

Partnership with Fyfield and Tubney Parish – an update from Nick

As outlined at the APCM recently, discussions about a new partnership with Fyfield and Tubney parish have been going on for a few months. In October last year the church wardens at Fyfield (Alyson Grove and Sarah Macelvogue) contacted me about the possibility of extending my ministry to include their parish.

A reminder of the background: Having not made an appointment to fill their clergy vacancy, and with irreconcilable differences over Living in Love and Faith, the two PCC's at Kingston Bagpuize and Fyfield & Tubney voted to suspend their benefice and seek clergy oversight separately. KB has recently advertised for a part-time vicar on their own.

The proposal is that I be cross-licensed as Vicar in Fyfield parish to cover ministry there alongside my ministry in our parish. It is not proposed that we would seek the union of parishes to form a new benefice. We would remain formally separate in terms of PCC governance and finances for as long as the benefice is suspended (at least 5 years), and then the arrangements would be reviewed. From the outset our respective contributions towards the parish share would be combined (effectively resulting in a reduction for our parish), and informally we will seek to work together as much as possible for services and events. The plan is to maintain the distinctiveness of the two parishes but build relationships for the sake of kingdom of God in our part of the Abingdon deanery.

Fyfield and Tubney parish has two church buildings (St Nicholas and St Lawrence). The parish runs along our northern and western border, straddling the A420. The electoral role is 18. They have one service a Sunday (currently at either 10.30am or 6pm), three a month at Fyfield and one a month at Tubney, with an average of 20 people attending. There is currently re-ordering work happening at Fyfield to install a kitchen and toilet in the church.

We are now at the stage where the paperwork has been drawn up by the diocese. This will go to the PCCs in both parishes this month, and subject to approval, it will go to the deanery and archidiaconal mission and pastoral committees. All being well, a licensing service will happen later this year, but we hope some informal aspects of the new partnership can begin over the summer. For example, I am taking the 6pm service at Fyfield on Sunday 16th June. As is our custom with St Luke's already, we will just have one evening service across the two parishes that day. One significant change as outlined at the APCM is that, to ensure our morning services overlap as little as possible, Fyfield will move their morning services to 9.30am and All Saints will move to 10.30am. St Luke's would be unaffected. We hope this will mean those taking services (likely to be me predominantly) can get to both parishes on a Sunday morning as much as possible. We will keep you updated as to when this change will happen, likely towards the end of the summer.

Do come back with any questions you may have. Please do commit these plans to the Lord in prayer, and we will keep you updated over the next few weeks.

Revd Nick Weldon