

WEST SWINDON & THE LYDIARDS L.E.P..

STAFF TEAM CONSULTANCY: REPORT FOR E.C.C. 26TH MARCH 2008.

Consultant: Revd Paul Wignall (founder / proprietor of 'Golden Apple Associates', a Christian Consultancy based near Gloucester, on www.gaa.uk.net).

Meetings:

30th August 2007 (Initial Meeting at Church House, Bristol, between: Paul, Stephen, Dick and George Rendall (Diocese of Bristol Training Team)).

15th October 2007. (Dick, Stephen, Tudor. Anne was with us in advance of official arrival – end November)

14th January 2008. (All Team present).

25th February 2008. (All Team present).

Agreement (accepted ECC Meeting, 12th September 2007):

Here is the 8 point 'Aims & Objectives' in my Paper agreed by ECC dated: 9/9/07:

- 1: To help Staff Team to work well together, so that our Team becomes more than the sum of its constituent members.
- 2: To help build relationships in this newly re-forming Team, by helping in the growth of mutual support, care, trust, respect and empathy.
- 3: To facilitate 'team spirit' and the flow of creative energy, which ultimately is grounded in the spiritual growth of the team and its members.
- 4: To use the insights of "Emotional Intelligence" to help members become more self-aware of their emotional competences in inter-personal relationships.
- 5: To help Team members discover and use appropriately their own leadership styles and gifts, both in the churches of the partnership and in the team itself.
- 6: To help establish 'best practice' in the manner and culture that team meetings are conducted according to the 'collegiate principle'.
- 7: To reflect with the Team on the issue of authority, and how it is both exercised and responded to, from various sources in the partnership.
- 8: To facilitate the growth of trust between the Staff Team and other teams such as Wider Staff, the ECC and its Standing Committee, in their various working responsibilities. This will involve joint meetings in the latter stages.

Three initial Sessions, after which the arrangement would be reviewed.

Cost: £300 per session (10am – 4pm) shared 50 / 50 with Diocese of Bristol.

What happened?

Each day began with a 'Morning Office' (often Iona style). 2 of 3 Sessions included a mid day Communion, but we asked that the 3rd Session placed this at the end, to replace the 'Evening Office'. We felt too much precious time was being spent on this.

Each Session included an extensive period where each of us had the opportunity to share about how ‘things were going’ for us in ministry. Paul was good at leading these, listening well, and encouraging us to be honest and empathetic with each other. Some might have felt that we weren’t however using his skills & time to best effect, because maybe we could have done this ourselves in normal or mini-retreat gatherings.

Paul did produce some high quality written material for us to learn from together.:

15 / 10: “Leadership Styles and the Team”.

“Looking after ourselves and one another”

We had some useful notes on ‘Developing Stress Tolerance’, which includes looking at the workings of the brain! We talked about the core values of the Partnership! We learned the importance of being more ‘agile communities’!

14 / 1: “Developing the Team” a) Identifying strengths & gaps

b) What is our learning agenda

c) Experimenting with new ways of doing things

We considered practically which were our key gifts or skills for Ministry, and shared what we came up with. We talked about where the Team was at that moment, and where like to be in 6 months & 3 years!

25 / 2: “Emotional Intelligence – what is it?”

a) Self Awareness, b) Self Regulation c) Self Management d) Empathy

e) Social skills.

We completed a Questionnaire to help us work through our relative strengths in these areas, and then talked it through together. Overall we rated ourselves as having quite high levels in all 5 measures of “EQ” – what do others think?!

We had a long (1hr+) and very enjoyable lunch each time over at the ‘Village Inn’ in Shaw Village Centre. This was an important ‘bonding / relaxing’ time of day!!

Our Reflections on process & recommendations for future.

STEPHEN: I felt it very worthwhile at this early stage of our team building. Its given us opportunity to have greater depth in our team than we might otherwise. We made most use of Paul’s undoubted knowledge & experience when we got down to using / applying the material he provided in depth. Sometimes we spent so long on ‘sharing’ that we failed to spend long enough on the key learning topics.

I recommend we employ him once or twice again over next twelve months – clearly stating in what ways he could hopefully help us. But in addition (fulfilling LEP Review Recommendation) that we seek someone else to meet us every three months for more informal ‘How is it going?’ sessions.

Regarding fulfilment of the 8 Aims, I’d say that:

1, 2, 3, 4, 5 were all addressed at some point in our meetings, with some progress.

6, 7, 8 were not addressed at all. They probably require further meetings.

TUDOR, ANNE, DICK: Had no further written comments to make in the time scale required to get Paper to ECC in time, but might contribute orally at the ECC.

Stephen Skinner