



# Wisdom in Leadership

**From 6pm on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May until 11.15am on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup>**

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This Conversation is all about accessing a deeper discerning; stepping out of the day to day to sense into what is really going on below the surface – both externally in terms of the dynamics of events and internally in terms of what is stirring or moving in ourselves. There is probably no better place to do this kind of work than in the unique atmosphere of St George's House and in company of fellow leaders of the calibre and integrity to be able to support and challenge each other in their enquiry.

The Conversation will follow a process in which we take stock of the big questions we are facing into and then explore the deeper resources available within and around us for stepping into these questions – questions that may lead to substantive change, both in our own leadership and in our wider organisations. It may be that you have a nagging sense that something different is needed from you as a leader. Or it may simply be that you are finding yourself caught in a degree of overload that you need to break free from. In such times of genuine leadership transition there are no ready answers, there is no established path. The essential challenge is how we figure out what to do when we don't know what to do. At such times we need a different kind of knowing. And that is what we access together in this Conversation.

Part of the art of stepping into significant change is discerning how to:

- **Let go** – of old patterns and responses that may have served us well but are no longer needed
- **Let be** – the forces for growth and change that we need to embrace and work with
- **Let come** – the emergent knowing and capability that we don't even know we know yet.

These will be key questions to explore in this conversation and they take time – and usually a second or third look. It is often only with the help of the shared wisdom of fellow leaders who have absolutely no stake in our situation that we are able to get a clear, uncluttered perspective on these things.

This Conversation will also be built around a set of 'wisdom practices' that will sustain us on an ongoing basis as we face into more complexity, challenge and

uncertainty. These are about accessing the intelligence of body, heart and soul as well as mind. Again, it is also about garnering the shared insight and wisdom that only a group of mature fellow leaders can provide – people with no stake in each other's outcomes, but with the capacity and desire to be real with each other; who will hold up the mirror to you and help us see what is really there.

By the end of this Conversation we will have helped each other come to a new clarity about our leadership focus to see things in a fresh perspective, bringing a new clarity and inner confidence into a new phase of our leadership. We often express the benefits of this kind of work in terms of three core qualities:

- **Space:** an inner calm and presence that enables us to make clear judgements with...
- **Pace:** the capacity to act decisively or patiently bide our time as needed, and to act with....
- **Grace:** respectful of the wisdom, insights, needs and perspectives of others.



## Agenda

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The conversation will follow our usual flow in three key stages:

- **This is Me** – taking stock of where we find ourselves currently in relation to this theme and the questions that are arising from our experience
- **Tell Us More** – enquiring more deeply into our learning and insights as we probe into this experience
- **Yes I can, Yes I will** – turning wisdom and insight into intention and practice

## This is me

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In the opening phase of the conversation we will create a **space** in which we can share our stories, looking with bare attention at where we find ourselves today as leaders and what is really present to us – both in terms of the practical realities we find ourselves facing into on the outside but also how we are experiencing these on the inside, noting where there is congruence and where there is dissonance. What is stirring in each of us, where is there a sense that something more or different is needed? It is also a fact of this work that as we share we learn powerful truths from hearing each other's stories as well as our own. There is a quality of listening and appreciative enquiry that is only possible in this kind of community and as we reflect back our insights and impressions to each other, this enables us to see our situations in a new, clearer light – to get things into a truer perspective.



## Tell Us More

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Once we have taken stock of our current realities, we can move into the second phase of the conversation which is to enquire into the inner energy and outer forces for transformation that are at play in our different contexts. This is where the shared wisdom and discernment of our Fellows really comes into its own.

Using some of the new wisdom practices that we are bringing into this thread of the conversations we will listen more deeply to the knowing that is present in heart and gut as well as head. We will also help each other explore what are the powerful systemic forces that our driving change in our different situations and the degree to which the conversation amongst our peers and fellow leaders reflects this reality.

This is our **grace** theme, about an elegance and subtlety of how and where we intervene in our systems and who we engage with those around us. As we draw the threads of this together we start to discern where there is congruence – between our inner sensing and the forces at play around us, between key colleagues and fellow leaders in our community and between the priorities of our organisations and the wider issues playing out in our society.

This shows where there is real momentum and sustainable energy for change. Through this process we will each discern the deeper 'call' that is present in each of us for the season and context we find ourselves in. This is our unique invitation to leadership.... If not us, then who. If not now, then when... This is not just a matter of what we 'do' as leaders – the challenges and conversations we step into – it is also a matter of how we 'are' – how we show up in the world and embody the energy/wisdom that will be genuinely catalytic in our different arenas.

## Yes I can

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Following a period of reflection to ponder our invitations to leadership and our response to these, we move into the final phase of the conversation where we get down into the specific intentions, commitments and practices that will enable us to respond wholeheartedly to the invitations we have discerned and to embody the kind of leadership that we know in our hearts is needed of use right now. This is our **'pace'** theme – when and where to intervene, with whom, with what degree of urgency or patience. Working in small peer coaching groups this

again is where the quality of insight, challenge and support possible in this community is so important. We will create a spirit of honesty and accountability that is essential if we are to leave the session with commitments that (a) are fitting to the scale of our intent, (b) we believe are achievable and necessary and (c) are something we can incorporate into a sustainable leadership practice when we return to pressures and distractions of the day-to-day.



## Timings: Sunday 23rd May

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- 1430 You are welcome to check in to your room in St George's House
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- 1630 Tea in the House for those joining Evensong in the Chapel
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- 1705 Evensong (*optional*)
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- 1750 **Vicars' Hall.** Refreshments, then start of the Conversation at 6.00pm. Introduction to the Guiding Principles and then on to Stage One: ***This is me!*** We take an agreed question into small groups and then share our personal answers
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- 1930 Free time/drinks in the Sitting Room No. 25 The Cloisters
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- 1945 Working dinner in the House Dining Room
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- 2115 We go back to the Sitting Room for tea/coffee, and after dinner drinks
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- 2145 (tbc) Private floodlit tour of St George's Chapel, departing the Sitting Room (*optional*). After the tour, please join us for a nightcap
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## Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May

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- 0745 Breakfast is served in the House Dining Room
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- 0845 We start again promptly in the Vicars' Hall continuing on the '***This is me!***' theme with a deeper sharing of our personal stories: 'where we find ourselves right now as leaders, and what has brought us to this point'
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- 1100 Personal reflection time
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- 1130 Sharing our stories and an introduction to wisdom practices – accessing from our shared experience the knowing we cannot quite grasp logically, but is calling to us
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- 1300 A hot buffet lunch is served in the Vicars' Hall and we work together in our groups
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## Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May cont...

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- 1355 Team photo on the West Steps of the Chapel then back together in the Vicars' Hall and on to Stage Two: Tell me more – where we begin to explore more deeply what is emerging for us as leaders – what is stirring within us and around us that is calling for a different response? How do we feel about this?
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- 1600 Personal reflection time
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- 1705 (Optional) Evensong in the Chapel
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- 1745 Refreshments, then resume the Conversation at 6pm
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- 1915 Free time and pre-dinner drinks in the Sitting Room of No. 25
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- 1945 Dinner is served in the Dining Room
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- 2130 We go back to No. 25 the Cloisters for tea/coffee and after dinner drinks
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## Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May

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- 0745 Breakfast is served in the House Dining Room
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- 0845 We start again promptly in the Vicars' Hall. Some personal space and then we begin work on our aspirations
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- 1100 Personal reflection time
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- 1130 We shift our focus and start looking at how we are connecting with our wider organisational systems and how and where we may seek to engage differently within these to shift the wider climate
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- 1300 A hot buffet lunch is served in the Vicars' Hall and we work together in our groups
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- 1400 Work in small groups on key leadership conversations
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- 1515 Refreshments
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- 1615 Personal reflection time
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- 1705 Evensong (optional)
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## Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May cont..

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- 1750 Vicars' Hall. Refreshments, then restart the Conversation at 6pm.  
We move onto Stage Three **'Yes we can!'**
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- 1915 Free time then pre-dinner drinks in the Sitting Room from 7.30
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- 2000 Dinner is served in the Dining Room
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- 2130 Coffee, drinks and conversation in the Sitting Room
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## Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> May

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- 0730 Breakfast is served in St George's House. Please clear your luggage from your bedroom because the domestic staff need to service the rooms. You are welcome to leave bags in the Sitting Room or bring them down to the Vicars' Hall where we will be for the remainder of the Conversation
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- 0830 Vicars' Hall. We start again promptly and invite any personal insights that draw on our discussions the previous evening. Then into small groups to work on our commitments to our leadership practice going forwards.
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- 1115 Close of the Conversation
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