



Our Lady Help of Christians, West Byfleet, St Dunstan's Woking and St Hugh of Lincoln, Knaphill, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Frimley, St Tarcisius Church, Camberley, Ss Peter and John Church, Old Dean and Christ the King Church, Bagshot

Feedback on the consultation meetings in the Woking Deanery regarding the establishment of "The Catholic Churches of Woking and Surrey Heath"

Dear parishioners of our local Catholic churches,

My thanks to everyone who attended our **two recent consultation meetings**; I was delighted so many of us could come together to hear about the transition of the churches of the Woking deanery becoming *a new canonical parish*, and offer feedback of their views, concerns and ideas. I appreciate that not everybody would have attended, so I hope that this is a comprehensive summary of the meetings.

I opened the meetings by explaining how the name of "*The Catholic Churches of Woking & Surrey Heath*" had been decided on. The deanery clergy have chosen a territorial rather than a patronal name to emphasise that the focus is on the local churches of clergy and people who have their patronal titles. The deanery clergy have also put together the following mission statement for the Catholic Churches of Woking and Surrey Heath. Our vision is to be a family of churches that work together, becoming a community of communities.

*We are a family of churches that welcome everyone
and works together in Christ, to build a strong community
of Catholic faithful, who are rooted in prayer
and empowered by the Holy Spirit,
so that we can live out God's call to proclaim
the Good News to all, today and tomorrow.*

Bishop Richard Moth has been in discussion with the clergy, parish teams and diocesan agencies in how to prepare for the future with a reduction of ordained priests. He believes that there must be greater cooperation of clergy and people in the local parishes as outlined in the pastoral plan. Our local process is in response to the Bishop's third pastoral plan "The Word Who is Life".

The clergy are putting together a submission to the Council of Priests for our seven churches to be established as a new parish. The bishop will be likely to officially establish the new parish in the autumn of this year.

One step that has been taken is to form our local churches into the East Hub (Our Lady Help of Christians, West Byfleet, St Dunstan's, Woking and St Hugh of Lincoln, Knaphill) and the West Hub (Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Frimley, St Tarcisius Church, Camberley, Ss Peter and John Church, Old Dean and Christ the King Church, Bagshot). The churches are organised into "hubs" so they can work together in pastoral service and in the mission to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. Our churches are geographically close together which is an advantage for pastoral co-operation and work has already begun in the areas of adult formation, hospital ministry and youth ministry.

The bishop has appointed me as Moderator of Woking and Surrey Heath but that doesn't mean that I will be the parish priest for all seven churches. My role is to lead, in the light of our mission statement, the central teams to support our local churches in their work of worship, formation and mission.

For the *The Catholic Churches of Woking & Surrey Heath*, there will be:

1. The clergy team who will continue to meet monthly.
2. A leadership team, made up of the clergy and parishioners, who will help and challenge me as moderator and to direct our vision for the future.
3. A parish council that will involve representatives of the local churches.
4. A central finance team which will set the budget, produce accounts and make spending decisions at a certain level.

I will be setting up transitional teams to help the process of becoming the Catholic Church of Woking and Surrey Heath. The central teams will be properly established in the months following the declaration of establishment by the bishop. The churches will continue to have their local teams to help co-ordinate the worship, formation, community life, pastoral work, and care for the fabric of their buildings. They will be able to make spending decisions up to an agreed level.

A selection of the comments and questions at the consultation meetings and in correspondence

- Due to local government re-organisation the name Surrey Heath may become less relevant therefore in time the proposed name of "The Catholic Churches of Woking and Surrey Heath" could be reconsidered!
- It is essential that clear strategic objectives/guidelines are set out and communicated, thereby providing a strong sense of direction.
- We must take care not to proliferate committees within the new parish but simplify the processes of decision making and organisation to provide clarity of strategic thought and communication.
- Will there be just one newsletter for the new Canonical Parish or will separate newsletters still be produced for the churches as now?
- What will be the act of worship if a church does not have Mass on a particular Sunday?
- We must support the schools as they support the church and the faith.
- We have an opportunity for growth as lot of new young families have joined our congregations since lockdown.
- Helping our people to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus and their Catholic faith will give them confidence to become disciples.

Please email me: paul.turner@abdiocese.org.uk if you have a question or would like more information. Prayer is at the heart of this, so I shall end by sharing the closing prayer said at the meetings:

Our Father, we humbly seek Your divine empowerment through the Holy Spirit. Fill our hearts with courage, wisdom, and strength to fulfil Your purpose. May Your Spirit guide us in our daily lives, igniting our passion for service and love. Help us to be vessels of Your grace, spreading hope and light in a world that longs for Your presence. Amen.

With my best wishes and prayers

Fr Paul Turner