**Dyffryn Clwyd Mission Area Review**

**Summary of Key Recommendations**

**Recommendation One:**

It is clear that a lot of hard work has happened during lockdown to re-organise worship patterns so that they are easy to understand. This is a very positive step forward and it is particularly encouraging that the churches have worked together to agree a fixed time for each place of worship.

It is now time to begin the harder work of developing the spiritual identity of each church to provide consistency of worship style that can be communicated and publicised effectively. Done well, this should lead to spiritual and numerical growth.

The MAC should develop a Mission Action Plan, ready for implementation by June 2021, with SMART objectives. This means that the recommendations should be:

* Specific
* Measurable
* Achievable
* Realistic
* Time-framed

This plan should identify opportunities and locations for growth that need investment of time and resources. The MAC should draw on the mapping information available on the diocesan website in developing this plan and ensure that the MAP reflects the unique socio-economic and demographic profile of the Mission Area. The variance from the national and diocesan average in the following areas is particularly noteworthy:

* The age profile of the local communities
* The level of education
* The proportion of Welsh speakers
* The proportion identifying as Christian

Is there currently an attitude of ‘in-drag’ rather than ‘outreach’ in the Mission Area? By having a nice building with fresh coffee, is the church really fulfilling its mission? How is the church present in its local communities? How is it reaching out to its community? An audit of what the MA is doing to reach out of its building should be part of its Mission Action Plan.

The following questions should be addressed in the Action Plan:

* Where is the prayer?
* Where and how will the explicit proclamation of the good news of Jesus take place?
* Is there a strategy for evangelism?
* To undertake the above, what needs ‘dropping’?
* What training needs are there?
* How are those training needs going to be met?

**Recommendation Two:**

To develop the weekly Chapter meeting to include the Mission Area Wardens and all those involved in the various ministries and mission development. This would support the key principle of shared ministry that is at the heart of Mission Areas in this diocese ad allow this meeting to become the genuine hub of ministry for the Mission Area. This would make the Mission Area more dynamic and enable it to make decisions dynamically and inclusively.

**Recommendation Three:**

To enable clergy and lay members to attend Diocesan ‘Leading Your Church into growth’ events.

To enable ‘LYCIG’ locals in each worshipping community by June 2021.

The Diocesan Director of Resources, Tracey White, will provide additional support in the implementation of this recommendation.

**Recommendation Four:**

Spirituality: It was disappointing that there were few indications of what the churches were there for: there was little physical evidence of the role of Jesus. Very few of the people met were able to articulate what God was doing in the church or Mission Area.

Following on from LYCIG local, a series of discipleship courses need to be introduced by December 2021.

Consideration should also be given to using and adapting the display boards being rolled out for Pilgrim Churches.

**Recommendation Five:**

A very positive feature of Dyffryn Clwyd Mission Area is the number of churches that are open every day. Once current Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, all of the churches in the Mission Area should be re-opened to extend this important welcome once again. All churches should be registered on the Explore Churches website by June 2021 and opportunities for increasing the ministry of hospitality and welcome embraced wherever possible.

Online presence can be further developed through VR tours and exploring other opportunities such as ‘small pilgrim place’ and ‘well hopper’.

**Recommendation Six:**

Tourism is a major opportunity for the churches in Dyffryn Clwyd Mission Area to work together in creative way to develop a fresh ministry to visitors and pilgrims. Many of the churches of the MA already see themselves as centres for pilgrimage. However, there does not seem to be a ‘joined-up’ and coherent approach. This could be a major unifying project for the MA and transform how the different centres relate to one another.

We believe that Llanynys represents a significant and very exciting opportunity for a Mission Area initiative, possibly working with the diocese and local people, to investigate the purchase of the adjacent car park and land with a view to develop a pilgrimage centre, forming the hub of the MA pilgrimage strategy.

This could include:

* Re-ordering the interior of the church with good interpretation to tell a coherent story and share its many treasures
* Scope for a modern Monastic community as a centre for pilgrimage
* A compelling tourist destination
* Developing a residential property to generate rental income
* A community garden/growing project
* A place of rest and refreshment as an offer to walkers, cyclists and other pilgrims.
* Glamping pods as a source of income

This project is challenging but potentially very exciting indeed. A detailed feasibility study and business plan will be essential: this could be jointly funded by the diocese and the mission area.

**Recommendation Seven:**

All churches with a regular Sunday attendance below 10 must begin to consider prayerfully their mission and vision for the future and articulate this in a detailed plan. The churches currently in this position are Llangynhafal, Llanynys, Efenechtyd, Cyffylliog and Clocaenog. These plans will be reviewed in 12 months’ time and a decision made about the future at that point. It will be essential to identify missional opportunities for these church buildings if they are to remain open.

The steady decline in attendance at Llanarmon Yn Ial and Llanfwrog is noted with concern and the MAC should consider including these churches as part of this recommendation before their situation worsens.

**Recommendation Eight:**

Review the deployment of the Shared Ministry team, including the stipendiary clergy. Do the current groupings need to change? Things change over time and this could be a good opportunity, under new leadership, to review the inherited situation. Is travelling through another grouping to reach a church a sensible use of time and petrol for the Shared Ministry Team? Do pastoral responsibilities need to change to ensure equilibrium of workload and best use of each individual’s gifts?

**Recommendation Nine:**

There is some excellent children and young people work going on, the chaplaincy team at Ysgol Bryn Hyfryd needs to be commended and it is encouraging to see the work of the Youth and Children’s Chaplain at the heart of the Mission Area. She is well-positioned to lead the work outlined in this recommendation, ensuring that it is self-sustaining, and with support from the wider team as appropriate.

The reforming of the Open the Book team should be an urgent priority – this is also a great example of lay/clerical collaborative ministry.

Likewise, a clear and coherent children and young people’s strategy needs to be developed to provide ‘flow through’. The Diocesan Schools and Youth team will be happy to help.

Train lay leaders in providing spiritual leadership so that young people’s work is not secular.

**Recommendation Ten:**

The Mission Area Property Committee should prioritise recommendations for the MAC about the future of the Cloisters Suite of buildings in Ruthin by September 2021.

**Recommendation Eleven:**

The many creative and impressive schemes already underway for adapting church buildings should be progressed and encouraged. Support, if required, can be provided by the Diocesan Churches Inspector and the Diocesan Funding Officer.

**Recommendation Twelve:**

The Mission Area should develop a co-ordinated plan to move the majority of its regular giving online with support as required from the Diocesan Director of Resources. Encouraging progress has already been made in this respect and this will help ensure the sustainability of the churches in the future.

The Church Treasurers are starting to work together effectively as a group, with excellent support from the Mission Area Treasurer and Administrator. The Mission Area is richly blessed with finnacial resources but this also brings responsibilities and challenges.

The use of the Finance Co-ordinator softare (FC4) should be extended to enable dynamic reporting of Mission Area finances throughout the year. Attendance at the FC4 intermediate training is strongly encouraged for all treasurers.

A consistent and combined Mission Area approach to the management of investments would ease the duplication of effort involved in managing significnat investments. This does not necessitate the amalgamation of individual church finances.

**Recommendation Thirteen:**

There is an impressive, coordinated approach to digital church and this is greatly appreciated by lay people. As restrictions ease, this coordinated approach needs to continue.

**Recommendation Fourteen:**

The work in Llanelidan to complete the transfer of the church into the Pilgrim Church Scheme must be completed by June 2021 at the latest and the financial accounts of the church closed.