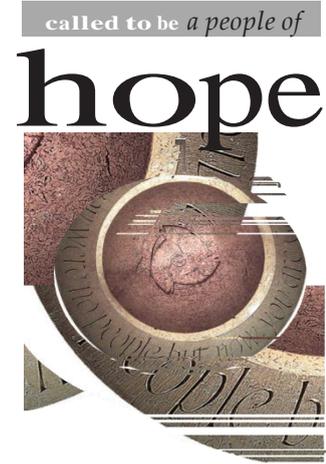


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April 2020

*Deepening prayer, enabling communion, strengthening mission*



**Pope Francis** @Pontifex · 57m

In the time of trial that we are presently undergoing, we experience our frailty. We need the Lord, who sees an irrepressible beauty beyond that frailty. With Him we rediscover how precious we are, even in our vulnerability.

100

1K

5K



Dear Colleagues

I hope that you and all your community members are continuing along this difficult journey with a continued hope and positivity. We know that within all our communities there will be difficulties either in terms of physical or mental health, as well as economic struggles. We continue to have the greatest admiration for those working on the front line but let us remember that you and your staff are included in these. So along with everyone I wish to express my thanks again for all that you are doing.

#### **Ann Fowler -Deputy Director**

You are all aware that Ann will be officially leaving us at the end of May. The current situation has made it very difficult to celebrate

the work that Ann has undertaken during her time with the Diocese and to be able to offer our thanks in a well-deserved way. However, I would like to reassure everyone that once we are able to,

we will have a post-dated celebration. I certainly would not be able to do justice to Ann, to simply thank her through a newsletter. Whilst Ann will no longer be in post, we do now have an:

#### **RE Lead**

I am pleased to inform you following interview we have made an appointment. Louise White who is currently Assistant Head at SS Peter and Paul Primary in Bristol will be joining the team in September 2020 - although she will work with us before that in order to be able to hit the ground running so to speak. Interviews were held remotely by a panel which included Anne Barrett and Carol Baron but comprised of a range of tasks as well as the formal interview. I am sure you join me in welcoming her to the team.

#### **Website- resources**

As you will have seen we have tried to continue to provide some support over Easter by providing

some reflections as well as celebrating some of the work that is going on within our schools. It would be great if schools could consider supporting us with providing some power-points for reflection that others could use, and also send us in contributions from students.

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### **Message from Rainbows Bereavement Support GB**

When schools reopen, there will be a real and increased need for Rainbows. They will offer quality training in bereavement, grief and loss, to staff enabling school staff to support their pupils in a small group situation. As the Rainbows Resource Centre is closed they have made some resources, including 'Silver Linings' and 'When Somebody Dies', available to download for free <https://rainbowsgb.org/corona-virus-how-rainbows-can-help/>. They have also provided a link to a terrific book for children explaining Coronavirus, also available to download for free <https://rainbowsgb.org/2020/04/coronavirus-a-free-book-for-children/>

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### **Embracing Technology**

One of the positives in this very strange situation is the fact that some of us have become more confident with technology. We have seen how things can continue, using such tools as Teams and Skype. The diocese has had regular conference calls with the LA's, the Regional Schools Commissioner and, where appropriate, individuals.

With the above in mind Paul Kehoe will be looking to facilitate partnership meetings to see how everyone is, share practice and discuss any issues that need to be addressed.

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### **Recruitment**

This is a challenging time for schools in terms of recruitment. Many schools are continuing to recruit, as we did, via video conferencing. It will be for each school to decide how they go about recruiting for vacant positions. The DFE confirmed last week that they would issue guidance however, it has been stated that resignation dates will remain in place, although schools should co-operate with each other

when it comes to having discussions about accepting shorter periods of notice from staff, if this becomes necessary. In many situations it may be advisable that interim arrangements are put in place until such time as people feel confident that the process allows for quality appointments to be made.

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### **Admission Appeals**

The government has now issued guidance on how appeals can be heard along with new regulations that take immediate effect. Links to the relevant guidance can be found below

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/admission-appeals-for-school-places?utm\\_source=4c8a1b54-c97d-47fd-8ffb-c8f766b75c6e&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/admission-appeals-for-school-places?utm_source=4c8a1b54-c97d-47fd-8ffb-c8f766b75c6e&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appeals-code?utm\\_source=e8dbfaaf-225b-44d4-99ea-0ce4a9e47bcb&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appeals-code?utm_source=e8dbfaaf-225b-44d4-99ea-0ce4a9e47bcb&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

For those schools for whom we undertake the appeals we are currently looking at how we can comply with the regulations in an effective and manageable way. Once we have clear processes, we will notify schools accordingly.

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### **Capital Projects – SCA**

All bids have now been collated and we have been provided with an allocation from the DFE. Decisions on the allocation of the money will be made within the next 10 days by a panel which will comprise of our Property and Finance Officers, the diocesan Chief Operations Officer, along with Jenny and me. The Hookway Partnership will act in an advisory capacity as appropriate.

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### **Budget Forecast Updates for Academies**

The ESFA has advised that the BFRO return due in

May is no longer required to be submitted but that the three-year forecast is still expected, but in June rather than July. The updated guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academies-budget-forecast-return>

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## Funding Questions

The CES have been asked for guidance about whether schools can access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in scenarios where they have staff whose wages are funded by commercial activities such as lettings or catering income, rather than public funds. They asked the DfE for advice on this matter and guidance was published late on Friday. The relevant guidance can be accessed by following this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care>

The basic principal is that no organisation should profit from the financial support available and the scheme should therefore only be accessed if the support available is required. For schools where there is also an element of private income which ceases, or has been reduced, it may be appropriate to furlough staff who would typically be paid from that private income subject to 5 conditions:

1. The employee works in an area of the organisation where services are temporarily not required and where their salary is not covered by public funding.
2. The employee would otherwise be made redundant or laid off
3. The employee is not involved in delivering provision that has already been funded
4. (Where appropriate), the employee is not required to deliver provision for a child of a critical worker and/or a vulnerable child
5. The grant from the scheme would not lead to financial reserves being created

Prior to using the furlough scheme schools should first seek to make the necessary savings from their existing budget, or consider options to redeploy staff, before furloughing them. Only after all other potential options have been fully considered should support be sought through the scheme. Schools may wish to review the illustration provided in the guidance. It is important to note that the guidance states that schools are not expected to consider each stream of private income separately but should instead consider their total income from private sources as a proportion of their total overall income when determining what claim to make to the scheme.

The DfE is considering appropriate measures to monitor use of the scheme in order to detect any duplication of funding and it is also working on an online tool to support schools in working through the guidance.

The CES have also been asked for guidance about what schools should be doing in relation to paying their contractors. The guidance, linked to above, refers to Cabinet Office Procurement Policy Note (PPN 02/20) when agency staffing arrangements are being considered. The CES are continuing to seek clarity in relation to the PPN from the DfE and await further information. As soon as that is received, they will let us know.

Finally – Once again please do not hesitate to make contact with us and as someone sent me

