



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON

MINISTRY OF CONSOLATION

Arundel & Brighton



In my Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

John 14:2

For further information please contact:

Rev. Deacon Simon South
Marriage and Family Life Project Officer

E: simon.south@abdiocese.org.uk
M: 07415 306222



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON

The Arundel & Brighton Diocesan Trust is a Registered Charity no. 252878

www.abdiocese.org.uk

**THIS YEAR HAS BEEN
 CHALLENGING FOR SO
 MANY PEOPLE**

Would you like to support those
 in your parish who are
 experiencing loss?



There is a network of **trained Bereavement Supporters** across the Diocese who journey alongside the bereaved and the dying and are trained to offer supportive listening.

Do you find it easy to empathise with people? Are you a good listener?

Our next Bereavement Supporters course begins in **January 2021** and will run on **Tuesdays for seven weeks**. Participants will be taught a wide range of important skills enabling them to work within their parish, supporting the clergy in meeting the needs of the bereaved.

To find out more about joining our Ministry of Consolation team speak to your parish priest or contact our Marriage and Family Life Project Officer:

E: simon.south@abdioocese.org.uk | T: 01293 651155 | www.abdioocese.org.uk | Charity No 252878



RAISING THE PROFILE AND PURPOSE OF THE MINISTRY

An additional benefit to the deanery led structure has been the opportunity to raise the general visibility of the Ministry among both the parish priests and the parishioners across the Diocese thanks to the increased ability to support those in need.

Through the first half of this year we have been running an “advertising” campaign across the Diocese, including posters for parishes to display. On going communications to parish priests and deans, gaining access to deanery meetings, establishing a Ministry of Consolation web page on the Diocesan website, running adverts in the weekly Diocesan eNewsletter, and providing adverts to parish priests to include in parish newsletters.

THE MINISTRY OF CONSOLATION

A summary of progress to date

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this leaflet is to provide an update on the progress made within the Ministry of Consolation within the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton over the last two years, with a view to share this progress with you all.

Our primary focus has been to create an operating structure which would make the Ministry more accessible across the Diocese for those who have been experiencing the pain and challenge of bereavement especially in light of the isolating impact of the last eighteen months. Our secondary focus has been to target specific areas within our Diocese where we currently do not have coverage through Bereavement Supporters.

THE STARTING POINT

We had a team of 69 trained Bereavement Supporters across the Diocese. Each member of the team have completed the nine day training programme which covers topics such as supporting those affected by suicide, accompanying the dying, those who have lost children (including pre-birth), the spiritual aspect of the Ministry, and the Catholic teaching on key topics relating the support of those experiencing the pain of loss.

We have eleven deaneries within the Diocese made up of over 90 parishes, so we clearly did not have a presence in every parish.

The key stakeholder for the Ministry is the parish priest and our bereavement befrienders are identified as a resource to support their parish priest with the pastoral needs within their parish.



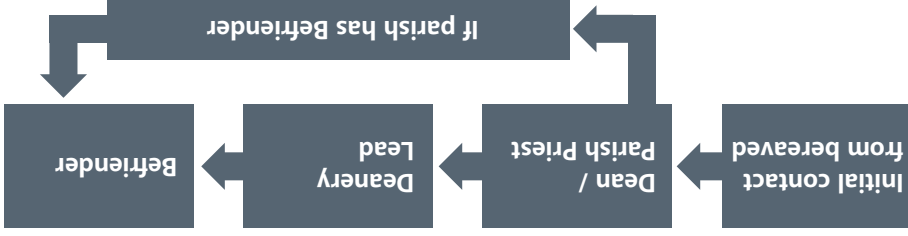
WORKING STRUCTURE

The objective was to provide a dynamic and responsive team who would be able to provide support across the Diocese despite not having a bereavement supporter in each parish.

The starting point was to consider Bishop Richard's 20 year plan for the Diocese. As a result it was felt that working with the deanery structure was the appropriate way forward.

As a result we identified a Deanery Lead for each deanery across the Diocese from within the existing team based on individual skill set. A role profile was established to give the role a framework and to make the role realistic for the volunteers with their busy lives.

Having identified the Deanery lead, the structure was then launched to the deans and parish priests, which is shown below:



By establishing the role of Deanery Lead, every parish has simple access to the bereanders if they do not have a parish specific individual. The structure has also enabled a communication route for the Diocese to share best practice across the team and to create a "team identity" within the deaneries.



COVID PROOFING THE MINISTRY

The obvious challenges for the Ministry under Covid restrictions was the ability to meet on a one to one basis or bringing groups together.

The solution was to ask for volunteers to undergo additional training in "telephone" technique. The training was four hours long and involved "refresher" listening skills, 360 listening to compensate for the lack of body language and physicality. Zoom was also offered as a vehicle for contact and for group work.

TEAM IDENTITY AND SHARING THE SUCCESSES

Utilising the Deanery Lead structure, we have established a bi-monthly Zoom call between the Diocesan Lead and the Deanery Lead. The purpose is to encourage the sharing of best practice and ideas along with being able to celebrate successes.

In turn the Deanery Leads then hold a bi-monthly Zoom/meeting with their bereanders, again to share best practice, gather feedback, and to celebrate successes.

The real progress has therefore been improved access to the bereanders, a building sense of team through open sharing of ideas, and two-way understanding of the challenges and opportunities going forward. Examples of the best practice sharing to date include:

- Ministry of Consolation "business cards"
- *Preparing Your Own Funeral* document
- Post funeral condolence card