

SOCIETY OF LEADERSHIP FELLOWS,
ST GEORGE'S HOUSE, WINDSOR CASTLE



SPACE TO BE...LEADERSHIP RETREAT

From 6.00pm on Wednesday 12th March until 12.00 noon on Friday 14th

"To Advance, retreat!" – Paradoxical though it may seem! There are times when we just know we need to get away – to breathe, get fresh perspective, renew our strength and purpose. Often of course these are the very times when we least feel like it! So can we invite you to challenge yourself on this as you read this?

The title of this Conversation came from our Fellows dinners this year as the summary of the discussion around one of the tables was what was most needed from us as leaders in this day and age.

The French writer Roland Barthes said pretty much the same thing,

"There is only one way left to address the challenges of present day society: to retreat ahead of it".

So, we decided to offer it as a Conversation.



AGENDA

Who is this for?

This is a Conversation for those of you who want some focused purposeful 'space to be' in which to address things you probably know in your gut you need to get to but have not been able to find the time or space for. This may include:

- Pausing long enough, even if things are pretty good right now, to notice where your 'full flow' lies - where to be bolder and more resolutely focused
- Stepping out of overwhelm and/or depletion - too much energy being spent on not quite the right things. Breaking out of our reactivity to re-source and re-fresh.
- Addressing a particular, complex and challenging question that your context is posing you that you know needs more time and attention
- Making a change, finding a new or firmer base on which to stand, fresh energy and clarity of purpose.

This is a true 'wisdom' conversation in that we will bring our own 'searching', and willingness to 'be searched' to the Conversation. As we step into this together and share our stories, the wisdom we need will emerge.

Those of you who have been on a few Conversations in this extraordinary fellowship will know and trust this well enough by now, we hope – to commit to some time that offers no fixed content or outcome, just the 'space to be' wholly in it together.



AGENDA

How will it flow?

Our core purpose will be to help us get things into proper perspective. We will follow the simple wisdom of – 'See, Be, Do'.

- See: where we are at, what is really going on, what the deeper forces at play are and what is being invited from us.
- Be: make the shift in our leadership stance and mindset that has us able to stand firmly in this,
- Do: what is needed with grounded clarity and conviction.

Following our usual flow, the Conversation will proceed through three phases:

- **"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!”

In this opening phase, we will simply tell the story of where we find ourselves in our leadership journey right now and what questions this is posing us. As we 'let our lives speak', we will start to see what is the 'froth' on the surface and what is the deeper flow beneath.

There will be an element of this, which will be specific for each of us, but there may well also be some common threads which characterise the times we find ourselves in.

It can be very liberating to realise that we are not alone in what we are facing into! As we work through this sharing, we will notice our perspective on the situation being opened up and freed. We will have 'new eyes'.

“TELL US MORE”

This is the phase of the Conversation where we really help each other bottom out what we might call 'the points of leverage' for our leadership – the small shifts that make a huge difference.

This will begin with 'seeing our seeing' and it may be just a matter of learning to look at our situation with new eyes. As an example, we may come to recognise that our approach to a situation is not helping, that actually we just need to get out of the way and focus on clearing the space for others. Or that we need to back ourselves on something that we have been too hesitant about.

As we see more clearly, however, new invitations, possibilities, even imperatives, for purposeful action will also start to crystallise. So we will help each other practically discern and assess these.



“YES I CAN!”

As we move into the closing phase of the Conversation, we will focus on the actions and commitments that will help us embody the new clarity of intention that has emerged from the retreat.

In doing this we will, as ever, support and challenge each other in identifying the real down to earth actions, and conversations, to initiate which will make the real difference.

We will undertake in our small groups to support each other in these and review our progress and learnings in our follow up call a couple of months after the Conversation.





Timings: Wednesday 12th March

- 1430** You are welcome to check in to your room in St George's House.
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- 1630** Tea/ Coffee available in the Sitting Room of the House.
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- 1705** Evening Prayer in the Chapel (*optional*).
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- 1750** **Vicars' Hall.** Gathering together. Refreshments, then start of the Conversation at 6.00pm. Introduction to the Guiding Principles and then on to Stage One: ***This is me!*** We share our personal stories as leaders in small groups, then any themes emerging – with the wider group. In light of the themes, we agree on our question to consider during discussions over dinner.
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- 1945** Drinks followed by dinner in the House Dining Room at 8pm.
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- 2115** Tea/coffee and after dinner drinks in No. 25 The Cloisters.
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- 2145** Private floodlit tour of St George's Chapel, departing the Sitting Room (*optional*).
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Thursday 13th March

- 0745** Breakfast in the Dining Room of St George's House.
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- 0845** We start again promptly in the Vicars' Hall, exploring in more depth some of the themes that emerged yesterday evening and identifying the most fruitful lines of enquiry in this for each of us.
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- 1000** We move on to Stage 2: ***Tell us more*** where we work more intentionally on the aspects that are most relevant to us, supporting and challenging each other in the process. This may be 'inner work' on our own leadership or 'outer work' on how we shape and transform our team and organisations – or both.
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Thursday 13th March cont...

- 1100** Refreshments and personal reflection time.
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- 1130** We draw out key messages from our reflection time and take our particular challenges into another round of small groups.
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- 1300** A hot buffet lunch in the Vicars' Hall.
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- 1355** Team photo on the West Steps of the Chapel. Then back together as one group in the Vicars' Hall to continue in the 'tell us more' enquiry into the issues that have most resonance and significance for us.
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- 1515** We pause to take stock and notice what is really moving for us and take some personal reflection time, with team and refreshments served.
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- 1600** Back together in the Vicar's Hall, we move onto Stage 3: **Yes I can!** As we go through this stretch stage, where we start to ground our learning and self-awareness in our own specific context, we encourage more feedback. We also focus energy on any 'stuckness' amongst us, where anyone may appreciate group support to help to unlock their thinking and move forward.
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- 1705** (*Optional*) Evensong in the Chapel.
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- 1800** The Conversation resumes, as we start to crystallise and 'step into' the wisdom and insights that are speaking directly to us in our own leadership.
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- 1930** Drinks in No. 25 followed by dinner in the Dining Room.
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- 2130** Tea/coffee and after dinner drinks in No. 25 The Cloisters.
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Friday 14th March

- 0730** Breakfast in the Dining Room of St George's House. Please clear your luggage from your bedroom because the House team needs to service the rooms. You are welcome to leave bags in the Sitting Room or bring them down to the Vicars' Hall.
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- 0845** Vicars' Hall. We start again promptly and take a moment to notice what is starting to become clear to us as we begin our final day together. From this we then we help each other focus and firm up our intentions. Where is the invitation for each of us more fully to embody the wisdom we are accessing?
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- 1045** We invite each of you to work in pairs or trios over tea or coffee to sharpen up your personal resolves and commitments in the light of your intentions.
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- 1140** Closing words and a whole group 'gathering up' of the wisdom that has flowed, both major insights and smaller practical tips.
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- 1200** Close of the Conversation.
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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