

## Our Mission Action Plan

[Date: 23 10 2017]

**Parish: The United Benefice of St Chad, St Mary and St Edmund – comprising the two parish churches of St Chad, Rochdale and St Mary in the Baum, Rochdale**

**Deanery: Rochdale**

**Period covered by this plan: October 2017 to September 2022**

### Our Vision/Values

We intend to create opportunities for people to encounter God in worship, through song and music, through prayer and ministry, through silence and through outreach.

We aim to be a place of welcome and hospitality for all. We want excellent music and singing to be at the heart of what we do. As the bells from our churches have rung out over the town of Rochdale for many years, so we want, in our age, to communicate our faith and call people to prayer.

We support the Diocesan Vision, which has been approved by Bishop's Council and Diocesan Synod, namely:

- A worshipping, growing and transforming Christian presence at the heart of every community. Supporting this vision are three mission goals:
- Growing: growing new disciples in missionary church communities which are younger, more diverse, active and spiritually engaged
- Nurturing: increasing vocations, nurturing new and existing disciples, increasing financial giving
- Serving: present for all, speaking and acting prophetically for justice, supporting pastorally especially the vulnerable, deprived and excluded.

### Stage 1 - Review

**Where we are starting from** - a realistic summary of our context and our present situation.

We are two churches in Rochdale. Our outstanding historic buildings are on either side of the town centre and sadly not at the centre. St Chad's is visible at the top of the steps above the Town Hall, St Mary's is adjacent to the Pioneer's Museum on Toad Lane. Our premises are not used for most of the week, though we regularly host homelessness groups, the Red Cross, classical concerts as well as other events and Deanery meetings etc.

Churches are sustained by people. We are blessed with faithful and active people however our membership is getting older and St Mary's in particular is struggling to manage the week by week work of being a church, with no wardens appointed in April 2017. Our 3 congregations are small and have declined in recent years. Most people from our congregations live outside the parish boundaries, and there are few from our multicultural community involved in church life, although we are delighted to have started an Urdu Christian Fellowship in the summer of 2017 at St Chad's. St Chad's has a "passing trade" – people will visit and occasionally stay. Very few young people attend our churches for worship. Many from the parishes are served

by the outreach of the Red Cross at St Mary's, our Place of Welcome (currently in abeyance) and the homeless groups which use our buildings. We have had several refugees join our congregations in recent years from Nigeria, Pakistan, Iraq, and Iran and have offered them care and support. Our parishes are economically poor and include 3 social housing estates which are hardly represented in our congregations. We have no church schools or uniformed organisations to draw on.

A small core of our membership gives generously of their time at both churches, serving on PCCs and in practical ways. Lay people are involved in roles include reading, intercessions\*, eucharistic ministry, Schools visits/teaching\*, building care and heritage openings. However, that age group - particularly at St Mary's - is now getting older and is not able to do all that they used to do. Two lay people from St Chad's will be starting Foundations for Ministry course in 2017. (\* = St Chad's only)

At times St Chad's has struggled to pay the parish share, partly due to a large number on benefits. St Mary's is proud to have paid the parish share although this is now proving difficult. In both churches legacies have been used to balance the books. St Chad's has agreed a new parish share with the Diocese for next 3 years. St Mary's hopes to do the same.

We recognise that in the Deanery and Diocesan context the number of clergy projected for our churches is reducing. We acknowledge that there can no longer be one vicar for each church. The projected numbers for the Deanery are as follows

2017 – 9.1; 2018 - 8.8; 2019 – 8.6; 2025 – 6.9

We are supportive of plans for our two churches to be joined with Christ Church Healey, All Saints Hamer, and St Ann Belfield and a team ministry formed with our incumbent and an other priest.

**Worship.** The pattern of services is currently as follows on Sundays:

930 am Common Worship Eucharist at St Mary's in the Baum (Attendance c 12-20 persons)

11 am Common Worship Eucharist (or BCP Matins 1x a month) at St Chad's (Attendance c 28-40 persons).  
With c. 5 baptisms each year(c80-100.)

3pm Asian Fellowship (Worship in Urdu) (c 8-30)

And on Wednesdays at 10 am BCP Eucharist at St Mary's (Attendance c 8 -15 persons)

Many of our worshippers are older people. St Mary's has many over 75.

There are no current Church halls. (St Chad's Fold, a building adjacent to the church was used as a church hall but is now rented out bringing income into the trust which manages it; funds which can be used for church projects, especially education related)

As well as worship the church buildings have been used for the following: Classical concerts, election hustings\*, Rochdale Literature and Ideas Festival, Artist exhibitions, Red Cross Refugee Hub+, Rochdale Soup Kitchen, Feeding Rochdale Homeless, Christmas Eve Homeless lunch, Pioneers' Museum Open Day+, Rochdale Peace Group Event\*, Christians Aware "Listening to Refugees Day"\* , Christmas Tree festival\*, Multi-faith events\*, Schools Visits\*. ITV Christmas special with Aled Jones\*, Mothers Union Meetings \*+, Rochdale Youth Orchestra+, Bury Choral Society+, Strawberry Teas and Harvest Lunches\*

*Key: Both churches unless \*St Chad's or +St Mary's*

**Where we are going** - a description of where we would like to be in five years' time

St Chad's wants to be a growing and thriving church at the centre of life in the town. We want to offer engaging worship to inspire both regular attenders and visitors. We want to be a centre of tradition and history, known for our music and choir, and a church which engages with contemporary culture and other faiths. We are thankful for the work we have done and hosted to help refugees and homeless, and are concerned about the needs of the isolated, in our parishes and in the wider town and borough. (St Chad's history as Rochdale Parish Church, and our vicar's role as Borough Dean, strengthen our sense that we have a wider role to play in Church and civic life). We want our buildings to be well used for the good of the whole community.

St Mary's wants to be a centre of worship, tradition, heritage and arts. We want the small but faithful congregation to continue, and if possible to grow. Our mid-week service is important to us and we want to continue with a Sunday morning choral Eucharist. We recognise that as a benefice there are not the resources to invest in a new service at St Chad's (which has only one English language service to St Mary's two) and continue with two services at St Mary's so we commit to providing extra resources. Specifically we will seek support from the Deanery for Wednesdays at 10 am that we may together share a BCP mid-week eucharist, and will appoint someone to get cover for Sunday Eucharists. We recognise that we may need to pay for this resource from PCC funds. We believe that St Mary's could build on its tradition of the weekly concert, and the hosting of the Rochdale Literature Festival finale to become a centre for music, arts and Church and community projects such as the Red Cross. Initial consultation with the arts community has been very positive and we would seek a close partnership so that the building could be well used and be sustained for the future.

We affirm the plans of the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee that we work with neighbouring churches in Rochdale in both mission partnership (with St George Oakenrod) and team (with Belfield, Hamer and Healey). This will help us share our clergy and lay ministers. We agree that not every church will provide for every Christian age group as before, and we may share our volunteers. (For example, we hope one of our sister churches caters for uniformed organisations and teenagers – something we cannot do with our low numbers.)

We believe it is important that we develop a new Sunday service to reach young families (of whatever status and including single people), for whom a Common Worship or BCP Eucharist may be challenging. We propose that this is based at St Chad's, which has a higher community profile and both a baptism and wedding ministry to build on. The mid-week service at St Mary's should continue, we hope grow, as a Deanery BCP service.

Our current congregations highly value traditional choral worship and we propose that a Sunday morning service continue at St Chad's. We expect this to be mostly eucharistic. We plan to keep and develop monthly sung matins, whilst offering another service that day that is both eucharistic and uses contemporary language. (for those who do not favour Matins)

We are pleased at the advent of the Asian Fellowship and will work to strengthen this new service and to create opportunities for multicultural worship and a sharing of musical styles for all of us to enjoy in our rich variety.

We note that discussions are underway about a possible bid to the Church Commissioners for funding for a Church Army Centre of Mission and will support and engage with this initiative for growth.

We want to make improvements and changes to both St Mary's and St Chad's buildings that will make them more useable and flexible, whilst protecting and promoting the heritage. St Chad's building could be

developed with better heating and more useable small spaces for small groups. St Mary's current layout with pews would significantly hinder future development as an arts and music centre.

## Stage 2 - Prioritise

How we will get there - a description of the priority actions if we are to 'get there'.

Priority 1

### **Growing Worship**

We want our worship to attract more people, inspire and be at the heart of caring, hospitable Christian congregations which use the gifts of those who attend.

We will train and appoint lay leaders for pastoral care including pastoral visiting, Baptism preparation and follow up, and schools' visits for Christian and heritage education. We may seek to partner with other churches and faith groups to broaden the appeal of some of these.

We want there to be a "mixed economy" of church in the benefice, so that different expressions of church may be available for the people of the town. This may include

Common Worship Sung Eucharist at St Chad's

New service at St Chad's

BCP Eucharist at St Mary's on Wednesday (and Sunday?)

BCP Matins at St Chad's

BCP Evensong (occasionally, shared with other churches)

To reach those who are younger, unchurched, or who may have lower levels of literacy we will start a new service. We recognise that there are different groups to cater for – (1) the younger, less churched, perhaps young family community who are open to church but would not find a long choral service accessible. (2) the communities who are relatively new to the town, and for whom English is a second language, many of whom live in our parishes. These are not the established Pakistani or Bangladeshi communities which are very largely Muslim but would include Iranian, Afghani, African nations, Eastern European. This new service would have a new genre of music, to express that difference of culture and age. This could be a multi-cultural Gospel Choir and music group

Each service needs its own lay team to support the smooth running– by organising helpers, readers, intercessors, music etc. We are clear that it is not realistic for clergy and other ministers to stand in for Wardens, sides-people and sacristans. Consequently we acknowledge that if we cannot secure the lay support then the services cannot take place.

We will study the report "Setting God's People Free" as we wish to grow the ministry of lay people in our benefice. We will seek to establish a worship leadership team, and in time have lay people who are trained in

leading worship. We will train our leaders initially in house, and by using the Diocesan Foundations for Ministry course and ALM training.

Working increasingly with sister churches in the team we will collaborate on worship, seeking to share some services across our parish boundaries and recognising that one parish cannot do everything. We will share our clergy and lay ministers across the 4 parishes and try to invest resource where growth is possible so that we may indeed be church for a different world.

We will hold the at least 4 united services each year where different congregations can come together, with different traditions styles and music. We will bring together a team to plan these services so that the rich diversity of our community may be celebrated.

Priority 2

**Nurturing disciples (both new and not so new)**

We affirm our identity as Anglican churches serving our parishes and the wider town and our intention to be a Church that is positively engaged in service of God's people – of all faiths and none. We want to grow to be a bigger church.

We want to improve our care of existing congregations, and enable people to better care for each other. Many are a "congregation at home", unable to come to church regularly but important parts of the community. Older people have spiritual as well as social needs and we will aim to meet these by pastoral visiting, home communions, PCC led social events, and continuing small home-based group meetings, a bereavement group, trips out, parish lunches, a telephone tree and a congregation based "starling" project, where congregation members adopt those, who sit near to them. We won't be able to do all this in year one, and we hope that the new service may bring new members who can be trained in nurture and pastoral care.

We believe our web site and Facebook will help people keep in touch.

We will work in the future with the Diocese, Church Commissioners, the Church Army and other partners to establish new congregations, whether in our existing church buildings or new sites. We will learn more about evangelism and church growth, and how we can work together to welcome and encourage others in faith and discipleship.

We will establish a number of small initiatives that, alongside engaging worship, may help those in our congregations and in the wider town join in the practice of our faith. This will include meeting in small nurture groups to learn together, and events which involve other churches, other faiths and community partners in working together for a different world. In all this we will work with our sister churches in the mission partnership/team/Deanery.

We believe that we can increase the involvement of lay people in the practice of being church. Many roles are currently carried out by ordained/licensed ministers – work that could be done by lay people. Thus, we will enable lay people (if they wish) to play a part in leading worship, leading groups, organising events. We will use Diocesan training and do our own on site. We shall consider establishing a parish office, and/or a regular church vestry hour.

We are aware of the ways in which historically some people have not been included in the life of the Church and want to make it clear that the Church of England in Rochdale town centre is for all regardless of age, disability, class, gender, ethnic background or sexuality. We will begin discussions about being "an inclusive church", and seek to communicate that widely.

Discipleship is expressed and developed through the giving of money, time and talents in the service of Christ's Church. We will run an annual stewardship campaign.

Priority 3

**Mission: Loving Service**

We will organise events and meetings that improve the quality of people's lives, offer them care, teach faith, build understanding and peace, and promote social, economic and environmental justice. These may take place in our churches, or elsewhere.

We regularly use both St Chad's and St Mary's for concerts, and various community and church social and fund-raising events. In 2016 St Chad's started a Place of Welcome, and worked in 2015/16 with Near Neighbours on inter-faith events. We have supported groups from the town to provide a refugee advice hub (The Red Cross) and homelessness support (Feeding Rochdale Homeless and Rochdale Soup Kitchen). We have welcomed several asylum seekers and supported them, and support Rochdale Young Carers, Christian Aid, Water Aid and Mothers' Union. We have committed to be a Fairtrade Church. We want to increase this work and to have the buildings well used by a wide variety of for the good of our parishioners and the wider town.

We will adopt a partnership approach, applying the test "would this be better done with others?". With our neighbouring parishes of Oakenrod and Spotland we will work to reduce loneliness. Whilst we will take some small initiatives ourselves (e.g. reaching out to isolated elderly, and newcomers to the town) we will seek funding for a project worker to establish a more significant project that strengthens the church's work for the isolated throughout the Deanery.

To help this happen we will establish a Mission Group comprising our ministers, church members, and others from the wider community with whom we can work in partnership. This group will also develop the interfaith work – so we get to know our neighbours better and do some joint work with Muslim groups.

Priority 4

**Better Buildings**

We have described above our desire to grow our contact with the civic life of the town, and especially those working for the common good, and those whose art and music enriches lives. Whilst we know that the "Church is not a building" we see our buildings as assets that can help us connect wider. There are 4 elements to this

- (1) These buildings need adaptation and improvement. They are each iconic heritage buildings, and can play a part in the mission of the church, but need to be adapted for a wider range of events. St Chad's needs a new heating system, and renovated bells and bell-tower, and St Mary's a new kitchen,

renovated toilets and - to help wider use and sustainability – more flexible seating. A recent QI for St Mary's highlights a number of repairs which will be needed in near future.

- (2) To avoid confusion, we need to be clear about what is offered at each church building and when. We will seek some marketing advice to sharpen our message. In a nutshell, we plan to present St Chad's as the Parish Church, a Centre for worship and St Mary's as the hidden gem, a Centre for Arts, Music and well-being.
- (3) Because our capacity is limited and the development and management of an arts and community centre is not our area of expertise, we aim to explore the setting up a group to have delegated responsibility to run St Mary's effectively on a day to day basis, whilst retaining ultimate control by the PCC.
- (4) We recognise that there are those who are interested in buildings, organ music but do not see themselves as churchgoers or "committed" Christians. We want to develop our contacts with this group, involve them in the care of the buildings with a "Friends of" group, and create events that they can be involved in, so that they may have a living connection with church that we would encourage to grow over time.

#### Priority 5

##### **Communications**

This important area permeates the priorities above. We want to get better at communications to bring together our diverse congregations and the community groups which use our buildings, and build stronger links with stakeholders in the town. We wish to communicate widely, not solely as to a club membership, but to the whole parish.

After a long delay, our web site is now up to date. Recognising the problem with leaving this responsibility to one busy person who struggles to get copy from the vicar and congregation, we will appoint 5 editors  
We will look for a volunteer to produce a paper newsletter for those who do not use internet technology  
Our external notice boards need physical improvement

### Stage 3 – Current activity plan.

What do we need to do and by when? Precise, time-based and measurable actions that help us achieve our priorities. It is assumed that this page will be updated regularly as the outworking of the plan develops and progresses.

Task / objective	Person Assigned	Resources available/required	Budget required	Timeline (expected start and completion dates)	Review method and timing
1. Growing Worship					
1.1 Draw up plan for new Sunday service at St Chad's	MC/Philip Lowe/Ministry team Andrea ? Helen ?	Can start new service with CDs and current IT resource but will aim to recruit musical leader	Tbc - £4 k pa	Plan – Nov 2017 one off events to promote new service Trip to see similar new services at Ashton and Liverpool	
1.2 Seek cover for continuation of St Mary's Sunday Eucharist. Investigate costs.	??		tb	Oct 2017	
1.3 Establish Worship Group to review St Chad's Eucharist and Matins with a view to improvement and development. Plan special services and united services in benefice	MC and PCC to propose names Vicar to invite interest Seeking gender balance and wider representation			Jan 2018	
1.4 Investigate feasibility of monthly Evensong with Deanery	PL			PL to discuss with other choirs	
1.5 Deanery to be invited to be partners in St Mary's mid-week service, providing clergy, and lay ministry team	MC and Area Dean to write to Clergy. Meeting to be held to discuss vision, and resources				
2. Nurture					
2.1 Establish programme of small groups. To meet in	MC and Ministry Team			Confirmation – Oct 2017	



Church, at homes or pioneer's museum. May include Bible studies, faith discussions, Jesus shaped people, film and book groups etc				Advent Course – Dec 2017 Various one off events Lent 2018 (with mission partnership)	
2.2 Gifts and Talents. Annual Stewardship campaign to be run.  Establish teams of lay people to help in the following area as resources allow: Schools and Heritage visits (Team established) Home visits and Communion Baptism Buddies (2018/19)	MC Martin Butterworth Angela Collins Wendy Cullen			MC and Treasurers to produce brochure for Oct 2017 Special Sermons – Oct/Nov 2017 Schools Team to write offering spring/Easter programme and Christmas special Training in pastoral care Spring 2018 Bereavement Listening Skills course Spring 2018	
3. Mission					
3.1 Work with Rochdale Borough Dean and with other churches in Deanery to organise inter-faith events in Rochdale to build community cohesion in the parish				MC to consult with other churches in Rochdale Deanery about training needs and first events. Joint event with RCOM Spring 2018	
3.2 Work with Diocese of Manchester in bid to Church Commissioners for Church Army Centre for Mission in Rochdale				Archdeacon will advise	

<p>3.3 Develop our ministry of hospitality. (a) Review St Chad's Place of Welcome and develop project to reduce isolation and increase use of St Chad's in the week. (b) Work with St George Oakenrod to fund and recruit an anti-isolation worker</p>	<p>Organise a weekly event ...to reach out to isolated and in need. Team to include MC, AS, Caroline Lucas and partners from Mind, WRVS, etc.</p>			<p>Relaunch Place of Welcome with new steering group and activity programme.</p>	
<p>3.4 Develop our outreach in Freehold, Lower Falinge, College Bank by publicising new service through local community events  Host a Carol Service for local tenants groups, work with Petrus and other housing groups on Christmas Carol service</p>				<p>Produce leaflet to promote and deliver  Planning meeting in October</p>	
<p>3.5 Organise Christmas Eve Lunch at St Chad's</p>	<p>Ahmed Nadim MC with Council, Petrus and local homelessness</p>			<p>Planning meeting in October</p>	
<p>3.6 Begin discussions about being an "inclusive church" starting with mental health</p>				<p>Presentation to PCC Spring 2018 Small group to discuss in Jan 2018</p>	
<p><b><u>4. Better Buildings</u></b></p>					
<p>4.1 Establish feasibility of and support for new uses of St Mary's Church building by establishing group of</p>	<p>Timeline</p>			<p>St Mary's PCC to discuss Oct 2017 Seek advice from Heartedge network</p>	

possible users. Consider feasibility of employing a development worker/caretaker..					
4.2 Heating at St Chad's - replace				Faculty Oct 2017 Grants Nov-March 2018 Replace April-June 2018	
4.3 Kitchen and toilets at St Mary's – restore and replace as required.					
4.4 Review uses of St Chad's and produce plan for reordering to provide quiet space for prayer, meeting area, children's area, function and hospitality area	Helen			Working group set up at October PCC to organise visits and meetings with architects and report March 22018	
4.5 Renovate Bells. Preliminary work has been done by St Chad's bells sub group with DAC report and 2 suitable quotes				Bells group to meet and discuss feasibility, resources and timescale. Champion needed to lead the project ? Meet Feb 2018 ?	
4.6 St Chad's Maintenance Group – to continue with polishing, minor repairs etc				Meet monthly Maintenance group social event ?	
4.7 QI Each Church to carry out recommended repairs					
<b>5. <u>Communications and Administration</u></b>					
5.1 Appoint 5 Web site editors	Jill Jo Mark Helen Amy Others ?				

5.2 Renovate notice board at St Chad	Paul/Alan/MC				
5.3 Renovate Notice Board at St Mary's					
5.4 Explore feasibility of parish office for booking pastoral offices, queries, etc. Also to enable copier access for volunteers and to use gifts of volunteers.				Group to meet to discuss need Spring 2018	

**Our partners – what other people do we need to involve/consult – e.g. Mission unit/deanery; local authority; other churches; other organisations?**

Deanery: The Deanery MAP expresses support for the loneliness project and hopes to gather some of our learning. The Deanery has asked the Borough Dean to bring together people from the Rochdale churches in inter-faith initiatives. There will be in 2017/18 several cross-deanery initiatives to train those who work with children and to look at how we can work together and share best practice on Christian initiation.

St George's Oakenrod and St Clement Spotland. We are working together with these parishes on bid to fund a worker to counter isolation

Team Ministry. It is being mooted that both St Chad's and St Mary's be part of team with Belfield, Hamer and Healey. A new vicar will be recruited in late 2017/early 2018 with particular responsibility for Healey and Belfield, with Hamer having effectively closed.

Estates Missioner: We recognise the needs in our housing estates of Lower Falinge, Freehold and College Bank (the Seven Sisters).

The St Chad's Fold Trust and The St John's Mission Room Trust. These church related trusts are a valuable adjunct to the work of the PCCs. We hope that

Rochdale Creative Arts Network

Rochdale Council of Mosques

**Parish and Deanery - How our plan connects with and enhances the mission of the deanery as expressed in the current Deanery Plan?**

We can help other churches engage with inter-faith work

Our parishes are centres of deprivation. We want to partner with sister churches to show Christ's love to the poorest

We are aware of the epidemic of isolation and want to bring people together as neighbours and friends.

Our mission action plan shows how we will play our part as a local church in the Diocesan vision of

**A worshipping, growing, and transforming Christian presence  
at the heart of every community.**

**This mission action plan was approved by the PCC on (Date) .....**

**Signed: ..... Post/office.....**

**Date: .....**

*Please send your plan, along with any supporting documentation to the MAP team – [map@manchester.anglican.org](mailto:map@manchester.anglican.org). The MAP team will then review it and send it to your Archdeacon*

