STATEMENT BY THE BISHOP OF LICHFIELD on the expectations of the Diocese of Lichfield in relation to the benefice of Ashley and Mucklestone and Broughton and Croxton (the “Loggerheads” benefice)

The Diocese of Lichfield is a diverse, rich and exciting place to live and work. It has almost 600 churches, over 420 parishes and over 200 schools in an area which includes Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, the northern half of Shropshire, Wolverhampton, Walsall, half of Sandwell and even three parishes which straddle the Welsh border. It lies at the heart of England, not just geographically but culturally and socially. There are areas of spectacular natural beauty that sit beside the legacy of centuries of industry and commerce; areas of urban deprivation and rural poverty beside places of aspiration, growth and hope.

What unites us as a Diocese is the invitation to “Come follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad”. St Chad, the first Bishop of Lichfield, challenges us to humble, faithful and courageous mission in this part of the Midlands and in this generation. We are committed to the mutual flourishing of faithful Anglicans of all traditions, and to welcoming and honouring people of all backgrounds.

We are inspired by our Diocesan Vision:

“As we follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad, we pray that the two million people in our diocese encounter a church that is confident in the gospel, knows and loves its communities, and is excited to find God already at work in the world. We pray for a church that reflects the richness and variety of those communities. We pray for a church that partners with others in seeking the common good, working for justice as people of hope.”

We have identified three priorities as we seek to realise this vision more fully: to developing discipleship, encouraging vocation and inspiring evangelism. These priorities help us focus our work in all the varied forms of Christian life in the Diocese; in our parishes, Fresh Expressions, Schools, Chaplaincies and the Cathedral.

The priest appointed to the post of Rector of Ashley and Mucklestone and Broughton and Croxton would be accepting an invitation to join us in this pilgrimage of faith. We will do all we can support you to grow as a disciple, deepen your vocation and be a confident bearer of the good news of Jesus Christ so that you are equipped and ready to do same for those with whom you are called share in ministry.
The “Loggerheads” benefice, with the help of an interim minister, has spent the vacancy thinking and praying carefully about its ministry and focus. The parish profile is very much the result of that discernment process and presents a realistic, challenging and exciting vision for the future. The new priest for this benefice will be community focussed and eager to join with others in sharing the gospel in both traditional and new ways. He or she will strive to provide the framework for deeper learning and spiritual growth for all ages.

The Deanery of Eccleshall is working towards a plan in which the current 5 benefices in the Deanery become three centred on the communities of Gnosall, Ashley and Eccleshall. It is proposed that the Loggerheads benefice will join with the benefice of Chapel Chorlton, Maer and Whitmore with a clergy deployment of 1.5 posts. This plan is still under discussion across the Deanery and there are currently no formal pastoral schemes under consideration.

You can find out more about the Diocese of Lichfield by exploring our website: (www.lichfield.anglican.org/our_vision)

+Michael Lich: