

SINCE SYNOD 2013

Progress

- Detailed Terms of Reference have been developed which we hope will help people to not only see what we are meant to be doing, but also how individuals as well as parishes or chaplaincies can contribute to the development of communications in the diocese. The Terms of Reference were agreed by Standing Committee in September 2013 and are appended to this report.
- The scene@synod and scene@cypgulf publications have been produced and distributed. Feedback has been very positive and we will be publishing future editions in a web-based format (in addition to the PDF version) to see how that is received.
- A diocesan facebook page has been launched.
- Revd Nigel Dawkins has left the Group and David Hammond-Williams has joined it.
- The new look Olive Branch has developed its own style to form a valuable archive resource for the Friends of the Diocese.
- Online website training and troubleshooting has been carried out with several parishes.
- 7 parish websites have been given either major overhauls or complete redesigns and 5 new websites have been launched.
- The Diocesan Calendar has been published and again proved very popular - we consider that it is both a valuable vehicle for sharing the “good news” of the diocese and sustainable in the future.
- Some parishes have implemented the PayPal donation facility on their websites.
- The Group held one face to face meeting last December to assess progress and determine strategy and objectives for the year ahead.

The opposite of progress ☹ ...

- An attempt to establish some forums last year for the Group, webmasters/managers and the House of Laity was a brave experiment that was probably before its time. We will be thinking about (a) whether there is a better tool (b) how we might encourage individuals to actively participate in this type of online dialogue or (c) whether it is a useful tool at all.
- Some Group members admitted that it was a significant challenge to respond to Group emails and discussions in a timely manner because of their own workloads – and that needed to change.
- An area that was identified as a priority at our inaugural meeting, and on which no progress has been made, is how to communicate “the diocese” to a digitally savvy youth generation. To repair this, we have invited John Karunakar, a youth worker at Holy Trinity Dubai to join the Group.

THE DIOCESE WEBSITE

There are no similar diocese websites to compare ourselves to; nevertheless with over 18,000 visitors to the diocese website from 127 countries last year, we feel that we are achieving good results online. Summary statistics of visitors to the website are appended to this report.

Developing the website as a resource base

Our website has great potential as a resource base for initiatives such as spirituality and teaching and learning, and we will be liaising closely with those involved to see how it can be of most use. On the Spirituality front there is scope for: book reviews, weekly spiritual exercises, a spirituality blog, a directory of other resources, a downloadable Lent course, etc. On the teaching and learning front, it may be possible to store resources for specific courses. Some courses are actually designed to be resourced in this way.

Sharing the good news – or not?

We have been disappointed that there has not been a more regular flow of news items (for the website) from parishes. This is partly due, we think, to a lack of confidence that what is going on in parishes or

chaplains is newsworthy – whether that means of interest to others in the diocese or to a wider Anglican, Christian or even secular audience. **An editor can be the best judge of that.**

What we would like to see is a news gatherer in every parish, regularly sending material for consideration to a central editor who, in collaboration with other Group members, can then produce appropriate news items for the website, or the Anglican Communion, or whoever.

In the absence of a diocesan Communications Officer we noted the importance of getting pictures and text from those who regularly accompany the bishop, and noted the importance of Julia Lewis (a corresponding member) in this regard.

For all news items both pictures and text need to be contemporary. There needs to be some sense of priority and urgency about getting news on the website; publishing an item about an event 6 months ago or even 2 weeks ago does not encourage online viewers to read it. We accept that this involves a change of culture, which we hope to see develop in the months ahead.

Another difficulty is the reporting of news that is not strictly parochial, or for which a particular parish may not feel responsible, or where the diocese may choose to contribute to a wider regional/global issue or event. It is difficult to get someone to write about, for example *“Bishop speaks out on...”* or *“Three way diocese meeting a great success,”* as opposed to the response of a particular parish on their own website. A current example might be the recent move towards designating the Cyprus archdeaconry as a fair trade archdeaconry. Again this highlights the lack of a diocesan communications officer.

As a group we will continue to try and monitor what is going on across the diocese to identify stories of interest to the wider diocese and beyond. But we need your help! Therefore a new email address has been created specifically to receive news items - news@cypgulf.org. All items received will be received, reviewed, edited and if appropriate, published on the diocese website.

Internet Questionnaire

As a Group we need to understand more about how people in the diocese use the internet, handle their email, what online tools you use and social media activities – this will help to inform our thinking in the months ahead. As we have a “captive audience” at Synod, you will find a questionnaire in your Synod papers and we would like you all to complete this and hand it in before the end of Synod. It WILL help us, so please take 15 minutes (no more) to complete it. The results will be published in the next “scene@synod”.

DIOCESE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

The Group believes the case for appointing a Communications Officer is strong. It recognises the present financial strictures, but in principle believes that as part of the Bishop’s office team, it would be good to have an officer who would support the whole diocese in terms of dealing with local (parochial), diocese and wider communications and manage the website and social media.

How such a position could be filled and funded – whether by combining it with a clergy position or by working with a mission agency to provide a self funding communications professional, or offering an open (partially funded) internship – is an ongoing challenge.

PARISH / CHAPLAINCY WEBSITES

The Group has noted with great pleasure the development and re-launch of several websites (Famagusta, Oman, Doha, Kyrenia, Limassol, Paphos and Ayia Napa) and the launch of some new websites (Fujairah, Derynia, Sharjah and Pissouri) since Synod 2013.

Unfortunately our attempt to form a community of all the webmasters and/or website managers using the forums on the diocese website failed, as did an attempt at simply emailing everyone asking them to update some information on their websites – over 50% of people emailed never responded!

As part of helping raise awareness of the diocese as a family, it would be good for all the websites to have (a) a **prominent link** to the diocese website and (b) show the news feed from the diocese.

RE-BRANDING THE DIOCESE

The Group believes that the time is now right to pay attention to what might be called diocesan branding (sometimes called “corporate identity”) which typically would include logos, stationery, publications, church signs, publications, advertisements as well as website and social media graphics.

Our feeling is that the diocese needs to move to a softer, more contemporary style and the Group will be developing ideas in the coming months and hopes to present a proposal to Standing Committee later this year. Any proposal would include cost estimates and a phased implementation plan, starting with the diocese office, officers and ministries and then extending to parishes.

DIOCESE EMAIL ADDRESSES

We are currently experimenting with “@cypgulf.org” email addresses for diocese officers and ministries (e.g. archdeacon.john@cypgulf.org, spirituality@cypgulf.org). Providing “branded” addresses would not only help to strengthen our “identity”, it could prove much more user friendly and (hopefully) overcome the frequent issues many people experience sending to and from spidernet email addresses. We will be presenting a detailed proposal to the bishop and Nicosia office staff soon.

VIDEO PRESENTATIONS TO SYNOD

The use of video presentations at Synod has greatly improved our knowledge and understanding of our diverse diocese. The efforts made to produce these videos is recognised and greatly appreciated not only by the Group but, we believe, by all those who attend Synod. There is also an “unseen” audience for the diocese Vimeo channel (where we put the videos online) and **the Synod 2013 videos have collectively had over 1500 views from around the world** – it doesn’t sound a lot but it is nonetheless significant.

The Challenges

As a Group we accept that:

- Some parishes struggle to produce a video for various reasons; lack of technical know-how and resources or lack of time are just some of the issues.
- The agenda / structure at Synod currently demands that all the videos are shown together since they all address the same theme.
- The very fact that they do all address the same theme can lead to repetition.

However, these videos are an important and valued way of demonstrating the diversity and vitality of the diocese at Synod, within parishes, across the diocese and to a wider online audience.

Changes for Synod 2015

The Group, in consultation with Standing Committee, notes the changing priorities of Synod agendas to a more thematic approach, and in particular the desirability of presenting the diocese in a way that demonstrates that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

From Synod 2015 onwards we propose, in consultation with Standing Committee, that a different approach be adopted. At Synod 2014 a list of themes will be circulated and parishes invited to create their video presentation next year with one of those themes as a particular focus. So for example, one parish might have made great strides in the field of spirituality and want to tell us about that. Another may have started a new ministry project or new form of social outreach. The videos would then illustrate how this particular aspect of diocesan concern is working out at parish level.

They may also include areas that do not feature on our current agendas such as social responsibility, stewardship, ecumenical relations etc. Videos produced on themes that are important in parishes might then prompt discussion or debate in Synod. So some videos might reflect our current agendas. Others might lead them. The videos would then be shown in the slots allocated for discussion of the topics. If a parish did not want to take a theme, it could still be possible to have a shortened session of showing videos that simply describe a year in the life of the parishes in question.

This could make Synod presentations more interesting and varied, and relate agendas more directly to parish activity, concern and priority. It will militate against any culture of competition.

We are thinking about how we can provide (physical and online) resources, training and support to parishes as they plan and prepare their video presentations.

VIDEO CONFERENCING AND VIDEO COMMUNICATIONS

It is becoming increasingly clear that the various networks, working groups, teams and ministries within the diocese **cannot work effectively through perhaps (or at most) one or two face-to-face meetings between synods, or indeed through protracted group email conversations.**

Voice and video over internet technology (VOIP) is no longer complex to use nor is it expensive. Consciously adding a tool like Skype to our **communication thinking and strategy** could be valuable, time-saving and cost effective for a range of purposes, e.g. preliminary interview of a candidate for employment, clergy reviews, a meeting of the communications group, participation of Gulf members in the Spirituality Development Team, or tutorials to an isolated candidate for ordination. It can also be used just as a FREE telephone service between individuals.

The Group has been testing a "Skype Pro" account for group discussions, both for short, sharp decision making and longer agenda driven discussions. We hope to make it available to other groups within the diocese to test. There will be a brief introduction to Skype during Synod for anyone who has never used it.

SUMMARY OF PROJECTS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2014

- Expansion of the use of @cypgulf.org emails by clergy and diocese ministries.
- Present a proposal to implement diocese "branded" emails in the diocese office.
- Actively engage with the Spirituality Development Team and those developing the Exploring Faith programme to see how the website or online tools can be used as resources.
- Implement online meetings using Skype for various diocese groups to "do business" and as an alternative to protracted email or expensive telephone communications.
- Continue to provide training (remotely) for webmasters of Wordpress websites.
- To work with parishes to capture local news of interest to the diocese so that we can publish at least one "news" story each week on the diocese website.
- Development of a detailed proposal for re-branding across the diocese.
- Development and production of a diocesan prospectus.
- Work with the Spirituality Coordinator to redesign the diocesan prayer booklet and directory.
- Work with Standing Committee to develop a congregational/parish/chaplaincy questionnaire to gather data about the scope and extent of the diocese.
- Identify people with appropriate skills to ensure progression in a diocese with a transient population.

CURRENT GROUP MEMBERS

David Hammond-Williams
Revd Tim Heaney
Ven Dr John Holdsworth
Julia Lewis (corresponding member)
Revd Canon Paul Maybury (SDT)

Angela Murray (Calendar)
Revd Dr Ruwan Palapathwala
Nick Truscott (Webmaster)
Dana Winner

ATTACHMENTS

- Terms of Reference for the Communications Group
- Diocese Website Statistics for the period 1 Dec 2012 to 1 Dec 2013
- Overview of websites within the diocese

Traffic Overview

- 18,600 visitors (1550 per month)
- 13,357 unique visitors
- 45,000 pages were visited
- Average time on website 2.35 minutes
- 71% were first time visitors to the site

Technology

- 83% viewed the site on a PC or laptop
- 17% viewed the site on a mobile device (e.g. smartphone or tablet/iPad/Kindle etc.)

Top 5 countries (location) of visitors

- UK (35%)
- Cyprus (16%)
- UAE (11%)
- USA (8%)
- Qatar (3%)

Content

Top 5 pages for visitors (after the home page)

- Chaplaincies (location of churches)
- Retreats
- Church Directory
- Bishop's Diary
- Clergy Directory

Top 5 news posts / announcements

- Prayers for St George's Baghdad
- Vacancy for St Andrew's Kyrenia
- Appointment of Canon Paul Maybury
- New website for St Andrew's Kyrenia
- Vacancy for Parish Priest in Paphos

Sources of Visitors

- 30% of visitors just typed the URL address into their internet browser
- 30% came from Google search results
- 7% came from the diocese RSS news feed that appears on other websites in the diocese
- 5% came from Facebook

Top search terms (Google queries) that brought people to the diocese website

"Michael Lewis"
"Bishop Michael"
"Tim Heaney"
"Wendy Hough"
"Naked Retreats"

Top 5 websites that send (refer) visitor traffic to the diocese website

- St Andrew's Abu Dhabi
- St Andrew's Kyrenia
- Epiphany Qatar
- Churchtimes.co.uk (jobs pages)
- Christ Church Jebel Ali

Diocese Facebook Page

Over 300 people "LIKE" the diocese FB page.

Approximately 250 people visit the page each day.

On average less than 10 people SHARE any single item from the FB page.

Items that are repeated from other churches often get more activity (reach).

Interesting FB traffic results...

"Prayers for St George's Baghdad" was seen by over 12,000 people within 36 hours of appearing on the diocese FB page.

Wendy Hough's appointment to the diocese was seen by over 3,000 people on FB in 24 hours.

Jo Henderson's ordination was shared over 220 times and seen by over 1,200 people on FB.

Mystery Worshipper report on Holy Trinity Dubai was seen by over 2,000 people on FB.

Tell us a little bit about you

Are you...

- Male Female

What **age group** are you in?

- 18-30 31-50 51-70 Over 70

Are you...

- Ordained A layman/woman

Do you **live in the diocese**?

- Full-time Part-time I don't live in the diocese

You and the Internet

What **device(s)** do you use? Desktop Laptop Mobile Phone iPad, Kindle or other tablet

Which **internet browsers** do you use? Internet Explorer Firefox Opera Safari Other

How often do you **surf or search the internet**? (*tick just one*)

- Frequently every day Usually once a day Several times a week Less frequently than any of the above

When was the last time you visited the **diocese website**? (*tick just one*)

- In the past 7 days In the past month Sometime in the past year I can't remember Never

When was the last time you visited **your own church website**? (*tick just one*)

- In the past 7 days In the past month Sometime in the past year I can't remember Never

You and Email

How many personal email addresses do you have or use? I.e. the **number** of email addresses that people can use to send YOU email like fred@gmail.com or fred.smith@business.com.uk.

Just enter a number

How often do you check/read your email? (*tick just one*)

- Whenever new email arrives Several times each day Once a day Less frequently than any of the above

How good are you at replying to emails you receive? (*tick just one*)

- I reply/acknowledge the same day Usually within 2 or 3 days Normally within 7 days
 I have a "system" It depends who the email is from I really struggle to deal with email in a timely way

Online Devotionals & Christian Resources

Do you use any **online devotionals, discipleship resources or similar** for your personal spiritual growth / encouragement / learning? (*just "yes" or "no" is fine*) Yes No

Do you use any **online resources to guide your daily prayers** (e.g. an online lectionary or the CoE's daily Prayer Feed)? (*just "yes" or "no" is fine*) Yes No

Do you subscribe to any Christian **blogs, websites or other online services** that send you an email whenever there is something new to read? (*just "yes" or "no" is fine*) Yes No

Would you use an online spirituality resource if we (the diocese) developed one and made it available on the internet in general or diocese website? Maybe Yes No

Social Media

Do you have **accounts** with any of the following **social media or networking sites**? (*tick all that apply*)

- Facebook Twitter Linked In Pinterest Instagram Flickr
 Blogger Google+ LinkExpats Orkut Tumblr Foursquare

Online Services

Do you have accounts for, or have you **ever used**, any of the following **online applications or services**? (*tick any you have used*)

- Skype** **PayPal** **Dropbox** or other file sharing service **Teamviewer** or other remote access service

Have you ever ... **Shopped online?** **Used internet banking?** **Made online donations** to charity?

Purpose

The purpose of the Communications Group is to bring together individuals with skills, experience and interest in various aspects of communications – and who have a willingness to work together – in order to:

- Advise the Bishop's Council on strategic and practical communications issues.
- Help raise the level of communications and communication related resources in the diocese for the benefit of all our constituents, including chaplaincies/parishes, churches, congregations, clergy and laity, working groups and other ministries of the diocese as well as individuals living within and without the diocese.
- Generate, help parishes to generate and promote, information and news about the diocese that will be valuable to constituents and a witness to the global Christian community and the wider world.

In practical terms the operational and strategic activities of the Communications Group will be evidenced through the Strategic Communications Plan and the Communications Group Workplan.

Accountability

The Communications Group has been established by the Bishop's Council and is accountable to it. In simple terms this accountability will be effected by routine reports presented to each meeting of the Bishop's Council, together with an annual report to Synod.

Except for any items that may be sensitive or inappropriate for the public domain, the routine reports of the Communications Group will be published on the diocese website. These terms of reference will also be published on the diocese website.

Composition

Chair: Executive Archdeacon

Coordinator: A lay member of the Group will be appointed to be day-to-day coordinator to ease the burden on the Executive Archdeacon.

Members: Volunteers, both laity and clergy, with relevant skills, experience and an active desire to contribute to this strategic area of diocese life.

Co-opted Members

The following will be co-opted into the Group if they are not already volunteer members: Calendar Coordinator, diocese Webmaster and a representative of the Association of Friends /Olive Branch

External Advisors

The diocese may also from time to time invite professionals from outside of the diocese to support the work of the Communications Group where their experience and talents are relevant to individual projects or the overall work of the Group.

Form & Process

The Communications Group operates across 10 countries in various time zones and it is neither practicable nor desirable to hold frequent face-to-face meetings. Much of the practical work and coordination will necessarily be conducted by email with group discussions taking place either within the private secure Communications Group forum on the diocese website or through online video conferencing.

The Group will update and publish its updated work plan for the following 12 months within one month of Synod. The routine reports to the Bishop's Council and Synod will focus on progress made against that workplan and the overall strategic plan.

Meetings

It is hoped that informal "coordination and progress" meetings will take place using video conferencing roughly every 3 months and that this method of collaboration will be sufficient for the bulk of the Group's work. Where practical and financially viable, a formal (face-to-face) meeting of the Group could be scheduled annually, ideally midway between Synods.

Agendas will be published in advance and members not able to attend meetings will be invited to submit comments, thoughts, and opinions by email so that their input can be included during discussions.

Wherever possible the minutes of the meeting and action points will be published within 14 days of a meeting and made available on the diocese website.

Decision Making

The Strategic Communications Plan will be approved by the Bishop's Council and updates presented annually to Synod as part of the Group report.

The Communications Group will generally make decisions by consensus following discussion, research, recommendations, trials or whatever collaborative process (both within and without the group) is necessary. There will be no formal voting process.

The Bishop has delegated decision making authority for the Group to the Executive Archdeacon, without prejudice to his own ultimate authority. It is for the Executive Archdeacon to judge when recourse to the authority of the Bishop is required. For day to day purposes, and within the Group, the Executive Archdeacon has overall editorial authority for all diocese publications and media, both online and offline.

Expectations of Group Members

It is not realistic to volunteer to be a member of a dynamic working group such as this and then do nothing. We recognise that everyone is busy in their own work and personal lives however there is an explicit expectation that members of the Communications Group will:

- **Make the time to participate** in online video or telephone conference/meeting at least every 3 months or more frequently as or when a project, topic, situation or issue requires it.
- **Regularly participate** in the online forum(s) on the Diocese website on communication topics.
- **Be prompt(ish)** in responding (e.g. within 72 hours) to emails from Group members on Communications Group business.
- **Be active** in pursuing communications group work/issues/activities within their specific local and/or regional constituencies, i.e. working with others in their chaplaincies, parishes, countries, regions.
- **Be willing**, wherever possible and practicable, to participate in Communications Group meetings either online, in their own Archdeaconry or elsewhere in the Diocese.
- **Inform the group if they are not able to participate** (temporarily or permanently). A member who will be "off the radar" for any length of time due to holidays, travel, mission, work obligations or any other reason, or no longer able to commit to the Group, should advise the Group so that non replies to e-mails will be understood.

Desirable Skills & Experience

Ideally members of the Group will have skills, experience or at least an active interest in one or more of the following areas. Note that this is neither an exhaustive or exclusive list:

- Campaign and/or donor management
- Corporate communications skills/network
- Desktop and online publishing
- Fundraising
- Graphic Design
- Journalism (press, TV, video, radio)
- Marketing
- Photography
- Printing
- level
- Public Relations
- Publishing
- Recruiting and managing sponsors
- Social Media
- Strategic Communications
- Videography
- Website design and administration
- Writing
- Communication experience at parish

Approval & Review

These terms of reference were approved by the Bishop's Council / Standing Committee in September 2013.

Communications Group | Websites of the Diocese - December 2013

	Type	Content Updates	Privacy & Legal	Show Diocese News Feed	Diocese Links	Diocese Crest	EU / Int'l Cookies Compliance	PayPal Button	Facebook Page	Website Subscribers	MailChimp Newsletter Subscribers
Christ Church, Aden, Yemen	Wordpress	Newsletters	Yes	Yes	All	Yes	No	Yes		Yes	Yes
Christ Church, Ayia Napa	Church 123	Occasional	No	No	No	No	No			No	
Christ Church, Jebel Ali	Wordpress	Regular	Yes	Yes	All	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	Yes
Church of the Epiphany, Qatar	Wordpress	Service Sheet	Yes	Yes	All	Yes	No	Yes		Yes	
Diocese Website	Wordpress	Regular	Yes	NA	All	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Dubai & Sharjah with the Northern Emirates, UAE	HTML	Static	NA	NA	Chaplaincy	Yes	No			NA	
Holy Trinity, Dubai	Joomla	Occasional	No	No	All	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	
St Andrew, Abu Dhabi, UAE	Wordpress	Regular	Yes	Yes	All	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	Yes
St Andrew, Kyrenia	Wordpress	Regular	Yes	Yes	All	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	
St Barnabas, Limassol	Wordpress	Regular	Yes	Yes	All	Yes	No			Yes	
St Christopher's Cathedral, Bahrain	Wordpress	Regular	Yes	Yes	All	Yes	No				
St Helena, Larnaca	HTML	Occasional	No	No	Some	Yes	No			NA	
St John the Evangelist, Deryneia	HTML	Weekly Notices	No	No	No	No	No		Yes	No	
St Lazarus, Pissouri	HTML	Static	NA	NA	NA	Yes	No			NA	
St Luke, Ras Al Khaimah	Wordpress	Static	Yes	Yes	All	Yes	No			No	
St Mark, Famagusta	HTML	Regular	Yes	No	All	No	No			Yes	
St Martin, Sharjah	In development	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No			NA	
St Nicholas, Fujairah	Wordpress	Static	Yes	Yes	All	Yes	No			No	
St Paul, Kuwait	HTML	Occasional	No	No	No	No	No			No	
St Paul's Cathedral, Nicosia	iWebsite	Static	No	No	All	No	No			No	
St Thomas, Al Ain	Wordpress	Regular	Yes	No	All	Yes	No		Yes	No	
The Anglican Church of Paphos	Wordpress	Occasional	No	No	No	No	No	Yes		No	
The Protestant Church in Oman	Wix	Regular	No	No	No	No	No			No	
Weddings in Paphos	Wordpress	Static	No	No	No	No	No			NA	

Churches and congregations included in other websites

	Parent Website
Awali Church	St Christopher
Ayia Kyriaki Chrysopolitissa	Paphos
St Luke, Polis	Paphos
St Stephen, Tala	Paphos
St George in the Forest, Troodos	St Paul
St George Baghdad, Iraq	FRRME
Christ Church Academic City	CCJA