

## NEWS FROM PETERBOROUGH DIOCESE 7 November 2011

### Next Archdeacon of Oakham announced

The next Archdeacon of Oakham is to be Canon Gordon Steele, who is currently Vicar of St John the Baptist, Peterborough. He will succeed the Ven. David Painter who retired at the end of October.

The role that he will assume has been changed from that of his predecessor. Gordon Steele will be full time archdeacon, and not also a Residentiary Canon of the Cathedral as David Painter was. He will continue with the traditional role of assisting parishes in the Oakham archdeaconry (which covers Peterborough, Rutland, and the Oundle, Rushden, Corby and Kettering areas) regarding practical matters, and share with the bishop in the pastoral oversight of the clergy and people in the diocese.



In addition, using his past experience and academic study of accounting, he will have spiritual oversight of financial matters across the diocese, usually representing the Bishop at the Diocesan Board of Finance.

He will also have a lead role in parish share [finance raised in parishes for clergy support] and clergy housing issues. He will work jointly with the Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech in relation to the parishes within the City of Peterborough but in Ely Diocese, representing the two dioceses in relations with the civic authorities across the city of Peterborough particularly in matters of growth and planning.

Welcoming the appointment, which had attracted a large number of applicants from across the country, the Bishop of Peterborough, the Rt Revd Donald Allister, said "I am delighted that Gordon Steele has accepted this post. I believe he has the skills and the personality to take on this major role. I very much look forward to working with him as Archdeacon."

Looking ahead to his new role, which he is likely to take up about Easter next year, Gordon Steele said, "I am both humbled and delighted to have been invited by the Bishop of Peterborough to become the next Archdeacon of Oakham, and to take up responsibility for the parishes in the northern half of a diocese in which I have served for most of my ministry.

"It will be no mean feat to follow in the footsteps of my much loved predecessor, David Painter.

"I look forward to supporting the clergy and churchwardens of Peterborough, Rutland and eastern Northamptonshire in their care for the life and buildings of the church, and to working with all the staff of the diocese in engaging in the opportunities for Christian witness and service which the 21<sup>st</sup> century affords."

Until he takes office, the tasks of an Archdeacon in the Oakham archdeaconry will be shared between the Archdeacon of Northampton (faculties for church buildings), Bishop John Holbrook (pastoral care and appointments) and the rural deans (licensings and interviews).

## **Canon Gordon Steele – brief biography**

Canon Gordon Steele has been at St John's Peterborough, a city centre church close to the Cathedral, since 2001. While there he has overseen a £280,000 development project and the church's 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. He has also collaborated with the multi-million pound regeneration of the city centre including the setting up of a Community Interest Company enabling the church to become integrated in the public realm and used as a community resource for arts, music, exhibitions and lectures.

Recently he has begun to implement a Growth Action Plan to keep the church open during the week, to develop varied forms of worship and to engage with young people.

Before coming to Peterborough Gordon was Vicar of St Alban the Martyr in Northampton (1994-2001). That followed periods in Middlesex as Team Vicar of St Andrew's Uxbridge (1988-1994) and Assistant Curate of St John the Baptist, Greenhill, Harrow (1984-1988).

He is no stranger to the structures and administration of dioceses. He is currently a member of the Bishop's Council and Chair of the House of Clergy in the Diocesan Synod. He was Rural Dean of Peterborough 2004-2010. While in Middlesex he was part time chaplain to the Bishop of Willesden. He has been involved with inter-church activity in Peterborough, and also in Northampton where he established and chaired Churches Together in Northampton.

Prior to his ordination he worked with the agency USPG [United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel] as Missionary Treasurer of the Diocese of South-West Tanganyika (1977-1980) where he was responsible for the finances of a large but poor African Diocese.

Gordon has maintained an active interest in current and international affairs since then, and for some years has been a Chair of the Archbishop's Board of Examiners which provides final interviewing panels for USPG missionary candidates. He has also been involved in various campaigns for a fairer world and in organisations which advocate it.

Gordon Steele studied accounting and politics and government at the University of Kent at Canterbury, and later theology at Worcester College Oxford and the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield. He grew up in a free-church family but moved into the Anglican Church while in Canterbury.

He is married to Maria, a biologist, and they have two teenage children.