



IM Viewpoint: Lay leaders supporting Transitions in Truro

Julian Briscoe explains the benefits of the *Transitions* programme in the Diocese of Truro

The Diocese of Truro established the *Transitions* programme in 2016 as a positive means of supporting vacancies as 'a season of change and opportunity'. The inspiration came from seeing Interim Ministry at work in Canada, and the idea emerged in 2015 from *Accompanied Ministry Development* - part of the diocese's learning strategy to encourage discipleship and enable mission.

Since 2016 the diocese has invested resources in supporting parishes through a team of lay Transitions Advisors. An information booklet has been produced to support parish officers, offering signposts to resources and tasks lists, and a timetable for the vacancy process. Transitions advisors provide guidance and support, calling in additional input from clergy and senior staff as required. They gather a transition team of 6-8 people drawn from the parish or across the benefice to support the process through planning and prayer over a period of six months or more, as necessary.

The intention of *Transitions* is to empower lay leaders 'with a profound sense of Christian calling'. It encourages parishes to use the time of transition as a chance to 'cast a vision for the future of your church and benefice, and think carefully about what you are, and what you are becoming.' It encourages parishes to consider it 'an opportunity for growth, during which you can build a joyful and flourishing church that lives the good news and celebrates the great excitement of life in Christ.'

Julian Briscoe, Head of Church Growth and Development and their Director of Transforming Mission for Truro, has served as one of the team of three Transitions Advisors, two of which are volunteers. Mr Briscoe, a former BBC executive with experience in change management, has led change in 12 or 13 churches.

'It is both a challenging and immensely rewarding process, and the relationships stay with you. It is a wonderful experience to connect with parishes at such a critical time and help them. More and more transitions are about parishes working together. We are part of that vision-making process, helping people see where God is leading them.'

Briscoe explained that the diocese has purposefully sought out and recognised lay people as transitions advisors, seeking those who has gifts of discernment and listening, and who could facilitate discussion. They had found the lay dynamic important to the support process:

'There is an amazing benefit in managing change from their level. It is not as if another member of the clergy is coming in and telling them what to do. We are coming alongside, listening and helping them from a lay perspective. While we do not always have the authority required in more challenging circumstances, we do seek the support of clergy and bishops as necessary.'

'Dioceses, inevitably, always attract negative perceptions as 'them', but this is one aspect of Diocesan support which parishes have really appreciated and which has built fruitful conversations and renewed partnerships' Briscoe explains.

For further information contact:

Sally Piper

Transitions Coordinator

The Diocese of Truro

T: 01452 274351

E: Sally.Piper@truro.anglican.org

Web: <https://trurodiocese.org.uk/resources/parish-resources/transitions/>