**

### **Summary record of proceedings/conclusions**

The meeting opened at 10.32 hrs. with the Rev'd Paul Vrolijk, Archdeacon of North-West Europe, in the chair.

Mr Vrolijk began the meeting by reading Psalm 127 and an extract from chapter 14 of the Gospel according to St. John. These readings were followed by a prayer.

Mr Vrolijk ascertained that the participants in this meeting were representative of long-term and more recent arrivals in Luxembourg, some having been here for over 40 years.

He explained that a draft Parish Profile providing information for candidate chaplains had been drawn up. This could, if necessary, be modified following the present discussions.

One of the principle purposes of the meeting was to determine the `person specifications` to be sent to candidates, namely the attributes being sought by those responsible for interviewing and appointing the new chaplain.

The Archdeacon had held a meeting concerning the vacancy with the Church Council in March 2017 and had conducted an exit interview with the Rev'd Mr Lyon. The present meeting is being organised in order to elicit input from the congregation.

The proposed timescale is as follows; the Parish Profile and the Person Specifications should be ready in two or three weeks. These will, following a meeting of the Church Council, be forwarded to the diocese which will publish a vacancy advertisement in the Church of England newspaper `The Church Times` indicating a deadline for receipt of applications. This advertisement will appear over a number of weeks, hopefully starting in June. The Chaplaincy representatives will be involved in the compilation of a shortlist of perhaps 3 or 4 candidates who will be interviewed in Luxembourg, probably in September or October. The interviewing panel will comprise Bishop Innes, the Archdeacon and two representatives of the chaplaincy. The chosen candidate will then be subject to `safeguarding checks` which could take some time. A further delaying element could be the possible need for the appointee to give notice to his or her present parish.

There are currently several vacancies in the diocese, notably in France.

**Parish Profile** The meeting, working in two groups, then considered the Parish Profile. The following strengths and characteristics of the chaplaincy were deemed to be significant:

The People, their friendliness and caring qualities (10 mentions)

Diversity, inclusiveness, welcoming nature and sense of belonging (6 mentions)

Resources - the chaplaincy is well resourced (4 mentions)

Voices/music (4 mentions)

Group of willing worshippers (3 mentions)

Importance of the Eucharist and liturgy (3 mentions)

The Chaplaincy is a focus for worship in the English language (2 mentions)

Outward looking and acting (2 mentions)

Emphasis on the family (2 mentions), linked to children's ministry (2 mentions)

Long-term presence in Luxembourg (2 mentions)

Intelligent people (2 mentions)

Encouragement of spirituality through liturgy (1 mention)

Breakfast bible study is important (1 mention)

Thought-provoking (1 mention) and a space for spiritual and metaphysical thinking (1 mention)

An inspiration for life (1 mention)

Generational renewal (1 mention)

Yearning for God (1 mention)

An encouraging community (1 mention)

An anchor (1 mention)

Fearless (1 mention)

We are free to be Christians in the community (1 mention).

**It was then concluded that the following five characteristics were particularly important:**

The people (open, warm, diverse and inclusive)

Their intelligence (positive, discerning)

The chaplaincy's rich resources (people and things)

The music (its variety, talent, richness)

The quality of worship and teaching.

**Opportunities and Challenges** The meeting next considered the opportunities that the new incumbent would have and the challenges that he would face. The following were mentioned:

Opportunities:

Working with young people, including contacts with schools (9 mentions)

The congregation's gifts for use in the community (6 mentions)

The possibility of harnessing the congregation's talents for the church and the community (3 mentions)

The provision of more resources for charity (1 mention)

The involvement of the congregation in other church activities (1 mention)

The development of prayer outside services (1 mention)

The possibility of widening the church's ministry geographically (1 mention)

Working with small groups (1 mention)

Becoming more a weekday church, including contacts with the workplace (1 mention).

#### Challenges:

People's lack of availability and reluctance to volunteer (8 mentions)

Ministering to an ageing congregation (3 mentions)

Problems caused by housing and living costs, peripheralisation and the problems caused by many living far from the centre of worship (3 mentions)

Threats posed by Brexit (2 mentions)

Stimulating younger people and families 2 mentions)

Recruiting a chaplain and possible housing problems (2 mentions)

Dealing with the changing legal framework in Luxembourg (1 mention)

Finding crèche helpers (1 mention)

Community pastoral care (1 mention)

Maintaining church unity during the interregnum (1 mention)

Becoming extrovert in mission and outreach (1 mention)

Relying more on God (1 mention)

Stopping the chaplaincy from being invisible and irrelevant (1 mention).

The meeting was adjourned for lunch at 12.40 hrs and resumed at 13.40 hrs.

After lunch the meeting, working in two groups, considered the person specifications to be drawn up. These were divided into three categories; (i) experience, (ii) skills, knowledge and competences and (iii) general attributes.

(i) Experience:

Pastoral experience of a varied nature, out of his/her home community, including dealing with hidden social problems (11 mentions)

Experience of initiating new ministry projects and managing change (5 mentions)

Experience with outreach (4 mentions)

Experience of working in a diverse (culturally, ethnically, linguistically, religiously) and mobile community (3 mentions)

Experience in high-level negotiations (3 mentions)

Experience in working independently, away from other clergy (3 mentions)

Leadership experience with volunteers and lay pastors (3 mentions)

Prior experience outside the church, e.g. business, financial, legal (3 mentions)

Successful experience in teamwork (2 mentions)

Proven experience in working with young people (2 mentions)

Experience in working with older people and in a multi-generational congregation (2 mentions)

Experience in training and monitoring trainee clergy (2 mentions)

Experience in ecumenism (2 mentions).

(ii) Skills, knowledge and competences:

Spirituality in worship and in all aspects of his/her approach, including in relations with others, as well as in leadership style

Pastoral skills

Strategic leadership and negotiation skills

Proven organisational ability (energy, time management, ability to delegate, etc.)

Competence in teaching, training and counselling

Linguistic skills (French, German useful) (Must be able to work through English)

Familiarity with a wide variety of worship.

(iii) Attributes:

Interested in people, approachable (both ways) empathetic and a good listener (9 mentions)

Good sense of humour (7 mentions)

Resilient (4 mentions)

Adaptable (3 mentions)

Of high moral integrity (1 mention)

Spirituality (1 mention)

Socially concerned (1 mention)

Being open to 'other strands' (1 mention)

Relevant but concise preaching/relevant to the modern world (1 mention)

Inspirational (1 mention)

A team player (1 mention)

Perceptive (1 mention)

Fun to work with (1 mention)

Able to preach without notes (1 mention)

Divinely reckless/courageous (1 mention).

Without their being put to the vote, there appeared to be general acceptance of these personal specifications.

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The Archdeacon was hopeful that a chaplain could be found in the near future. Luxembourg was considered a significant and interesting chaplaincy that should attract a suitable incumbent.

The Archdeacon concluded the meeting with a prayer.

The meeting ended at 15.45 hrs.

*Bryan Rose*