

Letter from Rev Rob Wardle to everyone in the Bro Cybi Ministry Area
Dated 4 June 2023

Dear friends,

At the end of the joint Ministry Area service today in St Cybi's I announced that I will be retiring from ministry this summer. I made the decision some months ago following a period of discernment, reflection and prayer. Since my decision I have been having discussions with the Bishops (including Bishop Mary before she left) and Archdeacon John; we are all of a mind to try and ensure the least disruption to Bro Cybi and to that end the recruitment for a new Ministry Area Leader will begin immediately and whilst I am still here.

The timing of my decision to retire has been influenced by several factors:

We received notification in January that we had been successful in securing major funding to restore and re-order St Cybi's. This funding will now ensure the future sustainability of a Church in Wales inclusive Christian presence in Holyhead at St Cybi's for many decades to come, it will also ensure the development of Eglwys y Bedd as a social enterprise and the St Cybi's site as a place of pilgrimage. The restoration will be undertaken under the Diocese' Stones Shout Out Project and the Enterprise and Pilgrimage programmes will both be undertaken by Diocese' Llan project. All three projects now have funding and the management structures in the Diocese are more or less in place to manage them. We have a newly inaugurated Steering Group as a sub-group of our MAC which is steering this major initiative for the Church in Wales. More information and communications about the developments of the projects will now begin from the Steering Group.

Getting these projects off the ground has been the vision I have worked to since soon after I started in Bro Cybi. I feel it is very important for a new incumbent to further shape these projects as they go into the final design phase and to continue working with you, the MAC and the Steering Group as the final designs are worked on. I think it would be unwise and unfair to expect a new incumbent to come into post part way through a major re-ordering or one or two years after re-opening. Bro Cybi should have a new Ministry Area Leader to be involved in designing these new projects and therefore it is better that I go before the projects are due to commence. I committed to 5 years in Bro Cybi (which would have taken me to age 67), I will have done nearly 4 years by this summer. The pandemic set our plans and vision back by some 2 years unfortunately, but I believe the Ministry Area now has very good resources and a vision which it can work to in the future.

I am not getting any younger ! This summer I will have been working solidly for 50 years; I continued to work during all my studies (in middle age) and my work days are usually long, which is known most obviously to my family and to Carol. My body is telling me to slow down, I've had a number of health issues over the last few years and some of them are continuing. Carol and I will be married on the 5th of August this year, at St David's Church in Blaenau Ffestiniog. I feel blessed to be entering into married life. I was divorced over 20 years ago and I always thought I would remain single, but now I have another chance and I want to be able to start again, even at my advancing age ! And I would like to see more of my children and grandchildren. I missed a good deal of my own children's growing up due to working long hours. And although I was later a single parent when they were in their teenage years, and I saw plenty of them as we went on to work together for many years; I don't want

to miss my grand children's early years. And yet they all live so far away ! So I hope to benefit from the time to travel and be with them. I also hope to have time to write more and to read more.

I appreciate very much that my decision will cause disruption and I am very conscious that colleagues and most especially the volunteers and laity who keep our churches going - will have more to do, at least in the short term. I can only apologise for this. All of us can only do what we can do, what we are able to do, I am convinced that we are Blessed by God most particularly due to our 'intention' and not necessarily by what we do or achieve. Our intention should always be 'to love others as I have loved you'. I encourage you to do what you do because you are thankful, because over all the commitment you show and difficulties which frustrate you - it is giving you Life and you are Blessed for it.

My final service in Bro Cybi will be on Sunday the 16th of July in St Cybi's at 11am. It will be a joint Ministry Area Service and I hope very much to see you there.

with love and blessings