



an association of christian retreat houses

Holland House in Collaboration with Archway

"Covid, Spirituality and the future of Retreat Houses"

Notes taken at a gathering via Zoom on 6th July 2020

There were 57 participants representing 43 houses (Archway members in bold):

Christine Clinch	Ammerdown Centre
Maggie Le-Roy	Anglican Diocese of Cyprus & Gulf
Jeff Witts	Archway Administrator
Demelza Henderson	Association for Promoting Retreats
Rt Revd Alison White	Bishop of Hull and President of Archway
Ron Blackmore	Bishop Woodford House and Chair of Archway
Marianne & Robin Anker-Petersen	Blackruthven House, Perth
Revd Alison Hobbs	Brancepeth Castle
Lois Baldwin & Peter Sidebotham	Breathing Space
Sr Susan Irwin	Briery Retreat & Conference Centre
Charles Hadley	Chemin Neuf Community
Ruth Flockhart	Coach House Kilmuir Trust
Mair Jones	Coleg Trefeca
Sr Sigrun Gross	Community of St Andrew
Margaret Rose McSparran	Drumalis Retreat & Conference Centre
Ed Martin	Edenham Regional House
Revd Jonathon Green	Foxhill House & Woodlands
Martin Price	Glasshampton Franciscan Monastery
Mark Strand	Greenhouse Christian Centre
Br Clark Berge SSF	Hillfield Monastery

**Tarn Heeks, Revd Ian
Spencer** & Paul West

Barbara Clarke

Judith Ley

**Ian Andrews, Ven David &
Helen Newman**

**Sheila Cotterill & Janet
Haynes**

Sister Anne Mullan

Don & Sam Quilty

Revd Jane Taylor

Geoff Bockett

Rachel Challoner & Fr Lorcan
O'Reilly

Katrina Doran

Jo Craven

Alison McTier

Carol Rider

Jo Penn & Revd Phil Stone

Jan Dumbell

Sr Mother Mary Joy SSB

Rachel Moore

Stuart McCredie

Judy Cannan

Dawn Brown

Sr Judith Maureen

Samantha Nichol

Amanda & Simon Kimberley

Richard Ellis

**Helen Lawrence & Mark
Rance**

Holland House

House of the Resurrection

Isle of Man

Launde Abbey

Llangasty Retreat House

Loreto Centre

Marygate House

Mill House Retreats

Minsteracres Retreat Centre

Oblate Retreat Centre

Open Cloister

Parcevall Hall

Retreat Association

Royal Foundation of St Katharine

Scargill Movement

Shepherds Dene

Sisters Of Bethany

St Chad's House

St Katharine's, Parmoor

Thie dy Vea Retreat House

Tillington House Retreat

Turvey Abbey

Whalley Abbey

Whitchester Christian Centre

Wychcroft

Wydale Hall

Ian Spencer thanked Archway and the Retreat Association for publicising this event, the 3 houses who had agreed to offer their reflections and to Bishop Alison for her input.

Participants were then divided into **break-out groups** of five.

After re-convening, three Retreat Houses talked about their experiences:

The Royal Foundation of St Katharine has stayed open during the pandemic. The NHS has used the premises for non-covid patients and front-line workers have been offered free 24 hour retreats. The Yurt café has been used as a grocery store to serve the local community. 200 volunteers have been giving out 150 food parcels a week to those in most need. They offered a 24-hour online retreat to over 100 participants. They are now open for business. Made possible by God's grace.

The Bield was closed during lock-down but it has been an opportunity for 10 staff to meet together regularly via zoom and also for prayer outside in the grounds. They have offered an online retreat and plan to open in August. They have purchased a fogger machine to deep-clean their premises between groups.

Wydale Hall have already opened their gardens to the public. This 29 bedroom retreat centre has en suite and also the Emmaus Centre for self-catering. 15 staff have been furloughed. 25-30 people have joined the community for morning prayer. Most group bookings have been postponed so 2021 is booked. They plan to open September at the earliest to offer retreats to individuals or bubbles. A sense that this ministry will be important for all after the lockdown.

We split into **break-out groups** again to summarise our experiences of lockdown, our greatest challenges, blessings or opportunities and greatest concern & hope for the future.

In the **Plenary** session people mentioned that whilst catering and en-suite accommodation were all good to go, there was still some confusion over meetings and worship, with group bookings currently restricted to 2 households. It was hoped that the next government announcement on July 15th would include more guidance about conferences, probably with reduced numbers to accommodate social distancing. Bishop Alison offered to contact the Bishop of London who is leading the Church of England's plans for re-opening places of worship, to ensure that the requirements of retreat houses are also considered. Contact with UKHospitality was also mentioned. Although business interruption insurance may not cover the pandemic, it may be possible to negotiate a reduced premium due to lower risks during closure. NFU were mentioned as being particularly amenable to this. Alison MacTier asked whether there would be interest in a follow up meeting and this was agreed by all and planned for early August.

In her **Summary & final blessing**, the Rt Revd Alison White mentioned managing risk, the practicalities of re-opening, the benefits of online retreats, how to be safe at the right time in the right way, the value of creativity and the part we play in the ministry of listening..