

FETCH ME A PRIEST

On 28 May 2015, our two wardens, Amanda Haste and Helen Brooking, sat down with our Treasurer, Michael Hilton, to work out some of the details in the process of staffing the chaplain's position. Father David Greenwood, from Canada had flown in at the request of the diocese's Appointment Secretary to be interviewed as part of the "Formal Visit", one step in the hiring process.

The day before, Amanda and Anne Roumieu, our two parish representatives on the recruitment process, had met Father David as well as the Archdeacon for France, Father Ian Naylor, and the Diocesan Appointments Secretary, Miss Catherine Jackson, for a most formal "informal" chat. Poor Father David was grilled for over an hour and was promised that some time afterwards would be allocated for him to ask questions. After 75 minutes of rapid fire questions, Father David was asked to cool his heels outside on the sidewalk while our church reps conferred with the church hierarchy.

The next step in the recruitment led to the meeting pictured here, where the Treasurer and both Wardens regrouped with Father David to go over a document called the Statement of Particulars which is for all intents and purposes, the contract. The Statement of Particulars covers such issues as hours of work, housing & benefits, travel expectations, pension participation, the cost of the move into the position and the financing of removal costs when the ministry concludes, the duration of the call to ministry (in our case 2 years with a renewal of another 2 years if the congregation and Father David agree) - all the nauseating administrivia that is required in such cases.

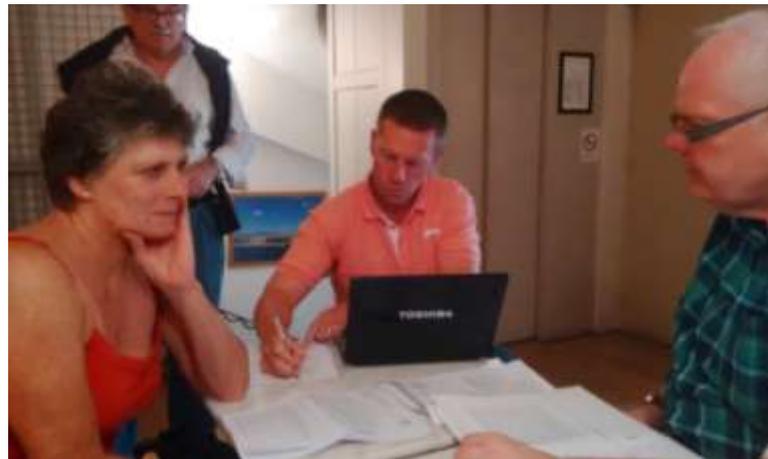
With all these details worked out, the Statement of Particulars was typed up by Amanda, reviewed and agreed to by the Wardens and Father David. Unfortunately this did not happen before Father David had to return to Canada. So the document started out on a rather lengthy journey. The wardens signed it and then drove it up to the Archdeacon in Pau for his

After 20 minutes of deliberation it was decided that Father David met the grade and was to be invited to continue in the application process.



Archdeacon Ian Naylor

That is why Michael Hilton looks so focused here - he is crunching the numbers to see if it will work out financially for us given All Saints' past budgeting expectations.



signature. Then it was off to Canada for Father David to sign. Then it was up to London so the Diocesan Secretary (the Bishop's Chief of Staff) could look it over and make sure it met all the legal and administrative requirements of the Diocese. When he was happy, he signed it. Then finally, Bishop David Hamid signed it and it became a formal complete statement of ministry.

But this is not all the story. Concurrent to the Statement of Particulars winding its way for signing off, other parts of the Diocese's hiring process came into play. After the meeting, the Diocesan Office solicited letters of recommendation from all four of Father David's references. Father David and his wife, Cynthia, also had to apply to the French government for a work visa and permits for a long term stay. As non-EU citizens, the Greenwood family cannot simply arrive as tourists and stay for longer than six months. They did this through the French Consulate in Montreal.

Then a new complication arose. As you may have heard, in July the Diocese changed its Safeguarding process; so that sent Father David's file back into the Safeguarding review mill. A proper safeguarding review is a good and essential thing, but unfortunately for us, Father David had spent some time studying abroad, and so he was required to get new police checks from both Canada and Italy. Italy of course is known as the paragon of European bureaucratic efficiency, so this caused some further delay.



Street view of the Church

All in all, from the creation of the Statement of Particulars, pictured above, it took a mere 65 days - 2 months and 4 days. As the Archdeacon recently observed, this is not really that bad given this was an international hire. But in the end, with the efficient and thorough assistance of the Diocesan Office's Appointments Secretary, our bishop was able to make the announcement of Father David as our new chaplain on Friday 7 August.

We as a congregation owe a great amount of gratitude to Anne Roumieu, our congregational rep for this undertaking and much, much, much thanks for the work of our elected PCC members. Of course, during the inter-regnum (the past two years) we have been wonderfully served by our Readers and assistant locum priests.

But let's not do this again very soon, please.

PHOTO CREDIT: Helen Brooking

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