

NSSM zoom meeting 3 October 2024. Modelling Good Communications

The following signed in via chat:

Christine Allen for Sarah Partridge for Rochester diocese
 Derek Allen - Bolton Archdeaconry in the Manchester Diocese.
 Elaine Bates Carlisle (archdeaconry rep)
 Simon Cocks Birmingham
 Karen Cribb - Sheffield
 Peter Draper - York Diocese
 Canon Ann Easter, Chelmsford Diocese
 Annette Fritze-Shanks Diocese of London
 Nick Hallam, Carlisle Diocese
 Lucy Hollingsworth, Chichester
 Ann Hosking Exeter - Assistant Bishops Officer
 Philip Howlett - Diocese of Chelmsford
 Hugh Lee, Oxford
 John Lees, Exeter
 Anita Morgan, Coventry Diocese
 Rosie Moss Co-Dean of SSOMs Diocese of Worcester
 Canon Kay Mundy Diocese of Gloucester
 Marian Needham, Dorchester Archdeaconry, Oxford Diocese
 Amanda O'Neill, Ely
 Julian Poppleton @salisbury
 Romey Poston - Dorchester, Oxford Diocese
 Julie Price, Portsmouth Diocese
 Carol Pritchard, Diocese of Norwich
 Jeff Risbridger, Dean of Self-Supporting Clergy, Diocese of Truro
 Dorothy Snowball. Durham Diocese
 Robert Stone, Chelmsford - Stansted Archdeaconry
 Margot Suter
 David Treharne, Diocese of Gloucester
 Sue Willetts - Leicester

Apologies from Lyndon Bannon

1. **Welcome.** **Tony Redman** welcome everyone and confirms his own appointment recently featured in the Church Times as **National Officer** and Introduction and **Bishop Julie Conalty** (Birkenhead) as Lead Bishop for SSM.

This is a very positive appointment to have an experienced voice on SSM at national and diocesan levels to aid **Communications**. Bp Julie has a long experience as SSM while working in Probation and youth services in London before moving across to stipended ministry.

She spoke with the steering group by Zoom and we hope she will join the wider meeting in the May .

2: Members of the steering group lead on communication practice and structures within their own dioceses:

a. Nick Hallam Carlisle Diocese: just over 40 SSM

Joined by another member of SSM leadership group in diocese **Elaine Bates** an archdeaconry rep. (one of 3)

SSM leadership group well established, with 8 members set up with an equal mix of SSM and stipended. **Aims to aid comms and breakdown barriers/ distinctions.** includes Archdeacon, DDO, Director of local theology college, Area/rural dean, parish priest.

Some on Bishops's Leadership team and Nick invited regularly.

Excellent communication to Bp Rob.

Activities: Monthly informal support forum via zoom SSM - mixed level of attendance but smaller gathering allows personal attention and prayer.

Also an **annual SSM conference** (Eleanor Sanderson, Bishop of Hull guest speaker; meeting opened to all clergy and licensed ministers and was v encouraging.

Elaine: has role as IME 2 officer so ties in with a lot of SSM curates.
All seems well linked together.

b. Hugh Lee Oxford (now retired SSM officer) with Marian Needham, Mike Raynor, Romey Poston 4 archdeaconry officers. Oxford c. 120 SSM

One SSM officer, one for each area overseen by Archdeacon who is link to Bishop and senior staff.

Officers meet with AD c. 3 times a year.

Success/experience varies a lot depending on Archdeacons, their passion/ experience/ portfolio mix.

No sense of what is conveyed to those senior staff meetings.

Formerly met annually with Bp; with a change of bishop things change;

Marion confirmed yes has had meeting with Bp but next overdue.

Large diocese presents challenge.

Not great presence alongside senior staff/decision making bodies.

Useful things:

SSM officers beginning to be involved in curate training both SSM and stipended.

An opportunity to tell their story of unique and diverse ministries, to share experiences and needs.

Some SSM value/ others happy without.

MDR/reviews can be challenging.

Chance to ascertain needs but does anything happen thereafter?

Some follow up on thorny issue of **fees for occasional offices**.

Mariam Needham outlined diocesan training coming up on Transitions which might speak particularly to SSM.

c. Jeff Risbridger, Dean of Self-Supporting Clergy, Truro for last 18 months

Covers all Cornwall plus 2 parishes in Devon - geographically large, only 60 ordained clergy including **20 SSM**. Intention to increase to overall clergy numbers to 80

Title given to increase status to role, not advisor but ministerial, alongside Dean of retired clergy.

Both sit in Ministry department of diocese.

Also both able to **appoint chaplains** - Jeff has 3 a retired with PTO, SSM, Stipended. Jeff role to sort out conflicts, working agreements, chaplains doing pastoral care of those involved.

Small diocese so access to Bishop very straightforward (although in See in vacancy, so suffragan acting.)

Eager to see all categories of ordained minister as equivalent: *A priest is a priest is a priest.*

Only use distinctive labels to identify particular needs and to target response and staff.

Jeff pleased to have worked with Head of Ministry on **MDR process** to improve universal use and suitability for all contexts including MSE chaplains.

Helps stipend to understand and SSM vice-versa.

3. Open Discussion and Comment:

a. Anita Morgan Dean of SSM Coventry (18 months in role)

Observed all those suggested as supporting colleagues for her are in all full time employment, so challenge to get additional help.

Would value **Role descriptions for chaplains**/members of SSM team.

Raised the **categorising challenge many have**: both by the diocese and by ministers themselves: SSM include chaplains, MSE, House for Duty, Team vicars? How to ensure/manage overlap with oversight?

(She has been working on Menopause, maternity agreements/working agreements.

Truro: Jeff only have hospital chaplains - they all have parish roles too. Military separate.

Sheffield: Karen Cribb there is separate group led by Archdeacon for health chaplains, another group for school welcome to support groups, open self selecting, some PTO.

Others who might such as Diocesan staff clergy elect not to be seen as self supporting.

Nick H: HfD - middle ground so as SSM officer invites HfD to be a part of SSM groups should they wish to be.

b. Database challenges/ who is SSM in diocese?

Julian: Salisbury raised challenge of official categorising and access to accurate information - is problem with Database national or local?
Local diocesan practices and nomenclature make things inconsistent.

Tony: St Ed and Ips: names added on arrival to diocese but not updated well. Can't have access as a 'volunteer'.

Nick H finds **C of E portal** very helpful for identifying clergy for Carlisle <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/national-register-clergy>
(seems strangely out of date to me, and equally fickle depending on how accurately diocese have put information in! Julian)
Simon acknowledged usefulness but not those on fringes of licensing so not capturing those coming through novel schemes.

Derek Allen - Manchester Diocese, challenge of data base access too.

c. Christine Allen Rochester : Query if rare to have P in Charge/incumbent status?

She is SSM who is priest in charge of 2 churches, one of 5 in Rochester.
How widespread? Her experience within full MDR structure
She also has modest stipended diocesan role.

Response: Nick Hallam yes at least one in Carlisle,; Salisbury at least own Team Vicar and assistant rural dean. Dorothy Snowball was an SSM incumbent for 12 years, working full-time too for 8 of those, and also for part of that time was Area Dean. Now retired.

Tony at St Eds and Ips, several incumbent status and rural dean, possible acting bishop coming up.
Carol Pritchard in Norwich currently interim priest in charge, just for a year. There was one other in our diocese for some years. so, two altogether.

Simon Cocks number in various roles in Birmingham diocese
Derek Allen - Bolton Archdeaconry in the **Manchester Diocese**, has moved between P in charge and associate roles; 6 or 10 priests in charge.

4. Back to modelling good comms

a. How much do your links enable to effect change etc?

Simon Cocks Birmingham - extremely limited; met new Bishop but managing access to senior/organising staff v hard, not least as he is MSE so tricky to interact as working hours incompatible. Same issues for those with caring duties etc.

b. Anyone overcome such challenges?

Sue Willett Leicester over last 12 months twilight sessions timing moved to evenings, 1730-1930.

Dorothy Snowball Durham invited to B Leadership annually to report
Meet archdeacon every 2 months as Archdeacon holds responsibility for SSM
Oxford, Carlisle also have a SSM brief for Archdeacon.

Tony would find Archdeacon job description including this good to receive.

Derek Allen Manchester have a Diocesan SSM Officer (Catherine Binns) who is the interface with Bishop's Senior Leadership Team, The four Archdeaconry SSM Officers wouldn't normally have access at that level. I find good access with Area Dean and Archdeacon if needed.

Nick and Elaine Carlisle part of the Diocesan ministerial development group - v fruitful.

Anita Morgan Coventry, as an NHS employee has used **annual leave** to be at bishop's core staff team
Not sustainable but helpful in initial months to establish relationships.

Dangerous precedent. Would it be deemed reasonable for an expectation of leave to be taken by church employees to attend something?

[Does working from home for office staff make this easier or harder - Julian]?

c. Jill Tucker asks can Bp Julie get stuck into this issue at a national episcopal congresses?

Bishops need to shape their team structures. Surely it ought to include Advisor/officers.

d. Various frustrations discussed Tony, Julian, Mike

about not having a **seat at the table**/not knowing which meetings were happening and one might have a had something relevant to speak into.

Where to plug in?

Kay Mundy Gloucester

Bp Chaplain paid role and SSM in parish. Sits on personnel & people committee so welcome to speak but seems to be only her in this space. David Treharne is one of the officers. She need more capacity in role.

Tony Huge variation on how dioceses manage this.

e. Reflection from John Lees Exeter:

Ongoing Database challenge because of categorising of people/roles/types of ministry.

Communication/role illustrated by the positive response and impact of National Best practice guidelines:

One of the bishops picked up ideas and took them to Bishop's staff generating positive work on Wellbeing, notably for SSM.

Now archdeacon part of responsibility.

But Bishop's staff decided to do this....but John wasn't asked! [John was a key author of the National Guidance].

John communicated to the staff that one of the **officers needs to be present when such topics/SSM are discussed.**

Communication comes in cycles...prompted by issues, wellbeing, fees for occasional offices, and use that to raise awareness.

Tell them again, so take opportunity to be in the room, but **v. hard to get time onto an agenda** without an issue being raised and advice sought from Advisor.

Jill Tucker on Bishop's core staff when advisor...from day one. Didn't talk to just SSM issue so was valued for the breadth of skills and experience she was able to bring to discussion.

Anita keeping same pattern and role.

f. Chelmsford reps. experience:

Philip Howlett in role 18 months, new in post.

Does meet with person i/c of clergy training. 3 monthly meet.

Also area bishop 1 year

Archdeacon newly appointed with SSM care in portfolio.

Ann Easter Barking: Problems getting information. Not generally invited to things like vocations day. An obvious good idea given likely demographic of future ministers Has been area dean and chaplain to the Queen. First SSM to do this. No limit but no info. Hoping to be better involved.

g. London **Annette Fritze-Shanks** believes Jonathan Croucher is the new Chelmsford Archdeacon and was SSM lawyer for period '*hold his feet to the fire!*'

Annette is Advisor for Bp London - only one advisor and a new role. Keen to have each of 4 areas to support 200 + SSM & their bishops.

Database created largely by her.

Training for bishop's pa's need much better training in labelling and categorising clergy/ministry. Makes communications tricky and some people prickly by being identified by inclusion in mailing etc.

The mixed ecology only going to make it more apparent: paid hybrid SSM /stipended, House for duty, P in C;

Chaplains mostly identify as stipended even if not!

Diversity and little cohesion: no-one looking after Retireds, PTOs, Caleb streamers finally been drawn into NSM cohort by diocesan staff.

Just invite widest constituency and they can choose. *Alcohol seems to aid attendance & communication!*

Numbers in Diocese of London c. 1000 clergy 1 stipend for each parish. c. 25% SSM

Tony talking to rural dean who thinks all SSM should get a retainer.

5. National Best Practice Guidelines Nov 2022

Tony has been asked to assess their impact and how they've been received.

<https://ssmnetwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/SSOM-Best-Practice-Guidance->

Karen Cribb Sheffield found a really helpful tool and communication mechanism

Sent copy to 2 Bishops and given permission to send out and reflect on with colleagues.

Reframed document:

National recommendation, reflection on local situation, things to work on.

Connect to DDO, IME, ministry division leads.

A live document to be resent every 6 months and stimulus.

Anita Coventry similar : liaise with Comms team to send out to all SSM survey. Also seeking permission for data base, talent audit.

Philip Howlett sent to bishop and thanked politely...

Dorothy Snowball. Durham : Really useful document. Copy given to Senior Staff and helpful in implementing change.

Kay Mundy Gloucester - discussed the document with the SSM group and then the document and comments fed back to Senior Staff.

John Lees presented document to 3 different dioceses as National Officer.

Carol Pritchard Norwich took sabbatical to go round to visit SSM Used guidelines and experience to present to bishop's staff, thus making document more personal to conversation.

6. Tony how to improve Comms between advisers?

Would welcome ideas about best medium - Facebook - not all happy to be here; WhatsApp popular, Email distribution list of officers might be helpful

Feedback/ideas welcome.

7. Chrism. <https://www.chrism.org.uk/>

Hugh Lee outlined what/who Chrism is and what it offers. Essentially those with non church jobs in a 'secular' context. Mostly Anglican, mostly ordained but not exclusively.

Simon Cocks is also a member

Reflective weekends a couple times a year.

Group that does theological reflection, meets also most every month.

8. Final thoughts/chat messages on numbers and recruitment/vocations:

Simon keen to know proportion of SSM

Seems to range from John Lees. 26%, Manchester 29%, Truro 33.3%, Coventry 25%

Julian consider it disingenuous to recruit to stipendiary training so much when paid roles are disappearing.

Sue Willetts - Leicester. As DDO in Leicester and a DBF employee who is still getting head round now being SSOM myself - we are definitely seeing more potential SSOM people coming forwards at the moment.

Anita Morgan: interestingly, when couples are both ordained often the female in the couple is encouraged to be SSM rather than stipendiary.

9. Closing Prayers led by Fr Jeff for Tony and Bishop Julie and our shared ministry.

Minuted by Julian Poppleton 16/10/24