

## Word from the Wardens

Dear Friends,

We have been quiet over the past month or so, as there has been little to say in terms of developments within the Chaplaincy. However, things are now moving on in the wider social sphere, with easing of the confinement restrictions and of course the consequences seen as a result. Churches have been given permission to re-open and some of the worship centres in our regions and in other Chaplaincies have done so. The restrictions on the conduct of worship have not really changed, except perhaps that seating can now be 1m apart rather than 2m. You may have been wondering what our Chaplaincy will be doing in response to these changes.

In June, Council agreed that we should not attempt to re-open worship centres over the summer period, but would consider doing so in September. We have therefore recently carried out a review with all our Clergy and Readers to gauge their views on holding services from September onwards. Clearly they would be critical to the leading of worship and are our starting point for the way forward. Almost without exception, the view was that it is still too early to commit to beginning services again in September. There are spikes of COVID-19 disease in various places and we don't yet know the consequences of the summer tourist season with the major movement of people around the area. Similarly, there is considerable uncertainty about whether or not there will be a more general re-emergence of disease later in the year as with the 'flu' season. The ongoing restrictions to indoor meetings and the way in which worship has to be conducted continue to make the prospect of church services unattractive.

For these reasons, the Wardens will not be seeking to re-introduce services in our worship centres in September, but will again consult at that stage to see how the prevailing situation has changed. Because of the difficulty of holding Council meetings at present, the Wardens have assumed that the view of Council members expressed in June remains unchanged.

Our second topic for this note is that of the AGM. We are now beginning the process of defining how we might conduct essential business within Council in early September, with a view to holding an AGM later that month. We are highly dependent on the changing restrictions on the use of indoor meeting spaces and will explore these with the relevant authorities to see what might be possible. Our expectation is that an AGM would be significantly restricted in terms of numbers attending and would have constraints on the way in which business could be conducted. Nonetheless, we need to make certain decisions to meet with Diocesan regulations and therefore hope to hold a meeting authorised to do this. We will advise further on this topic as information becomes available on the art of the possible.

We trust that you are remaining well and are enjoying the summer period, even though family visits and personal travel plans have all been disrupted. We should hold fast to the words from Romans 8: 38 that we heard in Steven Abram's Virtual Worship + Sunday service of 26 July: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord".

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