



The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

Living ely2025

Deanery Development
Planning across
The Diocese of Ely

Full Guide

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Introduction: The Vision of the Diocese of Ely

We pray to be generous and visible people of Jesus Christ.

Believing that God calls us to discover together his transforming presence in our lives and in every community, in Jesus Christ we pray:

- to *engage* fully and courageously with the needs of our communities, locally and globally
- to *grow* God's church by finding disciples and nurturing leaders
- to *deepen* our commitment to God through word, worship and prayer.

We have defined our **five levers** to focus our efforts:

1. Nurture a confident people of God
2. Develop healthy churches and leaders
3. Serve the community
4. Re-imagine our buildings
5. Target support to key areas

The aim

Deanery Development Planning is not about moving stipendiary posts around, with the aim of being able to cut clergy posts because some lay people are 'helping out'. Rather,

development planning seeks to begin to change "the way we do church", aiming for

- a culture change regarding leadership and ministry and within congregations
- the development of congregational capacity for outward-facing mission and ministry
- the discernment and nurture of emergent signs of leadership and mission.

This puts flesh on the bones of our first and second levers. This is part of what it means to nurture a confident people of God, and to develop healthy churches and leaders.

Why now?

The global pandemic has impacted every part of society including the church. The vaccine enables society to plan afresh and so we believe this is the time for church communities to plan for the future.

In line with what we said in *People Fully Alive: Ely2025* we are asking each deanery to create an ambitious but realistic plan so that ministry and mission can flourish in the years to

come. *Ely2025* is a strategy for growth: we are planning and trusting God for the growth of the Church across the diocese into the future.

As we plan, we will need to address the following questions:

- what have we learned and how have we been changed and shaped by the experience of the pandemic? What has been helpful for the future?
- how can we re-imagine ministry using the gifts of all God's people to make use of new opportunities, resource new ministries and better serve our communities?
- during the pandemic many churches have served their communities in new ways – how can we build on this to serve the common good?
- the diocese can only afford to pay a certain number of stipends on current levels of income (from parish giving and investments) so how can we live within our means?
- how do we most effectively manage our historic churches?
- how do we anticipate the challenge of living in a rapidly growing population with new housing developments springing up in many of our communities as well as in new areas where previously there was no housing?

- what new forms of outreach will engage with the generations who are unfamiliar with “church”?

Why the Deanery?

The deanery provides a framework for benefices to support each other in their deliberations, sharing observations and as appropriate finding common cause and cooperation, thus maximizing the benefit of all manner of available resources.

For the process of development planning to bear fruit, it needs to happen in a manner that reflects the generous way we seek to be, open and welcoming every voice, not precious about our own, and seeking to serve God's mission and God's church together.

A Brief Biblical Reflection

Urgency

This year (2021) our lectionary is dominated by passages from Mark's Gospel. And one of the characteristics of Mark is its immediacy and urgency. No other gospel uses the word εὐθέως [eutheos], meaning 'immediately, straight away' as often as Mark when the opportunities and challenges present themselves. When the time is right, Jesus does not delay in calling disciples (Mk 1:20), likewise there is no tardiness in new disciples

following his call (1:18). They tell Jesus about Peter's sick mother-in-law (1:30) as immediately as the man takes his bed and walks (2:12). And then, and then. Mark's simple story-telling of the Gospel urges us on, the mission cannot wait, the kingdom is at hand (1:15).

Rhythm of Prayer

This is not about a life lived relentlessly and unreflected though: "In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed." (1:35). We find in Mark's Gospel the rhythm of focussed prayer and focussed action. It is not about prizing busyness and ever longer working hours, but about focus in what we do.

A Shared Journey

We know that the first Christians were called the People of the Way. At key points in Mark's Gospel we read of people being 'on the way' (ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ), e.g. Mk 8:27. They are on the way together and they talk about their experiences and where it's going: this is a vital aspect for any Christian community, both moving forwards and sharing with each other as they do so.

The task of planning for the future development of the church in the Diocese of Ely is urgent and important

as new opportunities as well as challenges are presenting themselves. The task should lead us not to restless activism but to focussed work underpinned by prayer. And it can only be undertaken by travelling together and taking care of our relationships with each other.

We are therefore undertaking this enterprise together and are asking every parish, benefice, and deanery to review its mission and ministry, to be honest and to decide what is feasible and desirable as we pray, discuss and listen to one another and the Holy Spirit.

In many places, we believe that God is reshaping his church currently, and so pray *Give us grace to let go of all that holds us back; And grant us courage to meet the new life you have promised us...*

A Brief Theological Reflection: what is the Church God reshapes?

Our deanery development planning is about imagining the future of the church across our deaneries and diocese. It is an exercise in hope, as we discern together how to proclaim the Gospel afresh in this generation. But we aren't imagining from a blank page: we are hoping and planning within the context both of the communities

we serve, and how we reach out to them in new ways, and how we have been formed by the church we have inherited.

So, who or what is 'the Church' that we believe God is reshaping, and which we long to see grow in health, spiritually and numerically?

Anglican theological tradition tells us that 'the visible Church of God is present where the Word is preached and the sacraments duly administered in accordance with Christ's ordinance'. The Church is present where people gather in prayer and worship, are fed by Word and Sacrament, and then are sent out to serve.

In our planning, therefore, we need to ask:

- how are we ensuring that there are vibrant and viable worshipping communities of Word and Sacrament?
- how are we planning so that we can teach the faith and nurture new believers?
- how are we ensuring that we are visible and accessible to those who come for 'life events', and how are we planning the follow-up?
- how do our plans express our commitment to the schools across the deanery, and to the wider

community? Another way of asking this question would be to say, are we planning for the development of the churches in the deanery, or for our churches to be agents of transformation in the communities?

There is something really important about discerning and planning together as a deanery: we are reminded that we are part of a church that is wider than our own immediate worshipping community; that church is an ordered church in terms of ministry, worship, and the legal frameworks that hold us together. We can be imaginative, brave and radical, but we can't just do our own thing.

Because we're part of a wider church – expressed most immediately through the diocese – there is help, support, and guidance available. When clergy are licensed, they are given a share in the Bishop's cure of souls – our ministry is shared, not just in the local ministry team in our benefices or deaneries, but across the diocese.

We seek to be people fully alive in Christ, and pray to be his people – generous in our engagement and visible in our witness and service. That vision shapes the way we plan for the future shape of the church, its ministry and mission.

Ministry and Mission in the Future – an overview

In 2012, when Bishop Stephen was newly arrived in the Diocese, he wrote 'Imagining the Future', which held up a vision for worship and liturgical provision. He urged us to settle for nothing but the highest quality in the delivery and content of worship and preaching so that Christ's saving work is proclaimed and experienced.

Further on he recommended (among other things):

- becoming vivid communities of the Word
- enjoying the Parish Communion but not necessarily on Sunday and learning to be sacramental travellers, attending the Holy Communion in another church in the benefice;
- holding services at the same time each week even when the style changes so that people know when to come.

In the Diocesan strategy, *People Fully Alive: Ely2025*, we committed ourselves to the concept of Blended church - a mixture of inherited Sunday worship and new forms of gathering. Some of these would be independent, fully formed congregations but the majority would be places of 'encounter'.

The rural church has been in the vanguard of becoming a Blended economy. This needs to continue. Moreover, since the pandemic temporarily forced us out of our buildings, a new strand in the Blended economy has emerged in multiple forms of 'virtual' church. It was widely reported in the early months of the lockdown, that more people were viewing Sunday morning worship online than attended on a Sunday morning. These newcomers included people who wanted to access worship without being identified, or at a time that suited them, or who were unable to attend church services because they are housebound or lived away. There is much still to learn from this, but it highlights the fact that there is an appetite for Christianity, which is not entirely met or satisfied by traditional forms of gathered worship. As Deaneries consider their plans for development, thought will need to be given to how parishes or groups of parishes can continue this form of the Blended economy.

Though parishes have various patterns of eucharistic worship, Holy Communion is essential to church life everywhere. This presents a challenge in some places, where ordained priests are spread over several parishes.

Deaneries will need to consider carefully and generously how they meet the sacramental needs of their communities. They are also strongly encouraged to explore the riches of non-eucharistic worship – after all, Evensong and Matins are in our DNA. The development of ‘Sunday Resources’ (available on the diocesan website) has meant that churchwardens and others are better equipped to lead Services of the Word.

Given the practical issues around the spread of ministry, and the possible different designations of each church (see the section on Church Buildings), regular Sunday worship will not always be possible everywhere. Some churches will be Festival Churches with fewer Sunday morning services; others will have to develop mid-week and Sunday afternoon services. Deanery planning gives benefices the chance to work through different scenarios, with their respective opportunities and challenges, in order to find something sustainable and life-giving for the whole church and for those who serve in ministry.

As in most other areas, consideration of the worshipping life of each local church needs to be set within the wider perspective of the church across groups of parishes and whole

deaneries. The existence of a church building in a particular place is only one factor among others, such as the availability of ministers, the proximity of (church) schools and the needs of each context. Deanery plans should address situations of decline and seek to promote growth where there is opportunity. See sections on Buildings and Governance for the Future

The place of children, young people and families – the church of today and of the future – must be taken seriously. Our work in schools must be resourced appropriately and this will have an impact on our ministry if we give it the time and energy needed.

Since the beginning of 2021 the Church of England nationally has revisited the Five Marks of Mission as it too re-sets its vision for the 2020s. We need to ask ourselves what we are being called to do to make those Five Marks of Mission live in our own parish and deanery contexts. Answering that question will help us to discern what sort of ministry we need across the deanery.

Alongside the Five Marks of Mission the National Church has several other reports which all shape and influence our Deanery Development. Notably:

- Growing Faith
- The net zero carbon challenge

- The Archbishops' vision and strategy for The Church of England in the 2020s

Mission in the future

The Five Marks of Mission:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Parishes need to ask- *what we are being called to do to so that the Five Marks of Mission live in our own parish and deanery contexts.* Answering that question will help us to discern what sort of ministry we need across the deanery.

Further issues to explore together

The place of children, young people, and families – the church of today and of the future – must be taken seriously. Our work in schools must be resourced

appropriately and this will have an impact on our ministry if we give it the time and energy needed.

We would urge each parish to conduct an audit of its community and identify areas where the church seemingly fails to have any impact and then consider what new initiatives can be taken to engage with that part of the parish.

For some time, we have noted that there are more children coming to church for baptism in the north of the diocese compared to the south. However, when we look at the number of children in church and provision for children on Sundays the reverse is true. We are curious about this and wonder what more can be done to build relationships with those who bring their children for baptism.

The same questions can be asked about all our occasional offices. We would urge the Deanery in its response to Living Ely2025 to consider how to sensitively follow up every pastoral opportunity and discover what steppingstones are in place to enable people to engage with the church once the wedding, funeral or baptism has taken place.

In recent years greater flexibility has been given to us through such measures as Bishop's Mission Orders

(BMO). We are therefore asking if there are areas in the deanery or parishes where a BMO could enable the mission of the church to flourish?

We think there are a number of resources that can help us as we re-imagine our response to being missionary disciples and enabling the church to flourish. No doubt you have your own key documents but on the Living Ely 2025 resources we have included.

- A brief description of Health Churches
- An introduction to Pope Francis recent paper Fratelli Tutti
- A review of the work by David Wasdale in the 1970s which proposed the idea of multiple congregations within parishes.
- The National Church Report Anecdote to Evidence.

Other resources will be added.

Finally, there are many programmes which can help parishes consider their own response to the mission imperative. We would ask that each parish and deanery explore the possibility of organising or attending programmes such as Leading your Church into Growth, Partnership for Missional Church, Growing Healthy Churches or something else appropriate to your context.

Re-imagining Ministry for the Future

We want to promote good and godly leadership of every kind, and to nurture the God-given gifts of all... We want to refresh leadership so that both clergy and laity feel energised, empowered and liberated to grow in their ministry.

People Fully Alive: Ely 2025

Since 2015, we have seen a growth in diverse forms of leadership and ministry across the Diocese, with teams of lay and ordained, self-supporting and stipendiary ministers working together in new and imaginative ways.

Vocations to all forms of ministry have also increased dramatically and we have introduced new pathways of training and formation. And, very importantly, we have seen a new culture emerge in which the gifts of all God's people are recognised, nurtured and supported, whether or not they fit into an existing formally recognised category of ministry. It is wonderful to see the Body of Christ at work in all its members (1 Cor.12.12-31).

In December 2020, Bishop's Council and Diocesan Synod were inspired by reports of this rich and fertile ecology of ministry and resolved to encourage Deaneries to take full account of it as

they review and revise their Deanery Plans. The intention is to think beyond historic patterns of stipendiary ministry to release and deploy Christian ministry in all its forms. It is an agenda for growth, in the desire to see ever more people drawn into ministry and mission.

There will still be a very significant role for full-time stipendiary clergy in this emerging situation, but, like all things, it will need to adapt to a changing context and new patterns of collaboration within ministry teams. Full-time clergy must not become overburdened, given impossible jobs or become “Mass Priests” on Sundays. We do not want to be like Pharaoh, when Moses complained about working conditions, who only demanded more results from fewer resources. That way will only lead to disappointment, decline and anxiety.

In the following section we outline some of the ministries we have seen emerging recently. We hope these will inspire and enthuse Deaneries to re-imagine ministry in each local context. We do not believe in a God of scarcity, but of abundance. Since 2015 we have been praying to the Lord of the harvest to release workers *and he has heard our prayer*. God has given his church the gifts it needs in the people of its

congregations (and those who are not yet in our midst). Our task is to open up the pathways into ministry and discover afresh how God is equipping his church.

The story so far.... 2015-2020: A blossoming of ministry

The following list is not exhaustive but it gives an indication of what God is already doing across the Diocese in providing new and diverse forms of leadership.

You may wish to add others to the list as each place, team and Deanery considers its needs.

- Local Contextual Ordained Ministry (LCOM clergy)
- Permission to Officiate clergy
- School Headteachers
- Authorised Lay Worship Leaders
- Distinctive Deacons
- Licensed Lay Ministers (formerly known as Readers)
- School Chaplains
- Licensed Lay Minister- Pioneers
- Local Evangelists
- Licensed lay Ministers- Pastoral Ministers
- Authorised Lay Ministers- Pastoral Assistants

- Focal Ministers
- Home Group Leaders
- Churchwardens
- Youth Leaders (voluntary and paid)
- Children's and family ministers working in churches and local schools
- Parish Nurses
- Pastors for older people
- Occasional Preachers
- Chaplains (lay and ordained, paid and voluntary) in various sectors or specialist ministries

Ordained Ministry

Leadership in the local rural church needs to be diverse and flexible. As we look to the future there will be fewer full-time stipendiary clergy and many more self-supporting clergy working with stipendiary colleagues.

Stipendiary clergy in many places will be team leaders, exercising oversight as well as playing a vital missional role across an enlarged group.

They will be accompanied by ordained **Self-Supporting Ministers** – people who give generously of their time and gifts while also pursuing other forms of employment.

Over the last few years there has been a decrease in the number of people coming forward as traditional SSMs,

so we need to renew our invitation to people to consider whether God might be calling them to serve in this way. At the same time, we will continue to develop our relatively new pathway into **Local Contextual Ordained Ministry** which may be particularly appropriate for older candidates and experienced lay ministers who sense that their vocation is changing. Parishes play an important part in calling people to this ministry, as well as to traditional Self-Supporting Ministry.

Lay Ministry

Recently, there has been a resurgence in the number of people coming forward for **Licensed Lay Ministry**. These LLMs include 'Readers' in the traditional form as well as others with a different focus of ministry, such as children, schools, youth, hospitals, prisons, care homes, etc.

We invite every parish (particularly rural parishes in multi-parish benefices) to consider whether to appoint **Focal Ministers** to work within each Ministry Team, representing the wider church community as well as being the face of the church in a particular place and a resource for pastoral care. They could be, but don't have to be, Churchwardens, Licensed Lay Ministers, Authorised Lay Ministers. They have

to have the skills and aptitude to work with and be accountable to others. It will be important to follow a careful discernment process to identify and appoint Focal Ministers, which may be run at a local level but should be endorsed by the wider church. The Diocese will provide model role descriptions to help manage expectations.

Other forms of lay ministry may be identified at a local level and many will be authorised by the diocese, typically in the form of **Authorised Lay Ministry**. There is no 'in principle' limit to the range of ministries that might fall under this category and the diocese is keen to respond positively to locally discerned needs, opportunities and gifts (which might be outward-facing, such as school or small-group work, or inward-facing, such as administration). Partly because this is a fairly new variety of ministry, some churches have not managed fully to incorporate the contribution of ALMs, so the Diocese will recommend better forms of oversight, support and accountability.

Churchwardens are the backbone of the rural church. A warden will often take on huge amounts of work in the church as well as in wider community. Wardens need to be clear about their role and how they play their part in

the wider lay ministry that is envisaged in this paper. They are a gift to the church and their contribution needs encouragement and support.

Deanery planning involves asking each benefice to consider afresh its mission and then ask- what shape of ministry is required to fulfil that vision?

Financing the Future

Once you have addressed the questions posed in the first two sections, in other words, established the missional and pastoral needs of the Deanery along with those of the benefices/parishes, it will then be necessary to assess how the requirement can be funded, or to put it in another way - what provision is affordable?

As a guide, each Benefice should aim to cover its full cost of ministry based on the figures shown in the table below. It is envisaged that several Deaneries will plan to cover the full cost of ministry for all their benefices.

Some Deaneries may require a level of support (the maximum level of support available per clergy post is shown below). Whilst support is calculated on the basis of individual posts and the maximum overall sum is allocated to each Deanery, any support should be specifically targeted at those

benefices where a special need has been identified; for example, where there is an area of very low population spread over a large geographic area necessitating several churches being ministered to by one priest, and the weight of responsibility is already such that further pastoral reorganisation is not appropriate. Another basis for support might be that the benefice has a large area of deprivation.

It is not anticipated that there would be a need for every benefice in a Deanery to require support or that support would be allocated equally, but as outlined above, any support should be targeted to address specifically identified needs.

We envisage that across the Diocese there are probably at least two deaneries where even the level of support indicated as the maximum will not prove adequate if ministry is to continue at a sustainable level. In these cases, additional missional support will be required to enable a workable plan to be implemented.

Posts related to areas of new housing development and other Pioneer posts require high levels of support at the outset requiring a specific planned programme of payments to be agreed which lead over an extended period to

full ministry cost being achieved.

It is anticipated that in some deaneries/archdeaconries posts will fall away in some locations and new posts be recommended in others where there has been a population increase. It may also be that in some deaneries a stipend will be allocated to a lay minister rather than someone who has been ordained.

The Diocesan Synod and the Bishop's Council have agreed that, for budgetary purposes, they wish to see the number of full-stipendiary and half-stipendiary posts amounting to no more than 104. We are not expecting deaneries to manage this directly, and it will be overseen by the Archdeacons.

This figure has been arrived at by assessing what the Diocese is likely to be able to afford taking account of predicted Ministry Share receipt levels.

Costs	Full Stipend	Half Stipend	House for Duty
Stipend and on-costs	£39,283	£19,035	-
Housing	£8,497	£8,497	£8,497
Wider Ministry	£18,193	£18,193	£18,193
Investing in the Future	£9,750	£9,750	£9,750
Full Cost of Clergy Post	£75,723	£55,475	£36,440
Support (if needed)			
Wider Ministry (up to 33%)	(£6,004)	(£6,004)	(£6,004)
Investing in the Future (up to 100%)	(£9,750)	(£9,750)	(£9,750)
Supported Cost of Clergy Post	£59,969	£39,721	£20,686

Nb these figures are for 2021

From Subsidy towards Sustainable Ministry

In a word, deaneries are asked to review their local plans for mission and ministry, including number of stipendiary posts, with the aim of reducing current dependency on subsidy. Indeed, they are specifically requested to estimate the level of subsidy required to complement present congregational commitment to meet full costs of sustainable ministry.

Not all parishes will require on-going subsidy and some will require greater subsidy than others. We are asking each deanery to review the model and configuration of ministry best suited to

local context. The same circumstances offer our diocese an equally valuable opportunity to agree with deaneries acceptable methods of deciding where limited resources should be directed.

Generosity and Thanksgiving

There are various apostolic injunctions and encouragements directed to the Corinthian church: 'to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good', 'the body does not consist of one member but many', we seek 'a fair balance' among us, we are urged to give generously

and cheerfully, and to 'overflow with thanksgiving to God'.

We believe in a God of generosity and abundance - let us plan realistically and imaginatively in that light.

Responsible Budgeting

We would urge each parish to produce a sustainable and annual budget for the coming year to help congregations and the wider community understand the challenges the parish church faces each year as it seeks to raise sufficient funds.

Buildings for the Future

Church buildings continue to draw and inspire...

*By 2025 our church buildings must be more than monuments to our Christian heritage; they must serve the needs of the church today. We cannot afford to let them become "toxic assets", draining the church of badly needed time, energy and resources. **People Fully Alive: Ely2025***

Work has begun on helping parishes and deaneries identify different categories of Church Buildings and their use.

In the REACHEly audit some the following terms are used others have been added to help Deaneries and parishes think about the future of their buildings.

A Community Church

A church with regular worshipping community and capacity within the congregation to develop worship services and/or additional activities but needs improved facilities to do so. Small but able PCC and leadership team. Able to pay its contribution towards the requested cost of ministry, but it's a challenge each year.

Festival Church

A rural or isolated church. Services are attended by fewer than ten people. The church celebrates specific church and community events as well as life events services only. Very small PCC and lack of parish leadership. Parish share is small and difficult to find.

Gem/Tourism Church

The church is open and of interest to visitors through its architectural or historic merit.

Hub Church

A church serving a sizeable community. For example, it may be in a large village or market town. It has regular services and the congregation can sustain and resource itself through growth, use of gifts and pays its parish share. Leadership is strong and cost of ministry is met.

Programme church

A large congregation which supports all sorts of ministries across the age range. No shortage of paid and voluntary staff. Finances are robust and leadership is strong.

Distinct Church

Often in a city and appeals to a particular constituency. That may be 1662 Prayer Book with Matins and Evensong, or a distinct theological tradition and liturgical practice. Often vibrant with functioning PCC and able to pay parish share. Some of these churches may have had a core group of adherents and over the years the congregation has declined.

Major church

A physically big parish church, open daily and serving a large population. Vibrant congregation and cost of ministry is met.

Struggling church (sometimes called Fragile Church - see Appendix 1).

Here, local leadership is sparse, it is difficult to find PCC officers and members, parish share is not met and raising money is a challenge. Congregations are small, elderly and people are seriously worried that they cannot carry on.

Within this category it is not always evident why one church in a group flourishes and others struggle. Each situation needs to be carefully investigated.

That investigation should include considering issues such as

- Geographic location of the Church building and community it seeks to serve
- Leadership (lay and ordained, including the lack thereof)
- History - some churches, for many generations have little community support
- Liturgical offering and diversity
- Resources to engage afresh with the community through a blended approach
- Other flourishing local churches

If the leadership locally requests help from the Diocese this can be provided.

Local meetings can be held and support (or otherwise) gathered. This does not necessarily mean that the liturgical practises or wishes of the small congregation will be met however others from the community may realise the need to get involved and support the church in practical ways.

We have found that rural churches often benefit from a high level of support in the community, even if people do not attend church regularly.

One option to explore when we consider the future is whether this goodwill can be harnessed, and a **Friends' Scheme** set up to support the church building.

If none of these seem applicable, then it maybe that one of the following options could be considered.

The church building can have a "shared use".

There are five ways in which a church building can be shared with another party. The first two are reasonably straightforward the other three require a formal closure scheme.

1) A shared use building by Faculty and Licence.

This is where some part of the building (various options include the vestry, porch, part of the building, nave or chancel) is designated as remaining in the oversight of the PCC while the rest of the building is licensed to another body. This maybe a local Nursery, Playgroup, Parish Council, another denomination, local charity.

2) A shared use for part of the building via a lease.

The aim here is to relieve the burden felt by the PCC and ask another body to take responsibility for the building. It may be an active Friends' Group or a local Community Trust.

3) Close off most of the building so that worship is no longer the primary use.

4) Close the building and license it for occasional use - vest it with a national body such as Friends of Friendless Churches

5) Close and "re-boot" as a Church Plant or a non-parochial place of worship. This option is only likely to be viable in large towns or cities.

6) Close and find an alternative use for the building. This is difficult and time consuming. Changing a listed building into say, a residential home is fraught with difficulties. This is a last resort if all else fails.

The first three options outlined above have at their heart the principle of some of the building being retained for worship and the other parts of the church leased for suitable complementary uses (commercial, cultural, community).

The Diocese is currently exploring the possibility of forming a diocesan-wide trust to look after church buildings rather than the local community- do look out for further details.

Leadership and Governance in the Future

Sometimes there are simply not enough willing people to become PCC members and officers. Recognising this, in 2020, The Church Representation Rules were revised at the beginning of 2020 and provide for several options for PCCs to consider. Including: -

Joint Councils

It is now possible for two or more churches within a benefice or group ministry to formally join together, becoming a joint council and acting as a PCC for two or more churches in the benefice. This helps to pool resources and individuals to work together.

It is also possible for the joint council model to be scaled up so there is a single council acting as the PCC for all the churches in a benefice or group ministry, where all PCCs wish to do that.

Variations on the model PCC

The 2020 Rules, just like their predecessors, set down a model for the management of a PCC, prescribing who

may be a member, how they must be elected, and all the details of how the PCC should be operated. However, the 2020 rules also permit individual PCCs (and joint councils), with the consent of Bishop's Council, to vary the model to suit their own situation. For example, it is now possible for a PCC (or joint council) to vary its model to admit non-communicants to full membership of the PCC.

Deanery Planning and Vision

The formal process for deanery planning is clearly laid out in legislation and there are guidance notes on how to follow the legislation. The purpose of this paper is not to be a step-by-step guide through the legislative pathway; rather it is to help Deaneries think about how to organise themselves to go about the planning process.

We also need to remember that our desire is to review all aspects of our mission and ministry and not just focus on pastoral reorganisation.

To help Deaneries specific letters will be sent to each deanery highlighting key areas that need to be addressed.

Data collection

In the past, Deaneries have sometimes relied on hearsay and informal reports - even spin! – for their knowledge of parishes. This time around, each deanery will have a set of data available to it. This comes from the information each parish is asked to provide for their annual Returns and financial reports and responses to the REACHEly audit of churches and communities.

Each Archdeacon will consult with the Bishops and the relevant Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committee (ADMPC) in order to provide an external perspective on each deanery, highlighting or suggesting areas of strategic concern (e.g. unbalanced allocations of ministry; disproportionately sized benefices; financial concerns, etc.). These perspectives should be received as encouragements, and occasionally as gentle provocations. They are not intended to be definitive, but the Bishop's Council will expect to see evidence that they have been taken seriously when it reviews the final plans.

The results of the REACHEly audit will be available towards the end of 2021. These will be sent to deaneries to provide another layer of data. This

information will probably confirm what is generally known about each parish; but it will be accurate and up-to-date and helpful for testing first impressions and more subjective judgements.

Moving forward

The key thing throughout this process is that it must be locally owned, driven and determined. This is not a top-down process.

We would encourage the deanery to establish at least one and maybe two new groups to undertake this work.

We have seen this model developed most recently in Fincham and Feltwell - please see the Diocesan pages for Living Ely 2025 for the reports and groups they have established.

Two groups were created. The first gathered all the relevant information together. The second, with new people joining began consulting across the deanery on the needs of each parish and potential models for ministry as they looked to the future. The first group was known as The Deanery Strategy Group. The second, The Deanery Planning Advisory Group.

Both groups are lay-led with the Rural Dean, Lay Chair, Deanery Treasurer and other clergy acting as advisers. The benefit of this approach is that it

requires lay people to take long-term responsibility for their churches. It also means that (stipendiary) clergy are not put in the invidious position of having to defend their own jobs. The key to this model working is to have a good Chair who can drive business with clarity and determination but wears their authority lightly and is trusted by all.

Further information about this model is available on the website.

There may be variants on these models, or completely different models, that deaneries want to pursue. Whatever process the Deanery opts for, certain things are essential:

- it must be owned by the parishes and deanery, and importantly the lay people.
- it must include wide consultation.
- full notes must be kept of all meetings, however informal.
- objections must be carefully considered, and a reasoned answer given, particularly when the responsible group is unable to satisfy the complainant.

Members of the planning group need to:

- attend all the meetings
- work well with others
- be constructive and proactive
- be imaginative, creative and willing to explore new ways of being church
- be determined to focus on the future and not just the recent past
- be willing to see the bigger picture and not just fight for their own parish or worse still their own perspective
- be able and willing to adhere to collective responsibility when decisions are taken and to support the majority view
- become an advocate for the emerging plan
- have time to read and be able to digest data provided help the planning process
- on occasion attend PCC meetings outside their own parish, in order to listen and respond to concerns and eventually to be an advocate for the emerging plan
- willing to explore a variety of new models of ministry already being exercised in parts of the Diocese
- be sufficiently IT literate to receive emails and join Zoom-style meetings

Appendix

Appendix 1

Principles to guide deanery development planning

Just (not equal) - Being fair does not mean treating everyone equally. Fairness is not about mathematics, but about justice. It means taking difference seriously and doing the right thing in each situation.

Affordable - Plans must be affordable. Ultimately, this is a diocesan responsibility, and shared diocesan resources may be available as subsidy where there is particular need or opportunity; however, deaneries should approach their planning with a clear view about what ministry the local church can fund.

Healthy - While Christians are called to follow Jesus' example of sacrificial love and service, the church should not propose patterns of ministry and mission that are unlikely to foster the health and wellbeing of God's people. Plans should be life-giving, not draining.

Strategic - History shows that there have been many ways of organising the pastoral, spiritual and evangelistic life of the church, and that the church has often had to adapt to changing

situations. The church is a movement as much as it is an institution. Some things that used to work well are no longer helpful or possible. New opportunities and challenges lie all around us. Deanery plans need to take this seriously and determine what best serves the long-term interests and aims of the church in their area. They should also remember God's "bias to the poor" (e.g. Luke 7.22) and the diocesan imperatives and strategy.

Corporate - Our vision begins, "We pray to be." When we speak of the church we mean first and foremost the "one, holy, catholic church" of the creed, not just my church. Deanery plans should balance the needs of each local church with those of the wider Body of Christ, as we seek to engage meaningfully with every context.

Collaborative - The word "vicar" is derived from "vicarious" and has contributed to the idea that ministry is something done by a few select individuals on behalf of everyone else. Though some ministers have particular roles, which may have a vicarious

character, the New Testament pictures everyone contributing in different ways to the overall ministry of the church (e.g. Ephesians 4). Moreover, all ministers are collaborative workers, not solo operators (e.g. Luke 10). Deanery plans should assume a wide ministry base, drawing on the gifts of all God's people.

Consultation - Deaneries must be frank about challenges, share information openly and carefully consider different insights and ideas. There should be a planned approach to consultation, designed to engage a wide audience in an interactive process.

Accountability - Deaneries must agree criteria for decision-making and ensure that decisions are not based on other (hidden) agendas. Deaneries should use evidence (both quantitative and qualitative) and be prepared to test assumptions. They should be bold in pursuing pastoral reorganisation where current arrangements are unsuitable or unsustainable.

Contextual - Peculiarities of context are essential factors in deanery development planning (remembering that even a single, small parish may comprise several contexts). Deaneries should plan for emerging contexts,

such as new housing developments. They should also consider the importance of schools and the need to engage children, young people and families.

Blended - In accordance with the diocesan strategy, deanery plans should promote both inherited and Fresh Expressions of church.

Pro-Growth - The focus of deanery development planning should be on (re-)organising for growth, rather than maintaining the status quo. This is especially important in situations where the right approach to stewardship involves reducing the costs of ministry and mission (e.g. by reducing stipendiary posts).

Local – Deanery Development Planning needs to emerge from the parishes. This is not a top down approach rather than opposite, coming up from the parish and shared with the other parishes in the Deanery.

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