



**The Bishop of Dorking &
Acting Bishop of Guildford**
The Right Reverend Paul Davies

Dear Friend

24 July 2026

Interim Chaplain to the Acting Bishop of Guildford

Thank you for your interest in this post which becomes vacant on the appointment of the Revd Jo Winn-Smith to be the next Rector of Esher.

This is an exceptionally important role in the Bishops' Office. In a year which has seen the sad and untimely death of my dear colleague, Bishop Andrew Watson, I could not have functioned without the outstanding support of our small team in the Bishops' Office. The support of this team continues to be crucial in a vacancy-in-see which is likely to continue until we anticipate welcoming a new Bishop of Guildford into the diocese in early 2028.

At a time when there is only one licensed bishop in a sizeable diocese, the role of the team which supports episcopal ministry becomes even more important. The chaplain is the senior member of this team who has a crucial part in being the person who shares most closely in the Bishop's day to day ministry, as well as having a major role in setting the culture of prayerful, collaborative and efficient working within the small Bishops' Office.

Two years is a long time to manage a vacancy in see. I have, therefore, taken the approach that it is inappropriate just to tread water, and have set three foci for my ministry over this time: (i) prayer; (ii) pastoral care; (iii) the priorities of discipleship and children and young people (which are a topic of conversation in nearly all parishes I visit). I have just completed a tour of our 12 deaneries where I have held 'Gatherings' to pray, care and encourage these priorities.

In addition to this, these two years of vacancy bring other opportunities too. The beginning of 2027 will see the INEQE safeguarding audit of our diocese. I'm approaching this in an undefended way, seeking to learn what we can do better, but also using the opportunity to identify areas where we can 'pull our socks up' beforehand. In addition, next year will see the centenary of the Diocese of Guildford and I'm determined to celebrate this with a missional focus.

Alongside this work, there is the daily round and common task of our Bishops' Office. With over 300 licensed clergy (over 200 of whom are stipendiary), it is a busy team. In addition, I am doing my best to be as visible as I can in wider society with the opportunities it brings to speak the Gospel into a context which is increasingly fractured and to form partnerships for the common good. I am needing to be particularly careful in my judgement about use of time and resource.

If you feel excited about the possibility of being part of a busy but exciting team, please consider applying. I have deliberately framed this as an interim post as it will be important for the next Bishop of Guildford to be able to shape this role around their priorities and be able to ensure that the chemistry with their Bishop's Chaplain is right. At the very least, however, I anticipate that they will appreciate the support of someone who 'knows the ropes' in the first months of office.

With very warmest wishes

+Paul.