

Fit for Mission?

A review of the
Lancaster Diocesan Youth Service
Report to the Bishop of Lancaster
18th December 2008

External Review team;

Anna Cowell, Rev Dermott Donnelly, Mr Peter Metcalf,
Mrs Judi Shimmell, Rev Joseph Wheat

Introduction

This report outlines the main findings and recommendations of the Organisational Review conducted by an external review team on behalf of the Diocese of Lancaster Youth Service.

Bishop Patrick O'Donoghue invited the external review team to conduct this review and its scope was to examine the work of Castlerigg Manor and that of the Youth Service. Both bodies will be referred to in this way throughout the report.

The review aimed to

1. Collect data from interviews, observations, documentation and review days.
2. Give those involved with the Youth Service and Castlerigg Manor a voice in the review process.
3. Analyse the findings of the review in the light of the Aims of the Youth Service below.

The purpose of this report is to

1. Accurately reflect and honour the contributions of all participants whilst maintaining the confidentiality of individuals.
2. Identify clear themes and issues, draw conclusions and make recommendations as to how the work of both Castlerigg Manor and the Youth Service could improve.

The review process provided the review team with a snapshot of Castlerigg Manor and the Youth Service at a particular moment in time and does not purport to be a definitive statement providing a complete analysis of the organisation. However, the review does attempt to take into account the recent history of both Castlerigg Manor and the Youth Service to give some sense of how they have both arrived at their present position.

Methodology

Several different methods of gathering data were used in order to reflect on the aims set out for the Youth Service and to gather a representative view from across the diocese of Lancaster.

1. A face to face meeting with the members of the Youth Service in March 2008
2. Two day conferences held at Brettargh Holt Retreat Centre, intended to give clergy and laity the opportunity to give their views on “what was, what is and what could be possible for youth provision within the Diocese”. The days began by setting the context of the review, the Youth Service team and the Castlerigg Manor team gave an overview of their respective work and vision, then individuals were invited to respond in writing and conversation.
3. Various communications with individuals who were not at the conference and so responded either by email or telephone conversations.
4. Two members of the review team observed a five day course at Castlerigg Manor during which they observed all elements of the course, and made an assessment of the buildings and systems of work.
5. The two team members responsible for looking at the work of Castlerigg Manor conducted a series of structured interviews with those involved in the work of Castlerigg Manor; all leadership, staff and volunteers, young people who use the centre, school chaplains and staff, priests, Bishops and others who have experience of the work of Castlerigg Manor.
6. The review team then met to collate the data from these interactions, identify common themes and compile this report.
7. A review of the financial position of Castlerigg Manor and the Youth Service was also conducted.

Terminology

Throughout, the present team of Fr Philip Conner, Ruth and Joe White are referred to as the Youth Service or in the present tense as the outreach team.

In recommendations, we refer to a Youth Service; meaning a unified organisation comprising Castlerigg Manor and the residential retreat provision, and a version of an outreach team or provision.

Aims of the Youth Service

The review evaluated the work of the Youth Service and Castlerigg Manor in accordance with the aims set out by Bishop O'Donoghue in "Youth Ministry Consultation Document. June 2006"

1. To help the young people of our schools, colleges and parishes grow in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as his disciples in the Church.
2. To enable the full participation of young people in the life and mission of the local Church.
3. To encourage and nurture the growth of the whole person in the light of Christ, with prayer and spirituality as the basis for all human development.
4. The provision of attractive and safe environments in order to develop successful inter-personal relationships which will provide our young people with clear and engaging examples of discipleship, service, ministry and leadership.

The Review Team

- Anna Cowell; Diocesan Youth Officer, Diocese of Leeds.
- Fr Dermott Donnelly; Director of Youth Service, Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.
- Mr Peter Metcalf; FCA, DChA.
- Mrs Judi Shimmell; Director of Youth Services, Diocese of Hallam.
- Fr Joe Wheat; Director of Youth Services, Diocese of Nottingham.

Anna Cowell and Fr Joe Wheat concentrated on the review of Castlerigg Manor, whilst Fr Dermott Donnelly and Judi Shimmell focussed on the work done by the Youth Service. Peter Metcalf conducted an analysis of the financial position of both. The team worked together to establish the methodology of the review and compile this report.

Summary of Recommendations

This report makes recommendations which will enable two major developments

1. For a culture of Youth Ministry to be developed within the Diocese.
2. To provide an opportunity for Castlerigg Manor to be restored so that it will be able to better serve the young people and wider diocesan family in Lancaster Diocese.

Ultimately, it is hoped that the benefits will be; to create a culture in schools and parishes which helps young people returning from a residential retreat to consolidate their experience; create a diocesan resource which will serve the needs of diocesan groups and as a priority enable areas of the diocese that suffer from a feeling of isolation to be drawn into the life of the diocese.

Therefore, we recommend that

Concerning the Recommendations

1. The Trustees of the Diocese and the Management of the Youth Service and Castlerigg Manor engage in a process for each of the recommendations and so decide if it is to be accepted, rejected or requires amendment.
2. The Trustees of the Diocese and the Management of the Youth Service and Castlerigg Manor seek professional advice to guide them through the legal implications of any changes in personnel and in the status of the organisation.
3. Having considered the recommendations, we advocate that the Trustees make public a version of this report, at least to those who were directly involved in the review. This is to aid transparency and openness.
4. Those who will be directly affected by any changes are involved and consulted in the process of implementing these changes.

Concerning the structure and work of Castlerigg Manor and the Youth Service

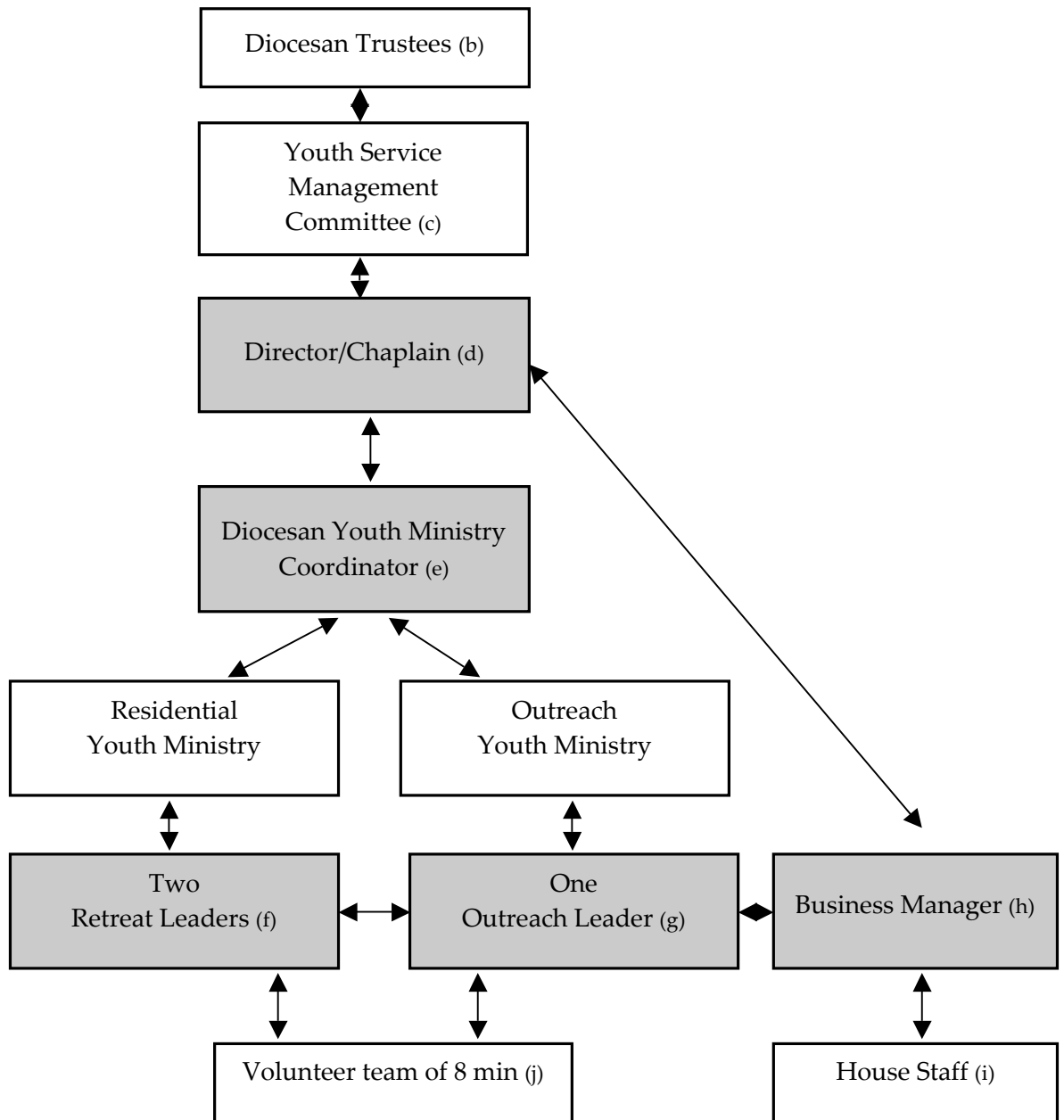
5. The Trustees of the Diocese and the Management of the Youth Service and Castlerigg Manor engage in a process by which they arrive at a shared, coherent and cohesive vision based on the needs of the diocese, not on the particular gifts or emphasis of the present staff.
6. That the presently separate Youth Service and Castlerigg Manor are restructured to form one united Diocesan Youth Service.
7. One Diocesan priest is appointed as Director/Chaplain of the Youth Service to oversee the transition and provide strong, clear and focussed leadership.
8. There is major capital investment into Castlerigg Manor to re-create it as the true 'centre' of all youth ministry in the Diocese and to bring the facilities up to standard.
9. The present roles and staffing structure is restructured as per the organigram below.
10. A new outreach team is immediately established as per the recommendations below.

11. The present system of bookings and client base is adjusted to encourage and allow for more diocesan schools and parishes to use Castlerigg Manor.
12. The programme of residential services offered at Castlerigg Manor is changed to encourage and facilitate its use by Diocesan schools and parishes, taking into account the recommendations below in the area of youth work and relationship with Diocese.
13. A recruitment process is instigated to provide for the restructured staffing and provide for what each role requires, not based on the skills of existing staff.

Concerning the implementation of the recommendations and new structure.

14. The whole Youth Service enters into a 'fallow year' to allow for the changes to the fabric of Castlerigg Manor and the changes in the structure of the Youth Service.
15. Castlerigg Manor close for business for a temporary period, allowing only for the accommodation on site of Director/Chaplain, Youth Ministry Coordinator, House Manager and Outreach Leader and team, either in the Lodge or, with a properly planned programme of works, in the main building.
16. The Lancaster Youth Office is closed and all resources re-located to Castlerigg Manor.

17. The Youth Service as a whole is restructured as per the organigram below and all aspects of its work is located at Castlerigg Manor.



Key and explanation of roles

- a) The boxes shaded grey form the Management Team of the Service which works in a collaborative manner and has frequent and regular team meetings.
- b) The Trustees are the employers and legally responsible for the direction and good running of the organisation.
- c) The Management Committee have oversight of the day-to-day running of the organisation and provide more immediate support to the Director.
- d) The Director/Chaplain leads all aspects of the work of the organisation. He provides sick and holiday cover for those who lead the face-to-face youth ministry. He is the line manager of the Retreat Leaders, Outreach Leader and Business Manager. The Director holds all aspects of the vision in balance, ensuring that each aspect of the work of the Youth Service is serving this vision. He also holds together the relationship between the Youth Service and the Diocese.
- e) The Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator works to link all aspects of the Youth Service's work to parishes, schools, the formation of adult youth leaders and other aspects of the life of the diocese such as Education Service and Vocations work. This role also ensures that both the residential and outreach youth ministry work in a collaborative and strategic fashion.
- f) The two Retreat Leaders are full time and lead all residential youth ministry. One has responsibility for the pastoral care of the volunteer team (including recruitment, selection, training and supervision) and the other has responsibility for retreat development (including the sourcing and integration of new material, joint working with other agencies, procuring of resources and equipment).
- g) The Outreach Leader is full time and leads all outreach youth ministry in the parishes and schools of Lancaster Diocese.
- h) The Business Manager is responsible for the project management of the recommended refurbishment of Castlerigg Manor and subsequently for the administration of the whole service, the good running of Castlerigg Manor and for the House Staff.
- i) The House Staff are responsible for all domestic arrangements. This includes admin. support.
- j) The Volunteer team assists in the face-to-face work with young people. At any one time, a minimum of four work to help lead the residential work, two work with the Outreach Leader in outreach ministry and two are on time off. Their schedule is the responsibility of the Director, Youth Ministry Coordinator, Retreat Leaders and Outreach Leader.

Conclusion

There is no escaping the fact that this report will make for difficult reading for those concerned with Youth Ministry in Lancaster Diocese.

To improve the situation, either by following the above recommendations or by pursuing another line of development, will take tremendous courage and effort. It will require many people to put aside past difficulties and work for reconciliation and recreation.

However, despite the seemingly bleak position, hope is present. The potential for Castlerigg Manor to once again be a beacon of good practice and a guiding light for the Diocese of Lancaster can be realised and for a united Youth Service to provide for the needs of the Diocese is equally achievable.

We urge and encourage all concerned to, with the help and guidance of God, take this opportunity to build something truly great for the young people of the diocese and for the wider Diocesan family.

A final note of thanks; it has been a privilege to work with the Diocese of Lancaster on this project. We have met many people, young and old, whose love and passion for youth ministry is truly a gift to the Church. We wish them every blessing for the future.

We wish to thank all concerned with this work; Bishops Patrick and Michael for having the courage to invite an external team in to review youth ministry in Lancaster Diocese; Mgr Patrick Mulvany and Fr Robert Billing who provided so much assistance and information to the team; all those at Castlerigg Manor and in the Youth Service who provided a welcome and cooperation with the review; priests, chaplains, youth workers and people young and old from all around the diocese, its schools and parishes, who gave of their time and spoke honestly during the course of the review.

We have found this to be an interesting and humbling exercise which has exposed us to the goodwill and dedication of many in Lancaster Diocese. For their dedication to youth ministry and young people, all concerned must be thanked.

Anna Cowell, Rev Dermot Donnelly, Mr Peter Metcalf,
Mrs Judi Shimmell, Rev Joseph Wheat.

18th December 2008.