



Diocese of Salisbury

Mission & Pastoral Plan

Revised summary & discussion paper 2022

Christ is our hope, and the sure foundation of his Church. Because of this we may face the future with confidence, however turbulent the times. Over the last two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has altered and tested our life together in all kinds of ways. Yet it has also returned us to the deep roots and extraordinary resilience of the local church, which remains the core of our mission in the Diocese of Salisbury.

As a Diocese we are committed to an evolving parish ministry – and the local, visible, and often pioneering presence of its priests, people, and buildings. We recognise that we are at a transitional point in our life and, while we await the direction to be set by our new diocesan bishop, adopted a Mission & Pastoral Plan as a working guide for our interim planning. This stemmed from our existing diocesan vision of *Renewing Hope: Pray, Serve, Grow* and its refinement into three priorities:

- Discipleship & evangelism
- Dynamic collaboration
- Community transformation

Our Mission & Pastoral Plan set some goals around these priorities, which have helped to frame not only our financial planning and the work of diocesan staff (especially those in the Mission, Ministry & Communications Department), but crucially also the deanery plans that are being developed concurrently. Its aspirations may be summarised as follows:

CLEARER PATHS TO MISSION & MINISTRY

Growing vocations



Our vocations strategy starts with the local call of Christ, who sends us out in his name, to serve church and world according to our gifts.

We hope for a significant increase in vocations to all forms of Christian service, including licensed and commissioned ministries. A significant proportion of our Associate Priests and Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs) are due to retire in the next five years, and so we must both grow vocations and provide a range of accessible online and in-person training paths leading to a variety of roles.

We will make realistic projections for the number of stipendiary clergy (and parsonages to house them) while growing a new cohort of Associate Priests and Licensed Lay Ministers via a two-year training pathway at Sarum College. We will grow pioneering ministry, rooted in the parish context, and encourage and enhance the vital contribution made by our retired and PTO clergy, without whom many of our churches could not operate.

Releasing lay ministry

We shall review our range of commissioned ministries and explore creative opportunities to release the whole people of God in the service of the local church. We will aspire to significantly grow vocations to Licensed Lay Ministry and develop the role and responsibilities of LLMs within the local church. Working with partners at the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) and Sarum College, we will pursue the development of, for example, lay chaplaincy and youth work; linking with CMS and the Diocese of Bath & Wells, we will develop a new training hub for lay pioneers.

Resourcing mission

In growing collaboration with the DBE, local schools, and civic partnerships, we will respond to emerging missionary challenges by resourcing programmes for discipleship, social justice, and community transformation.

These will include recommendations for concluding Rural Hope well, pursuing Net Zero by 2030 and responding to the social impact of the pandemic. Increasing the number of community hubs (local centres for joining church, community, and school) will be central to this, as will the expansion of the Aldhelm Fund as a resource pool for mission and ministry initiatives.

BETTER CARE FOR THOSE WHO SERVE

The welfare and training of our ministers and volunteers is of paramount importance, and the demands upon them (as upon all those who serve the church) are changing with the times.

Benefices continue to increase in size, which has a signal impact upon the work and wellbeing of incumbents, especially. New ways to help with the changing role of stipendiary clergy are needed and to this end we will make recommendations arising from the national Clergy Wellbeing Covenant and revise our Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) programme in partnership with Sarum College and the national church.

Many churches and deaneries are experiencing difficulties in finding new officeholders and our parish support must reflect and recognise this. We aim to offer more locally accessible training for those considering a range of responsibilities in church and community and hope to enhance diocesan services through revised DAC processes, property provision and better-connected administration. In short, we must prepare for the parish of the future.

STRONGER ROOTS FOR LOCAL CHURCHES

Financing the Future

The funding of the local church has evolved over the centuries and is a partnership between diocese and benefice. While the parish share remains the foundation of our finances, there is a need for the DBF to explore more broad-based financial models, especially in the light of congregational decline.

We will encourage new forms of deanery financial collaboration and local aspirations for meeting the costs of ministry and mission. There will be a review of the Fairer Share scheme in 2022 and the fruits of the 2021 Generous Giving campaign will be assessed. In all of this, we must cultivate a deep level of trust and mutual co-operation between the Diocesan Board of Finance and the local church.

Deanery collaboration

Many deaneries are framing their own mission & pastoral plans in the light of current experience, and these will be integrated with diocese-wide planning through the oversight of the Sherborne and Ramsbury Teams.

Diocesan governance - through synods, councils, and committees - is complex, but it is vital that this connects with strategic planning at the local level. Diocesan strategic planning (especially regarding local reorganisation and deployment) must be informed by the insights of God's renewing work in each place.

Sustaining church buildings

A new Church Buildings Working Group is preparing a toolkit of resources to help parishes in the care and usage of their church buildings and will make recommendations to Bishop's Council about their ongoing support needs by the end of 2022.

This work will pay close attention to supporting 'fragile' churches - those that are struggling to sustain their current fabric, programme, or congregation. It will consider how both the burden and asset of our built heritage may be shared between the Diocesan Board of Finance, PCC, and wider local community, and will offer options to those parishes reviewing the future of churches in their care.

These will include church building maintenance plans, festival church arrangements and help with establishing local 'friends of' or heritage trust organisations.

Your involvement

This paper identifies our aspirations for resourcing the local church over the next few years. It is important that these connect with local planning in deanery and benefice. As you reflect on this, we invite you to share your consideration of the questions below with your archdeacon.

- How might ministry & mission be imagined or arranged here more fruitfully, fairly and economically?
- Where is God growing new things - and what might need cutting back?
- How might we collaborate to meet the particular challenges of buildings & stewardship before us here?
- How can our 'people' resources (volunteers, officers, licensed ministers) be sustained or renewed to help us remain faithful to the places we serve?

While some decisions sit with the bishops (especially around the deployment of stipendiary clergy), there is much freedom for developing a local ministry strategy for benefice and deanery. 'A flourishing Christian presence' will look different in each community, so we need your continued imagination and enterprise in realising this.

Thank you for your fruitful ministry. The Lord is with us.



"My Father is glorified by this: that you bear much fruit and become my disciples" John 15v8