



## From the Final Discussion Groups

### 1. What am I taking away with me from this Assembly - for myself and for my church?

#### **GROUP 1**

Need to reflect and not rush in like 'fools ... where angels fear to tread'.

What we might do is small but will mean a lot.

Boldness to be open to others.

Simplicity of testimonies given: descriptive powerful images, wisdom and honesty with themselves.

Intention to meet again after the Assembly.

Intention to show the DVD in the parishes.

#### **GROUP 2**

The Holy Spirit. The chamois leather analogy.

Importance of generosity, hospitality, testimony.

Experience of being moved, of fellowship and a sense of oneness (unity).

Energy, ideas and enthusiasm.

Questions about the relevance of what we do in our communities.

Move for more inspirational worship in our home churches.

Challenged to leave the 'comfort zone', to work with people without being 'condescending', to go out to the people.

Resolve to get to know our congregations and the skills they have, and to use them.

#### **GROUP 3**

A glimpse of the Bishop as a 'real person' and family man, someone who will encourage everyone.

Godly play would be good for my village church.

Pray that the Spirit will move through the changes in my church.

Enjoyment of catching up with friends around the Diocese.

The chamois leather analogy: baptism.

The inspirational speakers/

The challenge to '*...start where you are, but START... !*'

Renewal of optimism; we could be at the start of something special.

Our baptism as our basis for everything.

Motifs of 'broken people' and 'hospitality'.

We must think about the lonely old people on the estate.

Mustn't feel overwhelmed by the size of the task –plant the seed and work with the growth.

#### **GROUP 6**

Taking away more questions than answers – food for thought.

The DVD's will help us digest and reflect.

The need to prioritise - there is so much work to be done.

The inspiring speakers – revived ideals and wish to serve

A sense of *being* the Diocese.. that it is people, not a place, with a shared responsibility.

Sense of diversity of the Diocese – meeting new people from inside/outside the Deanery.

Sense of community among delegates – was quickly established.

New ideas for worship to take home (worship in both chapel and conf hall was lovely).

Good to have worshipped together as a Diocese.

## **GROUP 6 cont...**

Need to take the vision back to the parishes, and find ways to channel it to good effect.

Need to find ways to sustain momentum.

Challenge to find out what **youth** really do want.

Talking the gospel to all people, not just on *E.g.* one age-group.

Identify and encourage all kinds of vocations to a variety of particular expressions of mission.

Helping them to get started, have confidence, not be isolated.

Need to get away from 'someone ought to...' mentality to starting 'where we are', with our actual gifts and callings.

Strengthened by the Assembly experience.

Reminded strongly that we fall short of 'Living the life', but inspired to hope and persevere.

## **GROUP 7**

Personal questions about my conscience.

Questions about the possible consequences of action to both recipient and provider.

Reassurance (from the testimony of the speakers) that support for outreach programmes is available to combat negative views back home.

God is hovering.

Concern about how to translate the enthusiasm of the Assembly to the parish.

The need to pray more for the young people I work with.

The need to find ways to make space for issues raised at the Assembly (by reducing time spent on procedural matters?)

Possibly re-run the Lent course in the light of the Assembly?

Need for the local church to pray more for others.

How do we communicate what has gone on at the Assembly?

## **GROUP 8**

Things from the speakers' stories, such as hospitality and making a difference where we are (Eg. Joanne giving a 'makeover' to neighbours, evangelism through touch rather than words).

Poverty- '...everyone has been out on earth to do good...', what about the others? Not being done good to!

## **GROUP 10**

The Holy Spirit at work in us.

A life-changing experience.

The place of baptism within our church, and its importance.

A different perspective on youngsters who are outside the community.

The many different points of view amongst us, but yet still being the Church (regardless of buildings).

Seeds sown.

Uplifting services.

## **GROUP 11**

Will not be so self-pitying in the future.

Learned I am a better Christian than I thought I was

Need to step out of convention.

There is no get-out clause for Christians where social action is concerned- it is part of living out our baptism.

The inspirational worship.

Honesty and affirmation- 'I wished I'd done that.... but I'm glad YOU did it'.

Need Assembly-like 'core groups' in each church to share beyond the PCC.

As a church, the need to take on board working together.

Acknowledging our humanity and commonality as opportunities for real engagement and conversation.

Living in the NOW. Not allowing the constraints of the past and the future prevent us.

## **GROUP 12**

The back-to-basics message of the strong, moving speakers, and the way they spoke from real situations and experience.

Some particular images, such as the 'jigsaw', 'start where you are', deep-rootedness in God. 'Living testimonies', in the power of the Spirit.

Examples of 'Eucharist without books', and 'Eucharist-on-the-move' to try at home.

Questions about how WE can speak from experience while being 'authentic' and 'honest'.

Feeling inadequate to change the world, more burdened.

Joy and tension, elation and challenge.

## **GROUP 14**

A sense of excitement and encouragement

A unity that embraced different churches, ages, challenges - embodying being 'inclusive'.

Space and silence.

Time for reflection.

An enthusiasm for God that enables us to embrace change.

Liberation to be proud of being a Christian 'Living the life'.

## **GROUP 15**

Inspiration and affirmation.

Having '...one arm to embrace and one arm to reach out..' (from all-age worship).

Gathering 'good practice' from fringe conversations.

The need to be radical.

The need to not let this enthusiasm run into the sand.

Neighbouring deaneries could get together to discuss the Assembly?

'Going away with little more than I have come with'. (*one member*).

## **GROUP 16**

Need for individual action; finding some way of reaching a specific area of the parish.

Need to encourage people to recognise their gifts.

Praying for other members of this group.

Stop worrying about people whom have left but care for newcomers.

Re-focus on one-to-one ministry.

Remove slushy hymns.

Explore keeping the church open.

Revitalise intercessions.

Make testimony by saying 'grace' at pub meals.

Affirmed in thoughts and enthusiasm.

Humour is OK in intercessions.

Let the Holy Spirit move his hand.

Don't build walls but allow God to use our vulnerability.

## **GROUP 17**

An exchange of practical ideas that work well – 'best practice'.

Poverty, injustice Etc. can be addressed in small groups by everyone and in every parish.

Using everyone's gifts for the common good. Helping each other find what we can do.

Do your homework: find out the issues - see where help is really needed.

Reciprocal work with community – ask for their help.

Prayer should undergird all activity.

## **GROUP 19**

Awareness of the variety of experience and approach in the Diocese- the diversity and acceptance of people, ways of worship Etc.

Meeting together is a way of developing this inclusiveness.

We have to be involved in the care of the earth and poverty as part of our baptismal statement - we cannot NOT be involved.

We can have unity and diversity if we find what we have in common and rejoice. We mustn't be frightened by the diverse.

Delight in the relationship between both bishops and the Dean.

Taking back a flavour of the worship and sharing it with the rest of the church through the DVD's.

## **GROUP 20**

Lots of things! - wider vision, larger picture, hope.

Insights and challenges from the speakers: 'back to basics', starting from where we are, humility, vulnerability.

Seeing Christ in the speakers and in each other.

Memorable similies we all indentified with: Eg. chamois leather.

Great music enhancing worship.

Absence of the 20's age group - lost to our communities after university.

Need for annual training events for all parts of the church.

Developing fellowship.

Sharing with those not here through DVD's, house groups, deanery or archdeaconry follow-up events.

Catch the energy/ new life and share it.

## **GROUP 21**

The humility of our leadership.

Hope.

More unity than division.

We can make a difference, however small the step.

Enriched, enthused, inspired, uplifted.

Learned lesson that poverty is not only financial.

Resolve to pray up to and during the Lambeth Conference for understanding of everyone's point of view, expressed fairly, and for the right decisions to be made.

There is hope and willingness within the parishes.

The Church of England is not dead, whatever the papers say.

## **GROUP 22**

Delight, healing, uplift, anticipation, excitement.

Use of DVD's for discussion and reflection.

From the workshops: reconciliation-dialogue-listening, how we deliver our message (body language Etc.)

Enhanced understanding of the perspectives of others.

Appreciation of ... worship, conversations, depth of relationships, testimonies.

Alertness to opportunities for radical hospitality.

## **GROUP 23**

A 'Diocesan' feeling - spirituality with much fun, laughter and fellowship.

Enthusiasm.

Need for communication and need to get back to basics.

Each others' experiences and opinions.

**GROUP 24**

Encouragement and hope; those in small parishes seeing the wider picture.

A desire awakened to be more bold, more confident.

To let the Spirit do the work.

Fired up by idea of 'radical hospitality', and with a readiness to offer it to those placed in our way (those we feel drawn to and those we don't!)

**GROUP 25**

An increased awareness of the needs of others.

Focus, fellowship and motivation.

A change of heart for some (after hearing Bishop Gerri) about the issue of women bishops.

**GROUP 26**

Inspiration of belonging to a big family.

Practical ideas for making a contribution.

'small and ordinary is good'

Preaching needs to be 'ordinary' and down to earth.

Need to explore the 'what', 'where' and 'how' of local poverty issues.

Need to renew the deanery.

**GROUP 28**

Broader awareness, ideas.

Jokes and sermon material!

How to take social responsibility back?

Need to spread ideas to encourage each other.

Use the internet - spread idea of freecycle.com

Re-cycle church stuff too.

Networks, connections and links made by us - huge encouragement.

Get PCC's to make decisions!

**UNMARKED I**

Testimony.

The sheer tangibility of God in the meetings, especially the last ones.

Getting to know the Bishop and Diocesan staff more, and taking that humanity back and letting others know how lovely they all are.

**UNMARKED II**

Creation and vocation for all.

Value of different churches finding common ground.

The diocese is the people.

The challenge of radical hospitality.

**2. What do I want to tell the Bishop about the future of the Diocese of Worcester?****GROUP 1**

We need reassurance and about insurance if churches are to be left open..

We would need support in re-ordering churches so that they more open.

Need a policy statement on acts of worship for radical thinking?

Worcester Diocese looks fresh, and we need to keep it fresh.

It is time for change.

We need to look forward.

Good to have Bishop John with us.

A conference every two years would be good.

## **GROUP 2**

Thank you... for a great assembly and for your style of leadership.

Do we have to wait another 6 years?

Be daring! Change does not need to be put off.

Empowering the laity - use their skills (and ban the use of the word 'laity'!!)

PNSM, NSM, MSE. One word for all Christians!

Grasp the nettle of dying churches.

Think of all resources.

The Diocesan centre needs to listen the parishes.

Look radically at organisation and structure.

Encourage parishes away from insularity.

There should be more ecumenical work as a Diocese

Encourage parishes to work more ecumenically.

We should use the opportunity to explore new avenues.

Optimistic that there would be a release of energy when hard facts/issues are faced.

Need more out-reach.

Need to focus on the central themes of our faith.

Need more fun!

## **GROUP 3**

The Cathedral needs to be lighter and more friendly in worship. It doesn't relate much to us!

Things are looking up! There are new beginnings.

Things should be more Spirit driven.

It would be good for the rest of the Diocese to experience the Bishops, Archdeacon and Dean as we have... including the comedy! DVD to parishes?

How can we carry on the conversation? (What were the outcomes from the previous assembly?) Could this provide themes/talks for Deanery Synods?

We felt a great sense of encouragement in the present leadership.

We need to get help out to the parishes who DON'T think they need it!

## **GROUP 6**

Another Assembly soon, please.

Need more opportunities for mixed-deanery meetings.

Communication: keep diocesan website up to date.

Communication: keep Cathedral congregation included and informed.

Help parishes with websites.

Tackle problems of under-used and redundant churches.

Creative uses for buildings for still-active churches.

Raise the profile of the DAC: encourage use of the DAC for advice on vision for buildings (not just faculties).

Explore patterns of cooperative and lay ministries as a positive use of gifts, rather than just to 'fill gaps'.

Raise the profile of the Old Palace as a resource for parishes: encourage knowledge of and use of Old Palace expertise.

We want the Diocese, in partnership with other denominations and agencies, to really engage with social justice issues locally and globally.

We want the Diocese to put across Christian vision, values and action to society generally (media, government Etc.) – we have a distinctive stance that needs to be heard and taken account of.

We want the Diocese to take risks and ACT.

## **GROUP 7**

There was an indication to parents that young people did not feel fully included in the Assembly – we need to ensure that they have the opportunity to take their full place in the life of the Diocese.

Then Church needs to gain confidence again in its place in society.

As laity become more involved in the future of our Diocese their roles need to be recognised and their involvement celebrated.

## **GROUP 8**

It would be good to have a strategy for recognising the gifts of lay people, then a strategy for endorsing and developing a range of lay ministries.

Be realistic about what is asked of the clergy.

Recruit a cohort of trainers (lay and ordained).

Training is good at Deanery level - it reduces travelling.

## **GROUP 10**

Engage with Church Action Outside Society (CAOS).

CAWS and other boards should stop working in isolation and draw in the parishes.

Rise to the challenge to think carefully about the place of justice in our attitude to money.

Help people to realise the wider dimensions of life.

Enable local parish worship to be a 'living' experience. Go to Lambeth with some hope!

## **GROUP 11**

How do we prevent 'clergy overload' being passed on to become 'laity overload'?

We need to change and to resource that change (financial and training). We need to look at what we have already been given.

Reduce red tape and bureaucracy.

We would like 'the Assembly' to continue in this Diocese. How can we carry the impetus forward? Build on the links?

## **GROUP 12**

Let's keep in touch – renew links between centre and parishes often.

More conference experiences for more people?

Have the courage to close more churches, especially urban (especially those with no wardens and not contributing to parish share).

A strategy for mission, please!

Looking at the number of lay people at the Assembly - see how much energy and commitment lay people can offer!

We thank God for you, Bishop John.

Encouraged to feel that there is a united commitment at the Assembly to see God's Kingdom come.

We hold you, Bishop, in our prayers - and all your colleagues at the Lambeth Conference.

## **GROUP 14**

Bishop, liberate us to it.

Encourage clergy to 'lay down' and lay people to 'pick up'.

Preach Jesus.

## **GROUP 15**

Keep your sense of humour. Keep living the three 'hums'.

Continue the strong interaction of the seniors in the Diocese. It's healthy.

The diocese needs to find a way of managing laity teams without being unduly dependent on a clergy-person for leadership.

The diocese needs to build on previous steps to encourage 'won't-pay' parishes to make every effort to pay parish share.

Share with us the diocese's future plans for ministry?

Pass on more relevant information to deaneries at an earlier stage?

## **GROUP 16**

Bishop John has exhibited real joy and great humour this weekend. He should be encouraged. Need to imbue the whole Diocese with joy in the Spirit.

## **GROUP 17**

Attention needs to be given to areas of the Diocese where people feel marginalised, out on a limb and communication is 'iffy, like the Black Country and the rural areas of Worcester. Rich rural parishes (or even poor rural parishes) might link with inner city or urban parishes to support and share, visit and enable each other.

A real 21<sup>st</sup> Century communication system is vital - we all need to know what's happening and what resources are available.

Where things go wrong between priest and parish sometimes the parish feels that it has no voice, and that the structures do not allow for pastoral care of priest and/or parishioners.

Parishes need somewhere to share best practice with each other instead of waiting for the Diocesan Assembly.

We need a database of ideas and activities which work (and also which fail, and why they failed) all as part of the Diocesan website.

## **GROUP 19**

Thrilled by + John's presence here and affirm him in his leadership.

Delight in + John's level of humour (which he so naturally shares) and the depth of his spirituality.

Want + John to know that he is loved – it is important for leaders to know this.

Don't be afraid! There are difficult times ahead with lack of money and the reducing number of priests. He has our support.

Please preserve the spirit of diversity, and goodwill there is in this Diocese towards different approaches to worship, beliefs and what we do/how we do it.

## **GROUP 20**

The Diocese has a future.

+John's leadership is a source of optimism.

We are too parochial, too protective and too busy about our own business.

We must support the Diocesan day in September.

Help us to celebrate what we have, not moan about what we lack.

Carry on joking.

Enhance Old Palace presence in our parishes – do we use their resources adequately?

Where is the best place to do the essential jobs?

## **GROUP 22**

Continue to release the talent that's here.

Mini-assemblies around the Diocese?

Cast a vision we can all own so that it 'costs us' if it fails.

Make mission more of a priority, then finances would follow.

## **GROUP 23**

Need to re-order the pattern of lay ministry, especially for readers.

Need to lift our heads from the finance books and trust God.

A similar assembly in two or three years time?

## **GROUP 24**

Affirm + John in his humour, leadership and 'being one with us'.

Have the courage to push on with things that need to be done.

Be well resourced ( +John) for your own spiritual needs.

Don't lose sight of mission and evangelism under the barrage of administration.

Put more energy into the Peruvian link, especially prayer.

Publicise the two up-and-coming Peruvian projects and ask for prayer for them.

## **GROUP 25**

We are concerned about the pressure on our parish clergy – they need to spread their expertise far and wide these days.

Vital to review the diocesan manpower resources.

Run courses on our baptismal vows (to develop the theme outlined by Ken)

Parish share as a contentious issue - we are so tied up with our concerns about bricks and mortar that we cannot focus on the pastoral issues that need addressing.

How do we balance the needs of bricks and mortar versus the needs of ministry and outreach.

Sell the cathedral to a property developer? (Joke.....)

## **GROUP 26**

Bottom-up church.

Equality of people and equal value of different gifts.

How do we stop 'the diocese' feeling like 'them'?

Need our PCC's to be facilitators and not control structures/mechanisms.

Need better caring for one another and one another's hurts.

Model hierarchy as service and not control.

Work out how to be our bishop in a congregational church.

Make sure we have space in the diocese and not just excessive busy-ness.

## **GROUP 28**

Old Palace should come round and see people on parish share matters.

Appreciate your honesty over financial problems and welcome your transparency.

Improve communication on the Diocese? As in Hereford and Gloucester?

A good newsletter, big, colourful etc, funding by adverts?

Looks like fewer clergy and more parish share to pay - need inspiration.

+ John is great! We are right behind you, lead us on.

Publish your joke book!

Don't neglect your own nourishment – avoid burn-out.

Could we have a clergy conference? More than a day? ( ... once you stop feeding the shepherds they start eating the sheep...)

Take NSM and reader ministries seriously - urgent need for strategic policy of deploying them.

Positive opportunity to restructure deaneries.

There is a training deficit.

## **UNMARKED I**

The Diocese has a future.

Get us together more often, this type of conference is important.

Help us to link with black-led churches? (in the light of the demographic at the Assembly)

Cherish our parish communities and don't worry too much about boundaries. Especially in rural areas, it's the only way they can function.

We were encouraged by the number of people who are longing to use their talents, and the sheer love for God, the Church and our Diocese.

Need to cultivate a will for political action amongst Christians - not just mopping up the effects of an unjust economic and political structure – but people getting fired up to change the whole society for good.

## **UNMARKED II**

Forward through humour, which comes by deep thought and deep prayer.

The extending use of laity in all aspects of church life is excellent and exciting.

Perhaps new channels are needed to disseminate information from the centre to the churches in a more successful way.

Make us more aware that each of us is a small piece in a global jigsaw.

### 3. General

#### **GROUP 1**

Report and information on the Diocesan website?

Worship at the conference was just right.

Liked the jokes.

The Dean excelled. Looking forward to a tour round the Diocese?

Thanks to 'Smith and Jones' and the team for arranging such an enjoyable and interesting weekend.

#### **GROUP 2**

Regret the Assembly was too busy.

Regret eating too much!

Would have been good to have an ecumenical speaker?

Worship was strong and meaningful with an emphasis on links with the world.

Thanks to everyone who helped create such a wonderful and inspiring assembly.

#### **GROUP 8**

It can be lonely coming to the Assembly as the only member of your parish. Most came with people they knew.

#### **GROUP 12**

Looking forward to sharing the DVD's

The Dean could raise money for the Cathedral by becoming a stand-up comic!

It would have been good if the older teenagers could have been included in the main sessions and the home groups.

#### **GROUP 20**

Some parishes under-represented. Missed out on communication about this event?

Significance of the candle collected at Candlemas could have been emphasised more.

Weekend needed more quiet time.

Need to agree and publicise the date of the next one.

#### **GROUP 23**

The conference has been very busy, reflecting on what is happening in our churches.

#### **GROUP 24**

It would have been good to have had some input from our Peruvian delegates.

Our group sessions were always positive.

#### **GROUP 25**

The assembly has enabled us all to be ourselves for just a while.

#### **GROUP 26**

How do we do assembly with people who don't do assembly?

Make sure we have space in the next assembly and not just excessive busy-ness.

#### **GROUP 28**

2012, yes please?

Need a two hour break on the Saturday afternoon.

Less directed worship?

Cover rural aspects more in future - be more aware of our specific difficulties.

Very valuable.