

The Anglican Chaplaincy of Poitou-Charentes Report 2017-2018, The Rev'd Adam Boulter

This is the end of my first full year in post and it has been an exciting year, both discovering all that goes on in the chaplaincy and sensing the callings to new ventures and growth.



Worship is central to our calling and the many worship centres around the chaplaincy continue to offer joyful, profound and thought-provoking worship. The point of worship is always to give God praise but also to deepen our relationships to God, and both of those happen in private as well as in public worship, and so the home groups, prayer group and prayer course have all been a vital part of this chaplaincy's life this year.

The practicalities of running a chaplaincy such as this has taken up quite a bit of my energy's this year, and it is good to see an increase in both the giving and fundraising, although we still have some way to go before we are running a balanced budget. Meanwhile it is notable that there is a huge amount of time and expertise given for free by the members of this chaplaincy, both in fundraising ventures and running services and events, and it is also heartening to see people volunteering for posts and spontaneously helping out with the various tasks and projects that emerge.

The Strategy Group was established this year in order to both oversee and adjust the strategic plan that was put in place by the chaplain at the AGM in 2017.



The plan for the last year had four strands.

Publicity and Welcome: Under this strand it is great to see the web site rebuilt and back on line, after it was hacked, with a new design and clear information. Jubilate has also been relaunched with a wider distribution and excellent content. We also now have welcome leaflets and are planning to make some other leaflets on giving and worship services.

Ecumenical relations: We have remained active on the various ecumenical bodies we are represented on and the Chaplain and Assistant chaplain have been active in developing relations with the local clergy of other denominations. There have also been a number of good local initiatives, and personal relationships across the denominations are always to be encouraged.

Sustainability of the Chaplaincy: Money has been a constant concern this year, however, giving is up an impressive 18% and fundraising has also grown, and so financially we are looking in better shape than we feared we might be, although there is still a way to go before we have balanced the books.

Prayer: The chaplain has been running a prayer course in Ruffec, with materials up on line. The existing prayer groups have also been active, and many individuals have spoken to me about

their prayer lives. No Church Strategy will work without prayer and so this is a vital part of our plan for growth.

Next year we are considering having focusses on:

Invitation, and how we can all learn how to appropriately invite people in to the chaplaincy and make the chaplaincy more welcoming to those who are new or returning (as well as welcoming to the regulars).

Worship, which would include a review of our current patterns of worship as well as considering how we can do what we currently do even better. New Worship centres, styles and times, asking what new worship events or regular services we are called to put on and considering other times than Sunday mornings for new services.

Then we will need to keep Sustainability as a focus on the strategic plan, there we intending to focus on small scale fundraising ideas to run alongside our two big fundraising fairs each year. In terms of giving, we will need first of all to keep improving the efficiency of the giving to the chaplaincy and encouraging planned giving so we can budget more effectively. We are also going to explore moving the office from Civray and to consider buying and office and meeting space. We are clear that sustainability and the growth of the chaplaincy are intertwined and so we are committed to growing into a sustainable position and hence the other strands we are considering for this year of worship, invitation, and new worship are connected to sustainability.

Finally we also need to deepen our spiritual life as a chaplaincy, and so this year we are going to once again run a course over the winter period which will either be a second prayer course covering some of the other prayer traditions we could not fit into this years course, or a bible study course. We are also hoping to arrange a Chaplaincy retreat day some time during the summer months.

The Diocese has played an active role in our life this year with Bishop Robert licensing me last February, and Arch Deacon Meurig visiting twice once to licence our new reader Joan Mason. The diocenal office has assisted with Safeguarding training, offered advice on a wide range of issues, and actively assisted the discernment of vocations to various posts we have put forwards to them. We now also have a new local Area Dean, Fr Tony Lomas in Aquitaine having take on that role, and we meet up on a regular basis to offer each other support.



The chaplaincy is a sociable place and there are many clubs and special interest groups that do wonderful work socially and pastorally supporting each other.

All of this cannot happen without the care and attention of many people. Our chaplaincy wardens take the lion's share of the responsibility, and the area wardens then assist them in there more local context, with local wardens doing the day to day jobs of opening up churches and checking the practicalities. The decision making body of the chaplaincy is then the chaplaincy council and all the members of that council work hard to discern both the big picture of what God is calling us to while also paying attention to the important details. The ministry team has been a huge support over the year and its advice and wisdom is invaluable.

Personally it has been a good year with us settling into French life and starting to improve our language skills. The chaplaincy has been a very warm and welcoming place and we all want to thank you for all your care and concern for us all over the last year.