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From Revd Canon Paul Norrington Area Dean and Canon Roger Ennals Lay Chair

To the Incumbents and Churchwardens of Parishes in the Deanery of Colchester

June 2016

Dear Colleagues,

Reimagining Ministry - Working towards the formation of Mission & Ministry Units

As you will know, under the Diocesan Transforming Presence and Reimagining Ministry strategy, all deaneries in the diocese are being encouraged to review and establish new ways of parishes working and collaborating in mission and ministry together. You will recall that one of the central planks of re-imagining ministry is the idea of bringing together groups of parishes who would commit to working together, sharing gifts and resources in what would be known as a Mission and Ministry Unit (MMU).

We can now share that the Deanery Standing and Pastoral Committee (DSPC) has reached a significant point in its work on MMU formations for our deanery and has invited parishes to the North and East of Colchester to begin the process of forming Mission and Ministry Units. Initially these will be known as MMU Colchester North and MMU Colchester East.

The DSPC is aware of the time and energy you have already applied to the diocesan strategy and the commitment to 'local conversations' with other parishes in the deanery. We are also aware of the concerns that have been raised in connection with the invitation for parishes to explore the formation of MMU structures and new relationships.

With this in mind, and to provide space for further reflection, the DSPC has decided to bring the parishes to the south and west of Colchester into a 'sub-deanery' formation to be known as ***'Colchester Deanery South'***.

The DSPC acknowledges that the notion of 'working together' will mean different things to parishes of very differing traditions, mission and ministry priorities, size and experience. As such, to enable parishes to reflect further, proposed MMU or not, the DSPC has developed some basic principles for incumbents and PCC's to consider together. It is our hope that these principles might enable us all to make this significant strategic change a truly shared and collaborative concern for all. Please see the enclosed ***Re-imagining Ministry - Mission & Ministry Units (MMU's) and Principles of Commitment in a time of strategic change.***

We would then like to encourage parishes to carry principles into practicalities.

As the North and East MMU formations have already discovered it is often in the 'simple things' that churches discover opportunities in unity and diversity and are able to flourish into new and sustainable relationships. The following examples may be of help in exploring parochial neighbourliness.

- A monthly morning prayer hosted each time by another church followed by a chat over coffee and tea
- Organise a reflection/discussion day for clergy and leadership team members (The Revd Geoff Read facilitated this for the East MMU)
- Share an evening with food attended by a representation of the PCC's – discussing what are our church's strengths, weaknesses, and how and in which 'domains' could we work together.

Re-imagining ministry may be something which brings a fresh reflection across the diversity of traditions and ministry priorities. However, we do not underestimate the intricacy of the factors here, and appreciate that we cannot attain perfect clarity and unified plans. It is therefore helpful that conversations continue until you judge that the time is right to approach the DSPC to form an MMU, and I invite you to come back to us when that is the case. To encourage you in considering next steps, the DSPC has developed a platform to assist parishes in understanding the MMU formation process. The document ***Structuring of Mission & Ministry Units (MMU's): Progressing towards establishing of Units*** is enclosed.

In the meantime, help is always available. With this in mind, Roger Ennals and I, would wish to receive an invitation to your PCC meeting where this letter and contents are to be discussed and may assist in clarifying any issues or concerns raised.

Please be assured that we will continue to pray that by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit you will be guided in your discussions, that we may be fully effective in this great Commission we share.

With every blessing,

Yours faithfully,

Area Dean

Revd Canon Paul Norrington

Lay Chair

Canon Roger Ennals