

The Rt Revd Colin Fletcher OBE
Bishop of Dorchester

22nd June 2010

To the Congregation and Parish of St Leonard's Banbury

Following last Monday's interviews I am delighted to say that we reached a common mind after much thought and prayer. As a result, I invited the Reverend Sue Burchell to become your next Priest at St Leonard's in succession to the Revd Mark Charmley and I am very pleased to say that she has accepted the post.

Various details still remain to be sorted out but I am anticipating that I will licence her to the Parish sometime in the early Autumn and that she will be working with you full-time from then on. In the meantime the Vacancy continues and the responsibility for running it remains with the churchwardens and Area Dean – ably assisted, of course, by Sue herself.

However in preparing her, and you, for this significant change in role I have asked Sue to take four to six weeks off away from her normal parish duties (including Sunday Services). This will create a bit of space between her leaving her former role and taking on the new one and will, I hope, be of benefit to you all.

In making this decision we were very conscious that it is unusual, but by no means unknown, for a curate to become the vicar in the parish they are working in. However we were convinced that this was the right thing to do on this occasion, and I am confident that Sue will have a great deal to give as your new incumbent. Will it mean 'more of the same'? Well, yes, in one way it will as I am sure that Sue's personality will not go through massive alterations because of this change in role. Neither do I expect her transparent love for Grimsbury, for St Leonard's and for your liturgy to be altered as a result. But equally one of the things that was impressive at the interviews were all her new ideas, particularly for building connections with the wider community, and I greatly look forward to seeing these developing in the months and years ahead.

With many thanks, in advance, for your prayers and support for Sue in the coming months.

