



# Leading in the 'New People Agenda'

From 6pm on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January until 4.00pm on Friday 20<sup>th</sup>

As we write up this proposed title, in May 2022, for a Conversation in almost a year's time, we do so in a context where there is a pervasive and undeniable sense that the 'human agenda' in our organisations has been irreversibly shifted as a result of the pandemic. Most obviously by the emergence of hybrid working, but also a more subtle sense that we accessed different priorities and ways of connecting at work that we do not want to lose as a 'post-pandemic' reality starts to consolidate.

Alongside this there are profounder shifts in generational expectations and attitudes to working life as well as powerful economic and political headwinds all impacting our organisations and therefore our leadership. There is a risk as leaders that we just 'suck it all up' and carry on. But this is probably unsustainable....

This Conversation provides a much needed space to explore how we may need to adjust our own expectations, and the expectations of others, about our role as leaders in the 'people context' we find ourselves in today? (Which is already likely to have moved on apace from the climate and context in which we are writing this!)

## 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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After arriving in the Vicars' Hall and sharing some introductory thoughts and questions, we will begin the Conversation with the sharing of something of our own personal stories of life in the recent past. What are the shifts in expectations that we are sensing and experiencing and how are these making themselves felt on us. What is bringing us hope and excitement, what is troubling or disturbing? In particular where and how are we sensing new pressures on us, how are we finding ourselves responding and to what extent do we feel we are getting it right?

This will of course set some interesting further discussions going for us to take into dinner about what really *is* the 'New People Agenda', how permanent and real a change is it, what is driving it and how it is manifesting?

This will take us into practical topics such as hybrid working policies, wellbeing, the challenges of recruitment and retention through to more fundamental themes such as societal shifts, generational patterns, new technology and the future of work. By the end of the evening, we would hope to have the beginnings of a well-socialised view around these things.

The following morning we will pause to notice what was speaking to us each most powerfully and personally in all of the above. It is often only when we give air to things that we begin to discover a sense of their true significance, we will begin our day by surfacing, and exploring this, noticing is shifting in our own energy and clarity as we do so. From here, we will clarify the key themes that we will work on in more depth in our small group work after the morning break.



## “Tell Us More”

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In this phase of the Conversation we will dig further into some of the core themes that are impacting us most – for example:

- How is the balance of power changing in the workplace, what does this mean for how we handle decision making and engagement?
- Where are the significant culture shifts – e.g. in the authenticity that is expected?
- Where and how is people's sense of 'responsibility' shifting?
- Where and how are some of our core 'people processes' misaligned to the emerging reality – e.g. how we do learning and development
- Where are we pioneering new approaches – e.g. in hybrid working – and where do these seem to be working well or not so well?

During this phase of the Conversation in particular, we will seek to challenge each other's assumptions – both about the issues themselves and also how we are responding to them – as well as learning practically from the exchange of thoughts, ideas and innovations. We will also get into some core principles relating to what we seek to embed as process and policy and what we leave to individual discretion and judgement.

From this we start to flow into the heart of the conversation – what is our role as leaders in relation to all of this and how do we occupy this in a way that is sustainable? This will inform our conversation over lunch.



## “Yes I can!”

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After lunch, we will start to discern and distil our own leadership insights and intentions from the Conversation – probably in two main areas:

- Where and how do I need to bring more focus and attention to specific aspects of the New People Agenda?
- How do I manage my own stance, capacity and role boundaries to enable me to be a positive force in this, rather than get stuck in reactivity

Working in small groups our aim will be to help each other find a greater sense of peace and clarity about what really matters and to adjust the pattern of our leadership accordingly. This may well be a reinforcing of our deeper sense of 'what is right' and strengthening in each other the confidence and trust to follow this through in practice.

In the closing phase of the Conversation we will pause to notice and 'hoover up' all the practical wisdom that has been gleaned and shared – from significant major trends to small practical tips. Finally we will pair up to help each other to firm up on our specific commitments and intentions - and maybe even offer to stay in touch from time to time to help each other with this...

We will close the Conversation with a pause to look back and 'hoover up' all the wisdom that has been gleaned and shared – particularly the very practical wisdom, the little tips, practices and insights that emerge spontaneously, often in offline chats, as we talk and share experiences together. Finally we will pair up to help each other to firm up on our specific commitments and intentions - and maybe even offer to stay in touch from time to time to help each other with this.



## Timings: Thursday 19th January

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1430	You are welcome to check in to your room in St George's House
1630	Tea in the House for those joining Evensong in the Chapel
1710	Evensong ( <i>optional</i> )
1750	<b>Vicars' Hall.</b> Refreshments, then start of the Conversation at 6.00pm. Introduction to the Guiding Principles and then on to Stage One: <b><i>This is me!</i></b> We work in small groups sharing our stories and experience
1930	Free time/drinks in the Sitting Room No. 25 The Cloisters
2000	Working dinner in the House Dining Room
2130	We go back to the Sitting Room for tea/coffee, and after dinner drinks
2145	Private floodlit tour of St George's Chapel, departing the Sitting Room ( <i>optional</i> ).

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## Friday 20th January

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0745	Breakfast is served in St George's House. Please clear your personal belongings from your room and bring them down to the Vicars' Hall, so that the domestic staff can prepare the rooms for the next group
0845	We start again promptly in the Vicars' Hall with a reflection on what is emerging for us. At roughly 10.00am we move on to Stage 2: <b><i>Tell us more</i></b> . We move in and out of small groups as we identify specific aspects and challenges in our different situations that require more focused attention and quality thinking time. We capture key insights and take-aways as we go and at around 12.30 start preparing for Stage 3: <b><i>Yes I can!</i></b>

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## Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September cont...

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1245 A hot buffet lunch is served in the Vicars' Hall and we work together in our groups, reflecting on how our insights from the morning are speaking to us and our intentions as leaders. At 1.40 we have a team photo on the West steps of the Chapel (weather permitting!)

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1345 Back together as one group, we draw out the key outcomes of our lunchtime discussions and engage in our final round of small group work as we clarify and solidify our intentions. At around 3pm we invite each of you to work in pairs over a cup of tea to sharpen up your personal resolves and commitments, after which we come back together as a whole group to close the Conversation, finishing promptly at 4.00pm

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1345 Conversation close

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### Video link-up:

At the end of the Conversation we will confirm the arrangements for our follow-up zoom call to check in on the progress we have each made in progressing our resolves. The key to us making the best possible use of our time in this is for Fellows to post a brief WhatsApp beforehand updating the rest of us on how you have been getting on, and especially which ones you found the most challenging. We then take it from there!

### Suggested date and time: tbc