

East Bristol

Partnership

Newsletter



WINTER

2012

Jan-March



**From the Desk**  
*Mark Gartside*

Dear All,  
As I write this, there are several things in the offing which will affect the future of the Partnership. Firstly there is the matter of

Pastoral Reorganization...

At first this might sound like we're being asked to embark on more of the same exercises we did for the review. However the point of this process is to actually legally formalise the structures which we've already put into place. This process should not affect the Ministry Leadership Teams which are being established in each church. However it should make the Partnership a more attractive prospect for any future incumbents, because they will be coming into a more secure set-up.

This process of pastoral reorganisation will not further delay the current vacancy process, the advert for which is now due to be placed in January. However the fact that we have begun this process will hopefully

make the new role of Partnership Priest Team Leader more viable for prospective candidates.

### Stipendiary Deployment

The Partnership churches are also being asked at this time to consider the new stipendiary allocations, which have been proposed by the Deanery. The proposal is that the East Bristol Partnership be allocated 3 stipends, so it's now up to each PCC to discuss whether they think this is fair, and report back to representatives of the Deanery Leadership Team at the Partnership Forum on 20<sup>th</sup> March.

### CofE FAQ's

If all this Church of England jargon is confuzzling you, then help is at hand! Revd's David James and Michael Selman will be holding an evening of Demystification at St Ambrose Beehive on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February at 7.30pm.

In the meantime [www.churchofenglandglossary.co.uk](http://www.churchofenglandglossary.co.uk) is a useful resource for much of the unique terminology pertaining to the church.

## Partnership Young People's Champion



At the Forum of November 2011 it was proposed and voted unanimously upon, that Diane Simms of All Saints should become the official Youth Champion for the Partnership. Diane has been the lynch-pin of the Holiday Bible Club,

which has been run successfully for three consecutive years at All Saints. She has also recently set up a weekly branch of Messy Church at St Matthias and Dr Bell's School. She is currently working closely with Dan Jones, the diocesan youth advisor, about upcoming youth initiatives, and she plans to get in touch with all church youth-workers, and address congregations in the very near future. You can find out more about Diane's new role, and young people's activities in the Partnership at

<http://www.eastbristol.org.uk/ypcommunity.html>

## Games afternoons at St John's

At the beginning of December I set up a regular weekly Games Afternoon at St John's, on a Thursday from 1-4pm. I plan to re-launch this initiative in the New Year, but am still looking for volunteers to go on a rota to help run the event. Many thanks to those who've already signed up. I'm also looking for board games which you might be happy to donate or lend to this project. I hope that this initiative will bring members of the communities and congregations together, who might otherwise feel cut off and isolated.

## Joint Partnership Publications...?

The office is becoming more and more of a hub for church publications, with printed materials such as pew sheets, magazines and service booklets being produced for at least 3 of the Partnership churches there. I wonder if in the future it might be possible to move towards a system of having 1 weekly pew sheet for the Partnership, and 1 monthly magazine? I might need a team of volunteers to help in the production of these, but in the long term, if we pool our resources in

this way, we might be able to afford to produce a more informative, efficient and professional-looking publication. If you have any thoughts on the future of Partnership publications please get in touch.

### Contact Details

The Partnership Office is open Mondays, Tuesdays 10am-3pm, and Thursdays, Fridays 11am-4pm (in the choir vestry round the back of church).Tel: 0117 9586412, mobile: 07918 903635, email: [info@eastbristol.org.uk](mailto:info@eastbristol.org.uk), web: [www.eastbristol.org.uk](http://www.eastbristol.org.uk), Address: c/o St John's Church, Lodge Causeway, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 3QG.

### **New Year's Epistle from Revd. David James**

Happy New Year! A significant one indeed for our churches in the East Bristol Partnership. We are being asked to make decisions which will affect the pattern of church life in Fishponds and East Bristol for the foreseeable future. I believe that our first consideration has to be to discern the will of God in this matter, the second the fact that we minister to a total population of some 50,000 people, the third the

question of the well being of the constituent churches, next the smooth running and enabling power of the partnership itself. Our own preferences come some way down the list of other considerations, if indeed they figure at all. That I believe is the right priority given that we are Christians first, and think about the various options as members of the Church of England. As far as the various options are concerned, I have no comment to make. Except to say that there were certain ideals on which the partnership was established, among them being that the ultimate decision making body remained the constituent PCC's and that as far as the clergy were concerned there has been no one person 'in authority'. With regard to the latter we have tried to be inclusive in our interpretation of that, involving not only stipendiary clergy but also our non-stipendiary and lay minister colleagues in our discussions and decision making. Both those ideals have been the source of difficulty and opportunity, and there will be various opinions about both. Critics have said that we have tried to 'change the nature of the Church of England', but I do not believe that this is the case. We have simply tried to make it more effective given the circumstances and possibilities of ministry in the national church.

Suffice it to say that the possibility now exists for either or both of these to be altered and the consequences of that needs to be reflected upon with great care. If either or both are changed, the plain simple fact is that the flavour of the partnership as we know it will change. Things will have the capacity to be very, very different indeed. There are significant matters to be considered. As Christians we are called to be people of hope, which usually suggests optimism, but that is no excuse for short sightedness or haste, neither is it a cast iron guarantee of plain sailing. Be careful, indeed of what you wish for and pray for.

I would plead for three things. The first is that we seriously listen to one another, the second that we rigorously debate the options with which we have been presented or others that might come to mind, the third is that future processes involving appointments should be tough and thorough. Please pray for this process that what God has in mind might be done.