

# North Monmouthshire Ministry Area Update ~ September 2022





# Faith in our Future

## Diocese of Monmouth Esgobaeth Mynwy

**Introduction.** The North Monmouthshire Ministry Area will be commissioned by Bishop Cherry, assisted by Archdeacon Ian, at 3.30pm on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2023, during a special service. The venue for the Commissioning Service is yet to be finalised, but it will take place in one of the seventeen churches in the Ministry Area.

Although the move to Ministry Areas throughout the Church in Wales and the Diocese of Monmouth has raised many understandable questions and legitimate concerns, it also offers exciting opportunities for ministry and mission through the mutual sharing of gifts and resources, both human and material, among our seventeen congregations. The Ministry Area Transitional Team (MATT), made up of representatives from our seventeen

congregations, is currently working to implement the significant changes required to bring the North Monmouthshire Ministry Area into being.

The Ministry Area will be geographically large and, apart from the suburb of Mardy on the northern outskirts of Abergavenny, it will be rural and sparsely populated. To enable the Ministry Area to work effectively, it will be sub-divided into five Pastoral Districts, each cared for by its own Vicar living in and working from a local Parsonage.

**Pastoral Districts.** These will correspond to the five existing benefices (parish groups) that will merge to form the Ministry Area. Pastoral Districts will enable relationships between churches, congregations and communities that have been forged over many years to be maintained. However, they will also encourage our churches and congregations to take on an additional sense of belonging and identity, as part of the North Monmouthshire Ministry Area.

The interdependence that belonging to a Ministry Area can offer, and the opportunity it will provide for a new partnership in ministry and mission, should be something we embrace rather than

something we fear. The five proposed Pastoral Districts of the North Monmouthshire Ministry Area will be as follows:

***Crucorney Pastoral District.*** St. David Llanthony, St. Martin Cwmyoy, St. Michael Llanfihangel Crucorney. *House for Duty Vicar with pastoral responsibility: The Revd. David Roberts.*

***Grosmont & Skenfrith Pastoral District.*** St. Nicholas Grosmont, St. Bride Skenfrith, St. Mary Llanfair Cilgoed, St. Cadoc Llangattock Lingoed, *Stipendiary Vicar with pastoral responsibility: The Revd. Gaynor Burrett.*

***Llantilio Crossenny Pastoral District.*** St. Teilo Llantilio Crossenny, St. Cadoc Penrhos, St. James Llanvetherine, St. Mabli Llanvapley. *House for Duty Vicar with pastoral responsibility: The Revd. Heidi Prince.*

***Llantilio Pertholey and Llandewi Skirrid Pastoral District.*** St Teilo Llantilio Pertholey, Bettws Chapel, St. David, Llandewi Skirrid. *Stipendiary Rector with pastoral responsibility: The Revd. Julian Gray.*

***Llanddewi Rhydderch Pastoral District.*** St. David Llandewi Rhydderch, St. Bridget Llansantfraed and Llanarth, St. Cadoc Llangattock-juxta-Usk. *House for Duty Vicar with pastoral responsibility: The Revd. John Humphries (position becoming vacant in January 2023).*

## **Ministry Area Transition Team (MATT).**

The MATT has met on several occasions, the next meeting scheduled for 28<sup>th</sup> September. Each of the seventeen congregations of the Ministry Area were invited to have a representative on the MATT. Most have chosen to do so, but some have opted to share a representative with a neighbouring congregation.

Three MATT sub-committees have been established dealing with Ministry, Governance and Finance. Progress with each of the sub-committees is set out below.

***Ministry Sub-committee.*** The purpose of this group is to ensure that ministry remains at the heart of everything we do as a Ministry Area and that our congregations all benefit from being part of a wider Church family. At present there are thirteen licensed clergy, the youngest being in their mid-fifties and the oldest in their mid-nineties! So, we will benefit from range of both youth and wisdom!

We currently have the following clergy:

- 2 x stipendiary (paid) priests
- 3 x self-supporting 'House for Duty' priests
- 3 x self-supporting Associate Priests
- 5 x self-supporting Assistant priests

It should be noted that the input and service that individual clergy in this group are able to offer to the Ministry Area will vary considerably. At present there are no Licenced Lay Ministers (LLMs) in the Ministry Area, although potential vocations to this ministry will be identified and encouraged.

We have been assured that a parsonage will be maintained in each of the five Pastoral Districts. This enables us to venture forward confidently with the assurance that an experienced local Vicar will act as the focal point for ministry in each Pastoral District. S/he will work to maintain existing relationships between neighbouring churches but also encourage congregations to look beyond the boundaries of current parishes and parish groupings. The congregations and communities of each Pastoral District will, as a result, be able to identify with 'their' pastoral and spiritual leader, whilst benefiting from input from the ministry of other clergy within the wider Ministry Area.

Each local Vicar will lead a Local Ministry Team, comprising both lay and ordained people. They will be supported by the Rector (Ministry Area Leader) and each other, meeting regularly for prayer, mutual support and fellowship. The various skills and particular interests of members of the MA team should enable workload to be

shared with particular clergy taking a MA-wide lead on issues such as healing, liturgy, hospital visiting, children's work, etc.

The Ministry sub-committee will compile an audit of what each church or group of churches is good at, or particular services they hold that others don't. The outcome of this audit will enable us to formulate ways of working across the new Ministry Area and offering greater opportunities for sharing skills and expanding ministry and worship. Further work is needed on developing a blueprint on how ministry will be taken forward, both locally and across the MA; this will be presented to the MATT in due course for discussion and sign off.

***Governance Sub-committee.*** This sub-committee will use the Diocesan Governance Toolkit as a guiding document, adapted to our local, largely rural, situation in North Monmouthshire. This sub-committee is concerned with establishing:

- How each of the 17 churches will have equal say in shaping the policy and direction of the new Ministry Area.
- The roles and responsibilities of the local Church Committees.

- The roles and responsibilities of the Ministry Area Council - MAC (the future Governing Body of the MA).
- How will each of our seventeen churches and congregations can be fairly represented and have a voice on the Ministry Area Council.
- How the Church Committees and the Ministry Area Council relate to each other.

The MAC will replace the existing fourteen Parochial Church Councils. Membership must not exceed 25 with a mix of clergy and lay members. There will be a maximum age of 75 years (as with PCCs currently).

The MAC will appoint the following roles: MAC Secretary, MA Treasurer, MA Safeguarding Co-ordinator, MA Electoral Roll Officer, MA Gift Aid Secretary, MA Faculties Officer, MA Data Protection Officer, a MA Health and Safety Officer, MA Insurance Officer and MA People's Warden (to be elected at the Vestry Meeting). The MA Rector's Warden will be ratified by the MAC.

It will be of vital importance that all churches have fair representation on the MAC. To ensure this, it will be proposed that

clergy delegates to the MAC would be limited to the Rector and the four Ministry Area Vicars. Each church congregation will have the opportunity to have a lay delegate on the MAC. This could be a person elected from each church or one elected member representing several churches, mutually agreed by the churches concerned. These representatives will be members of a local Church Committee, trusted to represent the views of all and expected to communicate effectively with their congregations. The hope is that all members of the MAC will be in place by the autumn to enable a smooth transition in January.

The current PCCs will become Church Committees with the very important role of being responsible for the day-to-day running of the churches, and facilitating mission and outreach locally, as PCCs currently do. Members will include Church Wardens, a Church Treasurer and Church Secretary. The seventy-five-year age limit will be removed, and Church Committees will no longer have legal responsibilities (these having transferred to the MAC). Church Committees will have control over their finances although they will be accountable to, and work closely with, the MAC. Members of Church Committees would need to be on the Electoral Roll of the MA.

The MAC may delegate what powers it feels appropriate to the local Church Committees. However, it should be noted that the Ministry Area Council retains overall responsibility and certain matters affecting the local church will need ratification at MAC level.

There is the opportunity to establish a larger Ministry Area Forum, although, at present, it is felt that is unnecessary so long as the MAC works effectively. The Governance sub-committee are drafting a constitution which will require the endorsement of each PCC before the MA comes into being.

***Finance Sub-committee.*** Members of this sub-committee are using the Diocesan Finance Toolkit as guidance. Much concern was initially expressed as to the role of the MA in relation to church finances, but this has now been clarified, and we hope to a very large extent eliminated. Whilst all churches will be included in the MA accounts, all funds in each church account will remain separate and remain under local control. In due course, churches will pay their Parish Share into the central account which will also deal with Gift Aid reclaims and clergy expenses across the MA. Decisions regarding spending of a specific church's funds will remain the preserve of the Church Committee, albeit with the MA being informed ahead of the spending of larger amounts. It is envisaged that before any church proceeds with a large costly project, the case will need to be made

to the MAC and agreement to proceed obtained in effect much as at present with the Diocese. There may be MAC funds or skills available to support such projects, thereby reaping the benefits of working in a Ministry Area.

A new finance software package called *MyFund Accounting* is being rolled out for all church Treasures to use. Training sessions and support to use *MyFund Accounting* will be arranged. All Church Treasurers have been asked to submit accounts information as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 in order to provide us with a snapshot of our financial situation and assets as an MA. Treasurers were asked to provide this information by the end of June. However, to date, there is still some outstanding submissions to be made. Help in doing so will be offered.

A Diocesan grant worth up to £10,750 over 3 years is available to fund admin support across the MA. Kay Howells from Llanfihangel Crucorney is currently liaising with the Rector Designate, The Revd. Julian Gray, to develop a job description and advert. There is also a MA Development Fund grant of £3,000 which will be applied for in January to provide start-up funds for the new MA bank account.

**And finally....** The members of the MATT and its three Sub-committees are conscious of the huge amount of trust that is being

placed in them. Their aim is to establish an environment that will enable each of our seventeen church congregations to feel supported and to thrive within the North Monmouthshire Ministry Area. The members of the MATT represent you and want to know your views on what is being proposed. Ministry Areas are the settled future for the Church in Wales and the Diocese of Monmouth so, please help us to make it work by your prayers and by your input.

*Ministry Area Rector Designate: The Revd. Julian Gray*

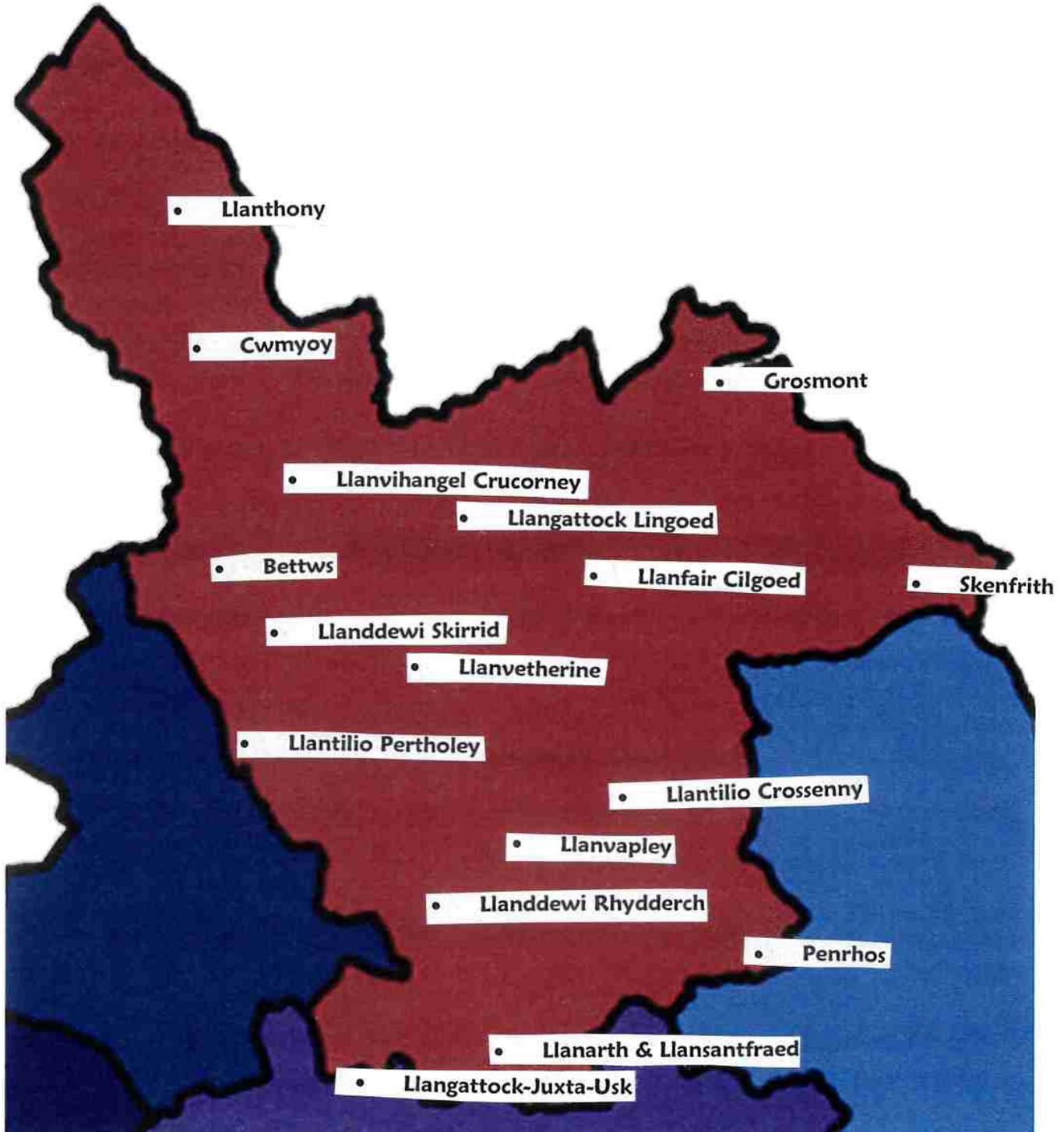
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**Ministry Area Prayers** . Dear Lord, we thank you for the opportunity to work together as a Ministry Area. May we engage with each other with faith and encouragement. May we manage each situation with wisdom and mutual respect. May we serve with integrity, creativity and purpose. May we speak with openness and gentleness. May we offer our gifts, time and finances with generosity. May we face each challenge with courage and the desire to grow through it. May we all be drawn deeper into our relationship with You and be known as your disciples. Help us to show your love, proclaim your Good News and grow your Kingdom in this place. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. AMEN

God, the Creator of all things, please help me build positive relationships with all my brothers and sisters in Christ, throughout the Ministry Area and Diocese. May this be a time for growing

together in the unity of Christ. Empower me to be an encourager and to bring joy to those I work and serve with. Enable me to be a good team player that others enjoy working with. Give me insight on how to deal with negative or difficult situations and help me make every effort to do what leads to peace and builds up other people in faith. And give me a heart to celebrate all the blessings in our lives and the life of our Ministry Area. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. AMEN

# NORTH MONMOUTHSHIRE MINISTRY AREA



# MINISTRY AREAS IN THE DIOCESE OF MONMOUTH

