

## **First Steps to a new Incumbent**

On Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September we held our Vision Meeting. It was led by the Archdeacon of Exeter, the Very Revd Andrew Beane, and a good proportion of our congregation took part. AD Andrew explained the process of appointing a new Incumbent, and the likely timescale.

First, we need to reflect and decide how we want our church community to develop over the next few years, taking into account the Diocese's own vision: growing in prayer, making new disciples, and serving the people of Devon with joy. We made a start on this at the meeting, and it will determine the qualities we look for in a new Incumbent.

Next, we will need to prepare a parish profile document, which will explain to clergy who might want to apply to be our Incumbent what our local St Thomas community is like; how our church community worships, witnesses and serves; and how we plan to move forward in the future. Input from everyone in our church community is welcome and, indeed, encouraged.

Thereafter, the post is advertised, in the Church Times and on the Diocesan website. It is important that we advertise nationally, to get the best choice of candidate. The advert will be published soon after Christmas.

Candidates will be shortlisted, and interviewed by representatives from the Diocese and our own congregation. Our parish representatives will be chosen by the PCC; they will have the final say on who is appointed. The interviews will take place just before or just after Easter.

Finally, the new Incumbent will start during the summer (they will have to give three months' notice in their current position). Then we can move forward with them in God's service!

We started the process of reflecting on how we should move forward as a parish at the meeting, discussing what we see as our strengths and our weaknesses, and what opportunities we have in our local community.

Everyone is encouraged to give their views on this. It is very important that we get the widest set of ideas. So please speak to your churchwardens and PCC members!

Ian Totterdell, churchwarden