

Diocesan secretary to step down

OUR diocesan secretary Michael Jordan has announced that he will step down from the post next year.

Michael plans to relinquish the job next Easter after almost 14 years running the diocese's finances and administration. He and his wife Marilyn will move to Montgomery on the Welsh border.

The bishop has started the process to find a replacement for him, and interviews for the job will happen in December. The successful candidate may be given the chance to work alongside Michael towards the end of March to ensure a seamless handover.

Among the responsibilities

of the job are managing an annual budget of more than £5m, organising our diocese's system of synodical government, and managing a central staff team who pay clergy, advise parishes, maintain parsonages, support church schools and promote social justice and Christian discipleship.

"I had intended to step down at the age of 60, but earlier this year I discussed with Bishop Kenneth that I would like to retire a year earlier, in the first half of 2007," said Michael. "The fundamental reason is that I find that I no longer have the energy that I had prior to my



Michael Jordan

illness in 2002.

"I was particularly keen to see through the changes to the central staff structures as recommended by the Dilloway group, and the office move.

"Those changes have now

happened successfully, and I trust that my successor will take over a central diocesan structure that is in good heart and good shape financially.

"We will be moving to Montgomery, although I don't know yet whether I will actually be retiring or whether I'll be taking on another post. That remains to be seen."

Michael was diagnosed with cancer of the oesophagus in 2002 and took several months off work for surgery to be carried out and then in recuperation.

● A full tribute to Michael's work for our diocese will appear in a subsequent edition of the *Pompey Chimes*.

Cathedral appeal on way to £1.4m

THE appeal to raise £2m towards redeveloping our cathedral is now approaching the £1.4m mark.

Fundraising around the diocese and within the congregation itself helped push the total raised to £1.37m last month. That prompted the appeal director to congratulate all involved in the first seven months of fundraising.

The public phase of the 'Continuing the Voyage' appeal began in May, when Bishop Kenneth and the dean were brought across Portsmouth Harbour to the launch service by boat. It symbolised the cathedral's unique coastal position and its voyage from humble parish church origins to cathedral status.

The money will be spent on preserving the 12th century east end of the building, creating a new education centre and updating the community facilities in Cathedral House, creating a new music centre and improving visitor facilities, with a new refectory, cathedral shop and treasury.

The cathedral's own fundraising group has raised £61,331, from events ranging from tea parties to slimathons. More than £8,000 was raised via appeal boxes that were returned at Harvest.

Our diocesan spirituality adviser, the Rev Peter Lippiett will be raising money by a sponsored read through St John's gospel in the nave on December 19. He starts at 12noon, and can be sponsored per chapter. And a masquerade ball in the nave is planned for February 16. Tickets will be available in the new year.

Appeal director Tom Morton said: "With many more events planned in the next few months, the energy and commitment of the fundraising events group is both inspirational and utterly dedicated to success: we cannot thank Mike Jackson's team enough for their hard work."

● Work will begin in the new year on extensive stone conservation and roofing repairs at Sts Thomas Church in Newport.

It is seeking to raise £2m to repair its crumbling exterior, transform its interior and to create a new pastoral centre. Around one-third of the cash will come from grants.

More than £400,000 has now been received in grants and pledges, leaving £900,000 still to be raised over the next three years.

Church steps in over post office

WHEN the post office closed in the village of Whitwell, it seemed like the end of an era.

Over the past 16 years, two shops, a playgroup, Methodist church, forge, nursing home and youth hostel had all gone. Due to a severe fire, even the pub was closed temporarily for refurbishment. It seemed the community would lose all its facilities.

Then the church stepped in. The vicar suggested that the Post Office could open up a satellite branch in St Mary and St Rhadegund's Church. Villagers could pop in to send letters, pay bills, deposit money and, most importantly, meet up with each other.

Now the Post Office has agreed. Postmistress Mavis Barclay and her husband Roger, who run the post office branch in nearby Niton will make sure staff are on hand for two mornings a week at the back of the Norman church building.

Not only that, but the church wants to put out tables and chairs so villagers can chat over coffee. Villagers may also be able to drop off and collect dry cleaning, put in orders for grocery shopping and ask staff to collect prescriptions or library books.

It's a good example of a church working in partnership with other community organisations to meet a genuine need – in line with the thinking behind the bishop's Kairos initiative.



The vicar, the Rev Sandra Lloyd, said: "Eighteen months ago, the village shop and post office closed and, despite much effort by a group of us, it wasn't possible to find an alternative site. At that time, I offered the use of the village church.

"Eventually the post office was able to open up elsewhere, and that was successfully operating for a year. Now that has closed, and the Post Office - remembering my original suggestion - has approached me asking if we could now have a satellite branch in our church.

"It would be quite exciting to be part of a regeneration of the village, as we could create a 'community space', allowing people to meet for coffee and having certain items for sale.

"It would certainly help bring the village to life again, as they've seen so many facilities closing over the past few years.

"The church congregation are keen and the diocese has been incredibly helpful. Nobody will make any money out of this – it's just seeking to provide a service for a community who were hit quite hard by the closure of the previous post office."

The satellite post office should open in the church in February, for nine hours a week – probably two weekday mornings.



The Rev Sandra Lloyd (front) with Roger and Mavis Barclay in St Mary's and St Rhadegund's Church