

DIOCESAN TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document summarises the current point on our transformation journey as at February 2023.

In November 2022, the priorities contained within our strategic plan received enthusiastic and almost unanimous approval by Diocesan Synod (all in favour apart from one abstention).

Our Transformation Strategy draws together a number of strands that have been developed over recent years, and looks forward to 2030 seeking to maximise our growth as Kingdom People in and through as many healthy and sustainable churches as possible.

We have identified three overall priorities, supported by an underpinning priority. These focus resources on doing a small number of things well in the places that will make the biggest difference, whilst ensuring that there is something to support every church who wants to increase in health and sustainability.

1. Increasing the number of paid children's families and youth workers so that we have at least one church with a flourishing young peoples' ministry in each major area of population, and two such churches in each deanery.
2. Investing in the renewal of a number of churches to ensure that each major area of population has at least one larger (150 AWA) healthy and sustainable church by 2030.

3. Encouraging every benefice to launch a new worshipping community to enable a wider choice of ways to access church. Examples might include Forest Church and Café Church.

Underpinned by, amongst other things a plan to develop our clergy and key lay leaders with the range of skills necessary to enable the transformation – ‘Equipping Ministers for Mission’.

Under God’s grace, we seek the following outcomes, to:

- Increase the number of healthy and sustainable churches by 2030, with by the end of the time period more than 50 churches reporting that they are healthier and more sustainable.
- Double the number of children and young people worshipping in our churches compared with 2019, worshipping within a Church which across the diocese is numerically larger than in 2019.
- Have 100 new worshipping communities, offering accessible and contextual expressions of church,
- Result in a church community which is more representative of the communities we serve, with a clear lowering of the average age of church members and an increase in diversity.
- See local churches being hubs for initial and ongoing formation, resourcing and releasing Christians to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the whole of life.

This plan will be funded through the Healthier Churches Fund created in 2021 by adopting a ‘Total Return’ approach to managing our investments and through applications to the national Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board. Importantly, the growth programme will be funded outside of Ministry Share – which will remain focused on funding local parochial ministry.

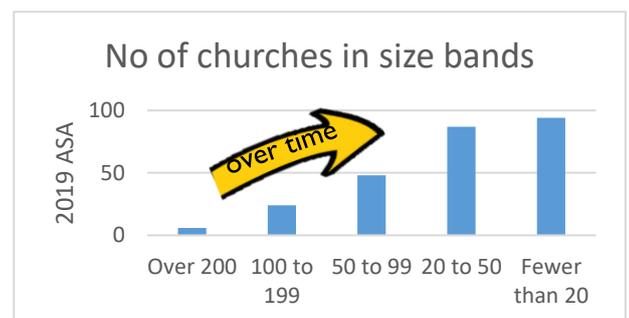
SECTION ONE: Where are we now? The Diocese in Overview:

This section seeks to provide a summary of data on population and churchgoing across the diocese:

Deanery	2021 Total Population	Adult	Child	2019 AWA Adult	% of Adult Population	2019 AWA Child	% of Child Population
Greater Dudley	347,854	272,102	75,752	2534	0.93%	296	0.39%
Kidderminster & Stourport	113,678	91,831	21,847	1275	1.39%	125	0.57%
Malvern & Upton	55,037	43,970	11,067	1308	2.97%	161	1.45%
Pershore & Evesham	85,087	69,080	16,007	1387	2.01%	223	1.39%
Redditch & Bromsgrove	155,392	121,868	33,524	1043	0.86%	175	0.52%
Worcester	150,798	119,333	31,465	2178	1.83%	404	1.28%
Diocese Total	907,846	718,032	189,814	9725	1.35%	1400	0.74%

(Note: Total Population Data is from the 2021 Census. Adult and Child figures use the 2021 total population, but allocated in proportion to the 2011 census. This will be updated when we have data from the 2021 census.)

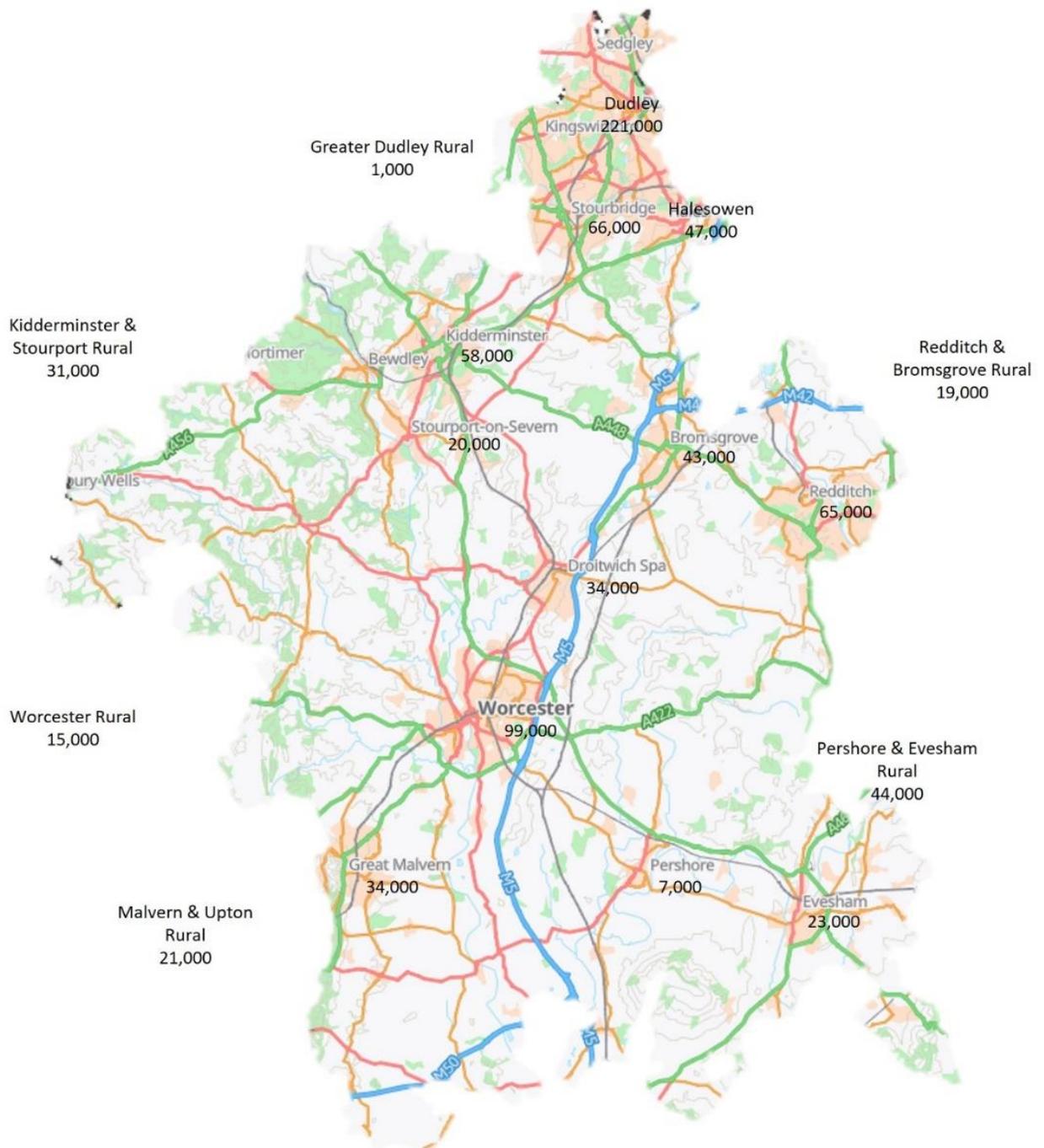
We have seen a significant decline in churchgoing in the diocese over many decades. In terms of Usual Sunday Attendance, numbers had dropped by around 40% between 2000 and 2019, and numbers fell further during the pandemic. Smaller numbers attending church leads to smaller churches, reducing the number of churches which are likely to have sufficient strength to look beyond themselves and grow.



The map below shows population centres and rural populations by deanery. Taking a simple split between urban and rural (on the simple basis of counting the towns shown on Map I as 'urban' and the rest as 'rural') then population, churches and stipendiary ministry is approximately split as below:

	Population	%	Churches	%	Stipendiary Ministers ¹	%
Urban	725,870	84%	113	42%	57.5	72%
Rural	135,730	16%	156	58%	23.1	28%

Map I: Centres of Population across the diocese



¹ Excludes House for Duty

In terms of the age profile of our churches, we are significantly skewed compared with the church nationally (data from 2019) with nearly half of our worshipping community being over 70:

Age	Age 0 to 17	Age 18 to 69	Age 70+
Diocese of Worcester	12%	39%	49%
National C of E	20%	47%	33%

Considering the diversity of the population, Worcester is less ethnically diverse than the UK, with

Ethnicity (2021 Census)	White British	White Other	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	Black, Black British or Black Welsh	Other/ Mixed
Diocese of Worcester	86.1%	4.3%	5.1 %	1.4 %	3.1 %
England	73.5%	7.5%	9.6 %	4.2 %	5.2 %

Data on Baptisms and Confirmations: In 2019, there were 120 adult baptisms in our churches, equivalent to 0.78% of the Worshipping Community (broadly in line with the national average of 0.82%.) Between 2017 and 2019, the diocese averaged 117 confirmations annually, equivalent to 0.9% of the Worshipping Community, (lower than the national average of 1.29%).

Looking at the size of our churches in terms of 2019 Average Sunday Attendance, we see:

	Over 200	100 to 199	50 to 99	30 to 49	20 to 29	10 to 19	Fewer than 10
Number of churches	6 ²	24	48	47	40	53	41

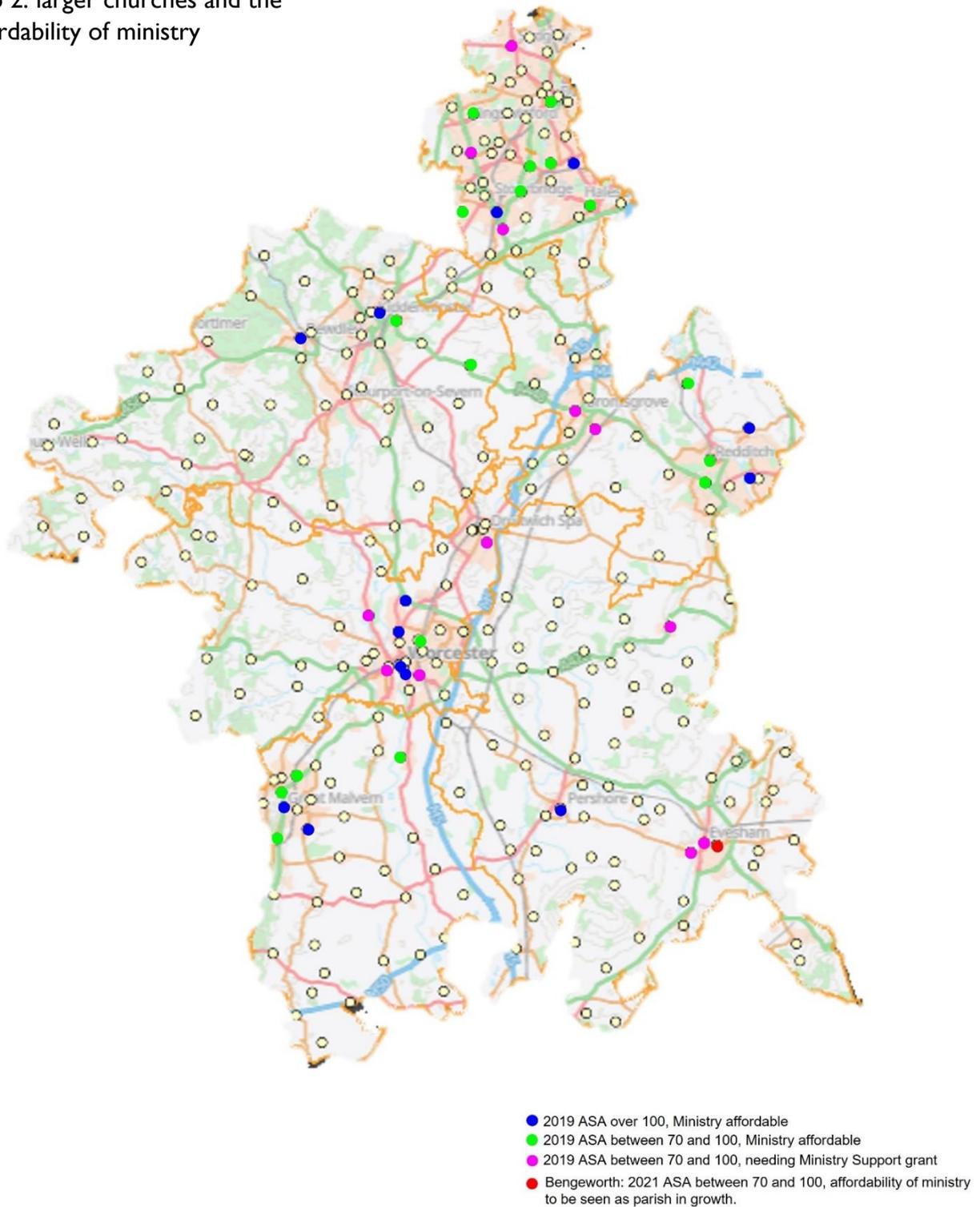
Map 2 (on page 5) shows our largest churches, plotting those with Sunday attendances over 100 and between 70 and 100, and identifying whether ministry is currently affordable (in that a Ministry Support Fund grant was not sought this year.) It is clear that in some cases 2019 attendance numbers are overstated, and also that post-pandemic a number of churches are smaller than they were prior to the pandemic. 2022 data on this will be key as 2021 data is clearly more significantly covid-affected than today's numbers.

In our 2020 Capacity Grant application we set out our intention to introduce a new Ministry Share system, which would provide greater transparency on ministry cost, and enable local discussions that enabled more sustainable patterns of ministry. Due to the pandemic the introduction of Ministry Share was delayed until 2022, and it has operated well in its first year despite the economic challenges of inflation, heating and emergence from the pandemic. Over time this will enable a greater proportion of our benefices to be able to meet the cost of ministry they receive, when adjusted for incomes of local churchgoers.

To support our transformation, we reduced the number of deaneries in 2021 from thirteen to six to provide a better canvas for mission planning and to have sufficient size for deaneries to be able to operate effectively. Although new deaneries are still settling in, the move has gone well. It is much easier to work with six Deanery Leadership Teams than thirteen – both in terms of recruitment of members as well as working collaboratively with them. We also held a governance review, implementing an improved governance framework with fewer committees and clearer terms of reference in 2021.

² Including the Cathedral.

Map 2: larger churches and the affordability of ministry



In terms of finance, we've eliminated the 2018 structural deficit of £1 million, and have navigated the pandemic well. Our forecast for 2022 is a small surplus and our 2023 budget and 2024 and 2025 projections show an essentially break-even position if we are able to sustain Ministry Share in the face of a significant recession.

Key Financial Measures	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	FORECAST	BUDGET
	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k
Parish Share / Ministry Share	4,579	5,074	4,430	4,244	4,227	4,404
Total Operating Income inc planned use of Total Return	7,619	8,074	7,559	7,785	8,615	7,962
Ministry	6,970	6,905	6,140	5,983	6,225	6,745
Total Operating Expenditure	8,684	8,761	7,724	7,962	8,310	7,910
Operating Surplus / (Deficit) exc Exceptional Items	(1,065)	(687)	(165)	269	305	52
General Unrestricted Reserves	4,935	6,081	6,058	5,678		
Total Assets	68,582	72,609	74,833	80,531		

We've grown the balance sheet, and have been able to create a £2.5m Healthier Churches Fund through moving to a Total Return approach. This is supplemented by a third of the Lowest Income Communities funding we receive, with the other two thirds being used to support stipendiary ministry in our most income deprived communities.

SECTION TWO:

Our Diocesan Vision and the Transformation Programme & Priorities.

1. **Our diocesan vision** is to grow as Kingdom People sharing the good news of Jesus' love in Worcestershire and Dudley. As the body of Christ, we join together to worship God, make disciples, share hope, and transform communities. We want to enable church communities across the Diocese to grow in health and sustainability by:

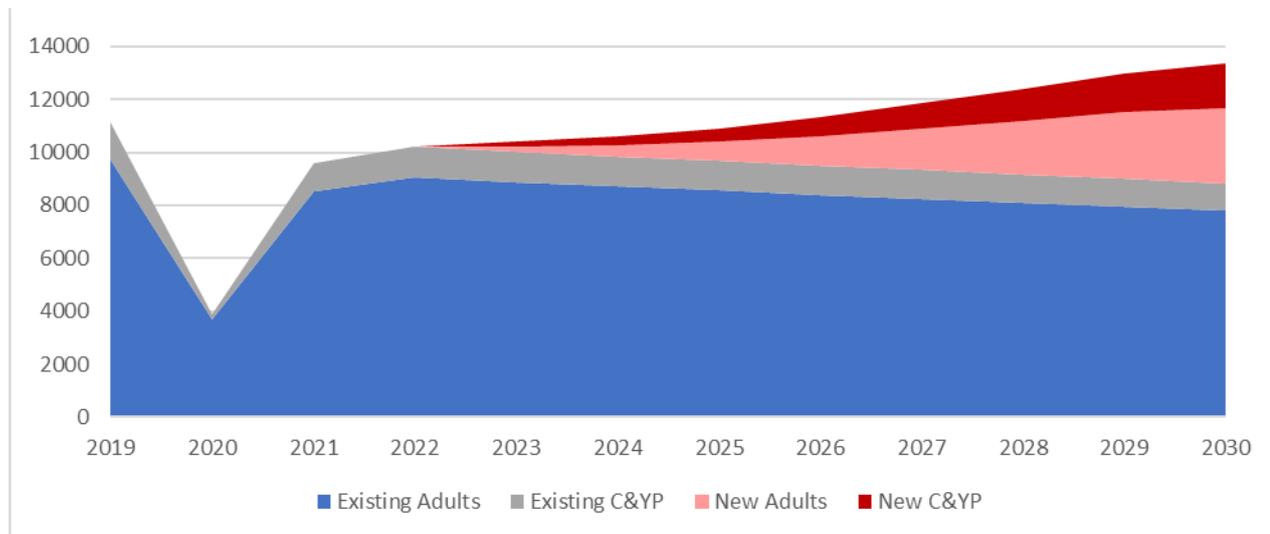
- Inspiring local church communities to be ambitious in generating appropriately local responses that enable them to flourish and grow.
- Equipping and strengthening church communities by providing training, and by establishing new approaches and forms of support.
- Adopting leadership models that support and develop ordained and lay leaders in enabling local church communities to be adaptive, and to grow spiritually, numerically and in depth of discipleship.
- Promoting wise stewardship that ensures financial stability and provides the space to deliver a robust growth programme, that increases the number of healthy and sustainable churches.

2. **Our transformation programme**, seeks to enable a sufficient number of our churches to grow in health and sustainability such that with God's grace, elements of the plan might combine in impact to:

- Increase the number of healthy and sustainable churches by 2030, with by the end of the time period more than 50 churches reporting that they are healthier and more sustainable, including at least twelve churches specifically targeted for renewal.
- Double the number of children and young people worshipping in our churches compared with 2019, worshipping within a Church which across the diocese is numerically larger than in 2019.
- Have 100 new worshipping communities, offering accessible and contextual expressions of church,
- Result in a church community which is more representative of the communities we serve, with a clear lowering of the average age of church members and an increase in diversity.
- See local churches being hubs for initial and ongoing formation, resourcing and releasing Christians to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the whole of life.

We believe that these desired outcomes are sufficiently in line with the six 'bold outcomes' developed as part of the national Vision and Strategy work to enable a fruitful and aligned partnership with the national church.

As a graph...



As a word picture ...

We hope and expect that the priorities identified here would have an impact in attracting new people to church. Assessing that impact isn't easy, but under the assumptions shown in Annex One, we would hope that by 2030 we might be able to celebrate a position where:

The church is engaging with more than double the number of children and young people, many of whom are coming as part of a family. Our Children and Youth workers are engaged in contact making activities with a similar number of children and young people – broadening our engagement even further.

Our new worshipping communities have become a regular part of our church life, enabling a richer diversity of routes into faith and church. Many of our traditional services have also seen growth, and the number of baptisms of both children and adults has increased, and many adults have found faith for the first time.

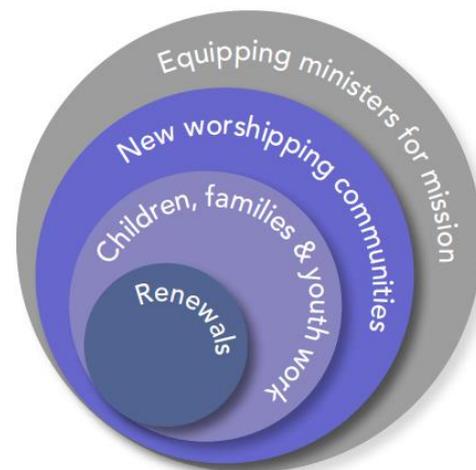
Around a dozen of our strongest churches are routinely engaged in supporting other local churches in a variety of ways, with both clergy and lay leaders working well together to equip local churches in their mission and ministry. Over 100 of our churches feel they are definitely healthier and more sustainable as churches – as a result of this collaboration, and of work with mission companions – which was so successful that it was extended to enable the companions to walk alongside their churches for longer and more churches to be partnered.

The church is now more representative of the communities that we serve. We're definitely younger than we were, and that at least one of the renewals and a number of new worshipping communities has increased the diversity of ethnic backgrounds present within our churches.

Ministry has broadened – with new models of ministry and church leadership working well alongside the traditional ones. Both clergy and lay leaders feel they have been equipped for the changes in their roles and are thriving in ministry. Across the diocese, whether urban or rural, whether in traditional forms of church or new worshipping communities, church members are clear that both they and their churches are growing as Kingdom people.

3. Our priorities focus resources on doing a small number of things well in the places that will make the biggest difference, whilst ensuring that there is something to support every church who wants to increase in health and sustainability.

- Increasing the number of paid children's families and youth workers so that we have at least one church with a flourishing young peoples' ministry in each major area of population, and two such churches in each deanery.
- Investing in the renewal of a number of churches to ensure that each major area of population has at least one larger (150 AWA) healthy and sustainable church by 2030.
- Encouraging every benefice to launch a new worshipping community to enable a wider choice of ways to access church. Examples might include Forest Church, Café Church.



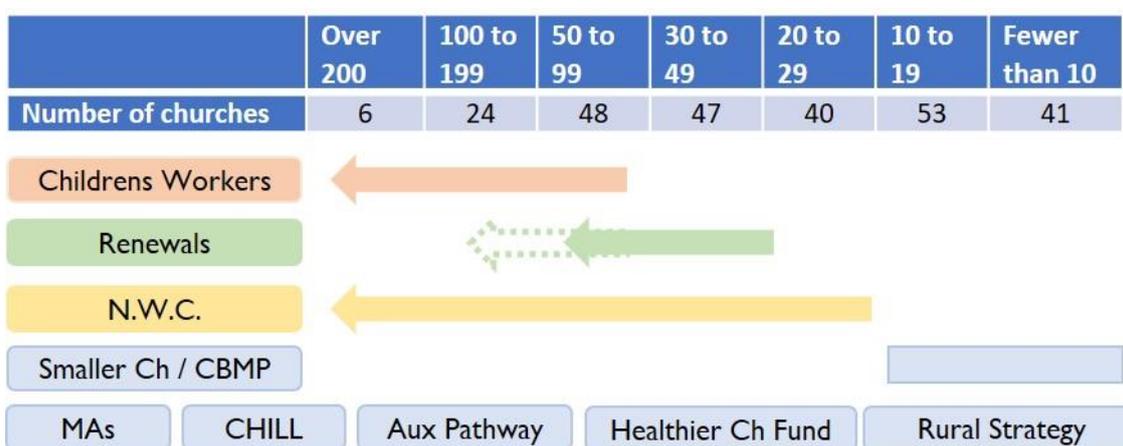
Underpinned by, amongst other things:

- Seeking to develop our clergy and key lay leaders with the range of skills necessary to enable the transformation – ‘Equipping Ministers for Mission’.

These priorities build on each other. We would envisage a relatively small number of renewals, but each of them likely to engage a CF&Y worker, and to develop at least one new worshipping community to extend the range of pathways to enable newcomers to access church.

Likewise, if a church is to employ a CF&Y worker, where possible it makes sense to develop a new worshipping community alongside to provide a context that families and young people may find more accessible.

The priorities also map onto churches of all sizes. Funding for renewals and for children’s workers is likely to be invested in larger churches, whilst the vast majority of benefices should be able to launch a new worshipping community. There is already a package of support being developed for our smaller churches, whilst other elements will impact churches of all sizes.



SECTION THREE: Key Challenges

There are a number of key challenges to be met, some of which compete with each other for resource.

a. Supporting existing local churches:

Most of our parishes have seen declining attendances for many years, and with that has come the challenge of sustaining the missional and financial life of the local church. Whilst our priorities with regard to Children, Families and Young People and New Worshipping Communities are likely to lead to us engaging with a significant number of new people, we want to restrict decline in the existing church

as far as we can. This carries a people risk (insufficient volunteers to support new worshipping communities and manage church buildings etc) and a financial risk (sustained high heating costs, continued decline in church attendance, increased pressure on costs of living reducing giving, may all flow through into lower Ministry Share than expected). In turn, this may either require subsidising or lead to greater reductions in clergy numbers.

See Section 4 for an explanation of how we're currently tackling this.

b. Missional Attractiveness

Most people outside the church now have little or no previous experience of being part of a worshipping community. Contemporary culture has a number of traits that do not easily fit with what we seek to be as church. Examples of this include: a 'consumer mentality' leading to people seeking to get enough from church to warrant the investment of time put into it; and lower levels of willingness to commit as society engages in a broader spectrum of activities to a lower depth e.g., length of time in the average job, lower levels of religious or political affiliation, challenges across the voluntary sector in finding volunteers, and yet commitment is at the heart of the Christian faith.

c. Nurturing discipleship formation:

The additional disciples that we hope to see, under God's grace, as a result of this plan may not develop a sufficient depth of discipleship to play a full part in the life of the church. This has implications for the faith of the individuals concerned, but also for the sustainability of our churches in terms of both volunteering, serving and giving.

We judge that across the diocese as a whole, there are fewer churches offering home/bible study groups and fewer churches offering nurture courses than in the church at large. Discipleship development has been largely focused on the training and development of those following an authorised ministry track.

d. Complexity:

Our transformation programme has a number of strands, and the inherent complexity carries significant challenge for a small diocese with a small DBF team.

Thus far we have made good progress, using our size to our advantage but sustaining this as we move into detailed implementation around the diocese will be challenging. It will be essential to ensure that we continue to have the capacity to deliver across the three priority growth areas, including sufficient programme management resource. It is critical to not only deliver the programmes, but to do so with sufficient quality to obtain the outcomes sought.

e. Recruitment & Development:

A number of the elements of the programme require recruitment (and retention) that may be challenging – leaders for renewal churches, children's and youth workers and other mission workers may be difficult to recruit at sufficiently high quality to achieve the outcomes intended. The underpinning priority will provide a plan to ensure development of clergy, and ensure we find ways of communicating that Worcester is a great place to minister.

SECTION FOUR: Missional Priorities

This section sets out our three missional priorities and our underpinning priority.

Priority I: Children, Families and Young People

Key data & Background:

2019 Average Weekly Attendances (AWA) across the diocese was 1400 children and young people. This is 12% of our total AWA, compared with 20% for the whole C of E (Ranked 40th out of 42 dioceses)

Under 18 AWA as % of Christian population³: Worcester 0.22% vs Total C of E 0.5% (42nd out of 42 dioceses)

Reduction in Child AWA between 2012 and 2019: Worcester 50% vs Total C of E 41%, with early estimates of further reductions in Child AWA 2019 to 2021 being Worcester 52% vs Total C of E 38%

235 of our Child AWA are in six parishes, five of which employ a children's, youth or family worker. There is a national pattern – 44% of child Sunday attendance nationally can be found in 903 churches. Four Worcester churches have attendances at that level – “fair share” of the 903 would be 12 churches.

The Approach:

Addressing the significant imbalance in age demographics is our first priority. If we are able to get a greater number of younger disciples in the church, some of these will come to church as families, increasing the number of adults in the 25-50 year old bracket.

1. As the Calling Young Disciples project draws to a close, remaining funding is being used for a limited extension to support parishes seeking to maximise the impact and legacy of CYD, specifically focusing on an increase of 200 new disciples in a number of parishes that have engaged with the project.
2. In addition to the final year of the Calling Young Disciples project mentioned above, we plan to increase the number of churches with a significant number of children, families and young people through supporting the employment of around 18 to 20 local children, families and youth workers across the diocese.
 - We envisage at least two such churches in each deanery, with a greater number where there is large population especially Greater Dudley.
 - We will encourage these local workers to further strengthen local churches by seeking to support one or two other churches with their youth and children's work as a part of their ministry.
 - We hope to develop at least twenty New Worshipping Communities by seeking to make best use of the connections that our schools bring. Our “gather” programme is in pilot phase.
 - Work will be Christian/Church focused (although not necessarily on a Sunday) with a view to developing appropriate pathways across ages and over time, and also contact making either through community youth groups or schools' work.

Through the above, we hope that with God's grace, we might more than double the number of children in our churches by 2030. This is spelled out in the separate strategy paper for Children & Young People.

Comments:

A report into growth amongst C&YP on a Sunday⁴ showed that our direction of seeking to establish a greater number of hubs with an employed worker is likely to be fruitful. The three summary leadership findings were: i) Committed leadership that sees youth and children's ministry as an essential priority is

³ This is a different measure to the one presented in the Diocesan Overview, but repeats the figure shared with Bishops Council in their July paper.

⁴ Presentation of the report made to Synod can be found at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/Youth%20and%20Childrens%20Growth%20-%20presentation.pdf>

fundamental for growth, ii) Growth is the result of intentional choices and iii) Employing a youth or children's worker is the biggest common factor to growth. Linkage with church schools is an important supporting factor.

One challenge with the approach will be recruitment as there is a national shortage of children's and youth workers. Developing a strong package, and communicating the ongoing support and network available would strengthen our offer.

Priority 2: Church "Renewals"

Key data & Background:

Across the diocese, we have had two major renewals in the past five years: Top Church and Bengeworth; alongside the creation of our other Resourcing Church, All Saints Worcester.

Data for Top Church shows Sunday attendances of 110, with a worshipping community of around 180, significantly greater than the 15 or so who attended services prior to its relaunch.

Bengeworth, led by Andy Smith, is the first of our renewals to come out of the other Resourcing Church, All Saints Worcester (started Sept 2021). Latest information is that the Worshipping Community is around 100.

We have a pipeline of six more planting curates (including training posts to be filled for 2024 and 2025).

The Approach:

Our strategy is to invest in around ten churches in areas of significant population so that:

- All of our major centres of population have at least one larger church which at least on the metric of numbers, should be healthy and sustainable. (We anticipate 150 or more Average Weekly Attendance.)
- These churches would be able to provide a degree of resourcing to neighbouring churches, albeit at a lower level than our two Resourcing Churches.
- In some cases, the 'renewal' would be initiated by a new incumbent, with appropriate training and skills. In other cases, it would be more of a case of topping up resource to enable a flourishing church to continue to do so.
- We would envisage all of these churches having some degree of paid children's/youth work, some operations/administrative capacity and the possibility of part-time paid worship resource.

The first renewal from Top Church will be to develop two church 'hubs' in St John, Kates Hill and St Francis. This is expected to launch in 2023, and will see Sarah Cawardine become Associate Minister at Top Church.

We have identified six further churches in the Greater Dudley Deanery as good prospects for investment to develop their strength. In two cases, this is a complete planting-style renewal as it was with Top Church. In other cases, the degree of investment (and the anticipated return) is less, as churches which are already larger will require lower levels of support – an 'extension renewal'.

We also want to develop St Stephen's, Redditch as a renewal to have a distinctive role within the Revitalising Redditch thinking. Its town centre position makes it uniquely placed within the Redditch area to do this.

The Greater Dudley and St Stephen's Redditch together form a Phase I application that accompanies this overview strategy. The remaining renewals that may be needed during the life of this transformation project are likely to come from Kidderminster and Bromsgrove as the largest centres of population without a church of the size that we seek.

Comments:

We perceive renewals to be less risky than 'green field' church plants and enable us to capitalise on existing church buildings and locations. The experience across the church is that many pioneer plants fail, and that those that do grow to maturity require investment for many years. There are of course, exceptions, such as Gas Street in Birmingham.

Priority 3: New Worshipping Communities

Key data:

We have little formal data on our New Worshipping Communities (NWCs). Anecdotally we know that we have a range across the diocese, including:

- Forest church e.g. St Martin's, London Road, Pedmore and Worcestershire West Rural Team.
- Walking Church e.g. Teme Valley South.
- Messy Church e.g. Worcester SE team, Kidderminster West.
- Early Birds Service at St Andrew's Malvern.
- Mainly Music at St Wulstan's Worcester, All Saints, Worcester, Worcestershire West Rural Team.
- Ignite at Norton.
- Café Church at Tardebigge, Breakfast Church at Upton on Severn
- Worship Wednesdays at Community Link on Cradley High Street.

The Strategy:

We will:

- Encourage each benefice to launch a new worshipping community over the next few years to provide a different access route into church. By this we mean something which is "new", which has "worshipping" as a primary purpose, and forms an ongoing and sustainable "community".
- Actively encourage this to be considered by parishes working with Mission Accompaniers on Health and Sustainability plans.
- Appoint a New Worshipping Communities Enabler (half-time) jointly with a half-time Team Vicar post in the Saltway Team in Droitwich. Embedded in parish life they will be a practitioner as well as an encourager and equipper. We will be a pilot diocese for a training pathway facilitated by the national Myriad team. This will provide training and administrative support for this area.
- We hope that the schools' pilot might be effective and would lead to a number of further New Worshipping Communities via after school all-age gatherings.

Through the above, we hope that, with God's grace we might see around 100 new worshipping communities in our churches (including current ones). This would be slightly less than our fair share⁵ of the 10,000 national bold outcome.

Comments:

In order to assess where we are, we will:

- seek to quickly map what NWCs that we already have around the diocese.
- encourage parishes to record new worshipping communities within their annual returns.

We are well aware of the challenge of developing NWCs that develop a sufficient degree of discipleship and worship to be complete fresh expressions of church. We also know that we need attractive missional activities that develop contact with new people, and provide an appropriate pathway for them to reach a

⁵ 130 would be fair share on the basis of the number of parishes, 115 on the basis of total Worshipping Community.

place where they are comfortable joining a fuller expression of a NWC. In the first half of the period, we will encourage parishes to develop NWCs that are of both kinds, seeking to refine the definition over time to ensure that we offer both attractive missional activities and full NWCs by the end of the decade.

Underpinning Priority: Clergy development especially in leadership skills

Key data:

Following the 2018 financial deficit, we embarked on a reduction of 15 clergy posts, which is now largely completed. Although the introduction of Ministry Share now provides clarity of cost and a means by which affordability (in an incomes-adjusted way) can be assessed, it has brought further change, both actual and perceptions of future change. For many clergy they are working with a different set of churches or have the prospect of doing so.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on creating operational challenges – both through the pandemic in adjusting how services and occasional offices are carried out, and following it, as many churches have found that they have lost volunteers.

The Strategy:

Our Mission Accompanier scheme not only provides support and coaching to the leadership team identified by the parish, but also works with the incumbents themselves. On the basis of initial feedback from parishes, we plan to extend this to enable Accompaniers to work with their parishes for longer, and for more parishes to be paired with a Mission Accompanier.

We have provided clergy with additional focused coaching in a couple of instances – usually in relation to equipping them to step up in terms of additional leadership challenge or responsibility. Feedback has been positive and we plan to expand this.

We have identified a model of Professional or Pastoral supervision, as in use in other dioceses, as worthy of exploration and this will take place over the next year or so. In time, this may replace a part of the Ministerial Development Review process and it is envisaged that a more formal and broader supervision approach would be fruitful in building a more regular review that leads to development.

We are working to map out what is required in terms of the necessary hard and softer skills to deliver the rest of the plan, and would plan to offer a range of development input (training, coaching, supervision) that leads to a more productive outcome.

Key Measures

In monitoring delivery and progress towards targets we plan to use the following key measures:

Overall progress

- Diocesan Average Weekly Attendance (adult and under-16) and Worshipping Community
- Number of adult baptisms (proxy for new adults coming to faith)
- Projects judged to be delivering outcomes on time and to budget.

Children, Families and Youth

- U16-AWA at diocesan level as above
- AWA (adult and under-16) and U16 Worshipping Community in each place there is a paid youth worker, or where a church is receiving additional support from a paid youth worker.
- Additional measure of children and youth engaged but not covered by AWA e.g. mid-week youth club with little Christian content.
- Number of workers in post judged to be good (i.e. recruitment and retention).

Renewals

- AWA (adult and under-16) and worshipping community in each renewal church.
- Members to show increasing indicators of discipleship (e.g., in relation to prayer, Bible reading, giving, evangelism, service and leadership).
- Presence of New Worshipping Community that becomes self-sustaining over time.
- Giving and financial sustainability of each renewal.

New Worshipping Communities

- Number of NWCs around the diocese
- Attendance at NWCs
- Members to show increasing indicators of discipleship (for example, in relation to prayer, Bible reading, giving, evangelism, service and leadership).

Underpinning Priority

- Feedback from clergy shows increasing degree of confidence that they have the skills required of them.
- Mission Accompaniers deliver programme objectives.

SECTION FIVE: Supporting Areas

Supporting Area 1: Ordained Ministry Patterns

Key data:

Our current diocesan ministry provision is 81.1 posts of incumbent status, of which 3 are currently SDF funded⁶. This includes two 0.8 posts, and one 0.5 post. In addition, we have three House (or Housing Allowance) for duty, and three SSM incumbents.

Our current annual curate cohort is five posts (three DBF funded and two SDF funded). The two SDF funded posts starting in 2023 or 2024 will become increasingly DBF funded as SDF funding tapers away.

Over the past ten years 66 people have been ordained deacon, 43 as stipendiary, 23⁷ as non-stipendiary.

Approach

Ministry Share enables a much clearer link to the cost of stipendiary ministry a benefice receives, albeit adjusted for the wealth of churchgoers in that benefice.

We are developing the Auxiliary Pathway, which together with the pilot Caleb Stream, will enhance the cohort of self-supporting priests ministering locally around the diocese.

Because we increased the number of curates earlier than many dioceses, we have struggled to take advantage of the Strategic Ministry Funding stream, which would have required us to take an additional DBF funded curate before getting national funding support. In future, it may be that we cluster our additional curates so that we only need to apply to the scheme one year in two or three when we have a larger cohort of local candidates for stipendiary curacy – although it is not yet clear how the scheme will work under the new funding arrangement.

Ministry Share has in some places led to increased stipendiary ministry. In other places it has shed a spotlight on unsustainable ministry patterns, and we are learning how best to navigate local discussions sufficiently quickly – but the current vacancy rate should give urgency to moving forwards.

⁶ James Treasure as Top Church leader, the vacant Associate Minister post at All Saints and Andy Smith in Bengeworth.

⁷ Although 3 subsequently switched to stipendiary ministry.

Supporting Area 2: Lowest Income Community Funding

We receive around £775,000 of Lowest Income Community funding each year, to be used amongst benefices which have areas of population that are in the 20% most income-deprived in the country. Over the next nine years we will hopefully receive around £8 million (allowing for inflation), and will think of it as a larger pot to help us plan its use more strategically.

Key data:

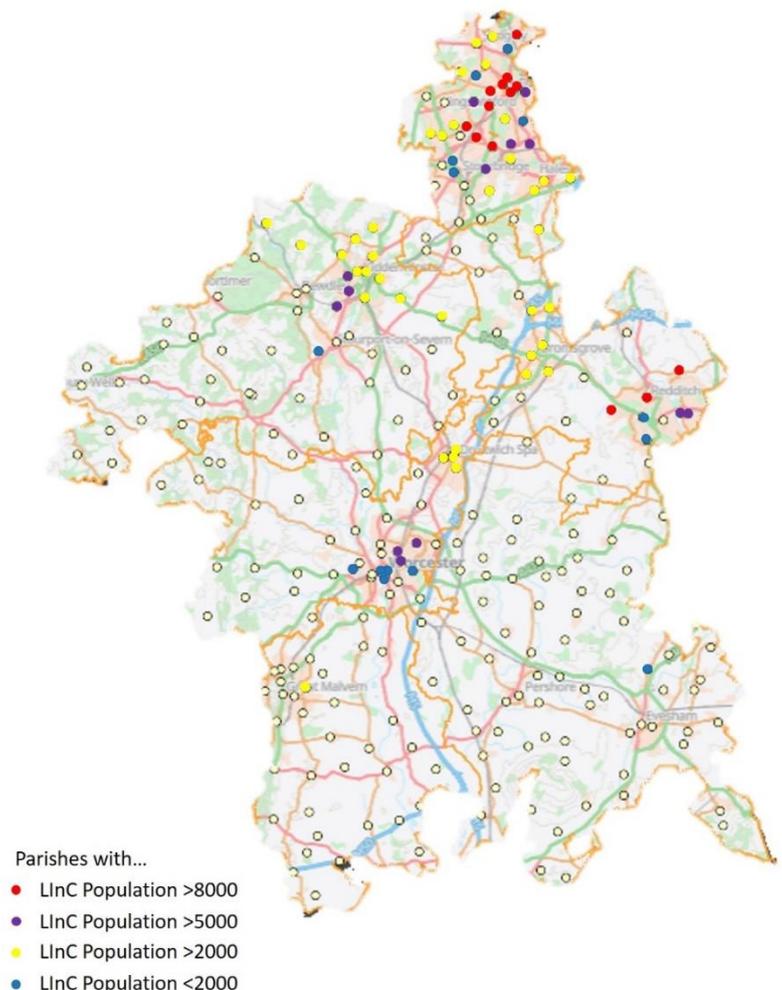
- 36 of our parishes are identified as Lowest Income Communities (LInC), containing 96 'Super-Output areas' that are in the 20% most income-deprived in the country. Churches in these parishes are shown on the map overleaf.
The population in these Super-Output areas is 160,000, (around 18% of diocesan population) and the population of these 36 parishes is 527,000 (over half of the diocesan population).
- Church Attendance in these parishes is 0.7% - considerably lower than the 1.2% seen across the diocese as a whole.
- LInC funding has been used to fund children and young peoples' workers in Pickersleigh, a Community Missioner in Matchborough, to make a contribution to the Tolladine project and to boost administrative capacity in Dudley.
- Over the past three years we have struggled to get good new project applications – in part due to stretched capacity of clergy to develop and manage projects and workers.

Our plans...

To continue to use two thirds of the funding to support stipendiary ministry, and one third to support mission initiatives or for capacity funding. This latter element is allocated through the Healthier Churches Fund. Our Ministry Share formula includes the concept of 'fair-share' funding linked to population in the most deprived areas, with those in the most deprived 10% being double weighted.

Fewer, more focused, projects feels like the way forward for the project element of the funding. We plan to develop the capacity to help LInC parishes make good applications – initially through Mission Accompaniers to develop the mission plans, and then through targeted support through application to implementation, which may involve employment.

The map on the right shows Churches in Lowest Income Community parishes:



Supporting Area 3: Rural Strategy

Key data:

156 of our churches are rural (58%), serving 135,570 population (15%) and served by 23.1 (28%) stipendiary incumbents (as well as other unpaid ministers, both ordained and lay).

Churchgoing in these parishes as a percentage of the population is higher than the diocese as a whole (as is the case nationally). 2019 AWA shows rural churches attracting 2.3% of the population compared with urban churches at 1.1% (which probably understates the difference as more rural people may commute to worship in towns than vice-versa)

Our rural churches have a diversity of types of rurality, and are also diverse in size:

Note: There is a clear overlap with the page on smaller churches, and in some ways they need to be considered together. Yet they are also separate: 87% (103 of 118) of Smaller Churches are Rural – the remainder are urban; whilst only 66% (103 of 156) of Rural Churches are Smaller Churches.

Our approach:

To invest in our smaller churches (see above) through the creation of a Dean of Smaller Churches.

To encourage simplification of governance – through multi-church parishes and joint councils.

Our Ministry Share formula leads to parishes receiving the ministry that they are able to afford, adjusted for wealth. This means that over time as Ministry Support Fund grants reduce, the degree of support from urban churches to rural ones will also reduce.

To develop new pathways for ministry which will have a particular resonance with the rural context e.g. auxiliary pathway, SSM incumbents, Churches held in Local Leadership (CHILL). It is important to note that a) all churches will be under the oversight of an incumbent, and b) that these pathways for ministry will not be exclusively rural.

To explore the establishing of a Rural Resource Centre (one benefit of which would become a good training benefice for curates wishing to pursue rural ministry) and two different “Rural Mission Areas” through the emerging deanery thinking in Kidderminster & Stourport and Malvern and Upton which would allow for greater collaboration and shared resourcing.

Supporting Area 4: Resourcing Churches

Our approach:

Both our Resourcing Churches are making good progress on their desired outcomes (albeit the rate of progress is delayed by the pandemic) and we expect them to be fully engaged in our three diocesan priorities.

With regard to Children and Young People, we would expect both Resourcing Churches to continue to employ a worker, and remain as strong centres of children’s, families’ and youth ministry.

With renewals, we see the contribution of All Saints and Top Church as pivotal. Planting curates will be key leaders of the churches selected for renewal, and it is hoped that in at least some cases, a team of supporting lay people might form a part of the renewal. Bengeworth has been a really good start, and we see that emerging plans for at least three of the renewals could feature planting curates. Our learning suggests it would have clear benefits to identify where the planting curate might plant much earlier than we have previously done.

With regard to new worshipping communities, both Resourcing Churches are ideally placed – both to act as exemplars in the communities that are developed in Dudley and in Worcester, and in resourcing and supporting others as they establish new worshipping communities in their benefices.

We also expect them to continue to be strong training bases for planting curates, equipping them to lead churches that have been identified for renewal.

Supporting Area 5: Smaller Churches

Key data:

- Currently 118 churches currently listed as ‘Smaller Churches’ – defined as those with <20 active members (2018 Fairer Shares survey)
- This represents 45% of churches and 15% ‘Active Members’ (2018) in the diocese
- Two thirds are Grade I or II* listed, only 17 have no listing.
- 87% of these ‘Smaller Churches’ are rural

Our Approach:

To invest in our smaller churches through the creation of a Dean of Smaller Churches (DoSC), funded by a national capacity grant.

We will seek greater sustainability for Smaller Churches by addressing the following four key areas with respect to both people and of finance:

- **Buildings** - introduction of Church Buildings Management Partnership to reduce the burden of maintenance; ongoing support for repair and improvements and work to increase engagement of local non-attending supporters
- **Administration** - ensure access to trained admin support to maximise use of existing tools such as ACNY, Digital Giving, on-line faculties, training, and resources. This will be shared amongst a number of smaller churches and should give rise to economies of scale.
- **Governance** - use Joint Councils and pastoral reorganisation to re-assign the working unit of the church at a more appropriate level – achieve benefits of benefice level collaboration, working together as one church with fewer, better trained and resourced, officers of the church.
- **Ministry** - through deploy clergy more flexibly across larger areas and introduce ‘Churches Held in Local Leadership’ (CHILL) to empower Local Leaders, lay and ordained, and enable clergy to be more episcopal in order to address the current over-provision of stipendiary clergy highlighted under Ministry Share.

Supporting Area 6: Church Buildings

Key data:

- There are 268 active church buildings in the diocese. 81% are listed; two-thirds of which (141 churches) are Grade I and II*.
- Quinquennial Inspection reports (data taken end of 2021) show that 2% are in “good”, 79% in “fair”, 15% in “poor” condition, and 4% in “very bad” condition.
- The 2017 Buildings for Mission survey which asked parishes to look at their own viability showed that 60% of parishes felt that their building(s) was unviable or under question, with less than half of those believing that their situation could improve.
- In the last typical year (2019), spend on church repairs⁸ was £2.27m.

⁸ This excludes routine maintenance costs.

Our approach:

We recognise that buildings consume a major amount of time and money, and that it will be extremely challenging for many worshipping congregations to continue to maintain their buildings.

Although we have not stated it explicitly, our current strategy for a significant and enduring solution is to wait for a national approach to be developed, as this challenge confronts all dioceses. Whilst we do so, we will:

- support parishes through the Church Buildings team and the Dean of Smaller Churches,
- ensure that churches selected for renewal have a building that is sustainable, or a plan to enable it to be so.
- support churches with key geographical, civic, visitor and heritage potential to play expanded roles in their communities
- develop the Church Buildings Management Partnership, and
- seek ways to make it easier for smaller congregations to continue

We have agreed that the Healthier Churches Fund will not be used for building projects as there simply isn't enough money to fund both a sufficient range of mission projects and buildings work.

Comments:

- The national picture for funding of church building repairs is its worst for decades: there simply aren't major funds available to repair historic churches without also undertaking significant outreach projects.
- Buildings aren't separate to mission: in many (mainly rural) communities, the presence, condition and availability of a church building is mission in itself.
- With ever-fewer human resources in parishes, important roles aren't fulfilled, and jobs not undertaken. Often it falls to wardens of other churches, stretched clergy, or even the church buildings team to ensure key jobs are undertaken on vulnerable buildings.

Supporting Area 7: Discipleship

Data

People in our churches are engaged in a wide range of discipleship activities that serve the Kingdom and seek to make a difference in society. However, our sense is that many people struggle to articulate their faith, and that few of our churches have regular house, study or fellowship groups where people might explore their faith. This diocese seems to have fewer such churches and groups than many others.

Our approach:

Many churches draw on a wide range of resources in addition to diocesan ones, and that is to be welcomed and encouraged. Likewise, many individuals follow personal patterns of prayer, use of podcasts and apps, and bible study notes to structure and grow their personal faith. Any diocesan offer begins from affirming the desire of people in our churches to follow Christ, and offer support that addresses the perceived lack of confident articulation of their faith.

Such support will include:

- Continuing the Bishop's Certificate course, but developing it as a modular, responsive, and flexible course. This also gives people an introduction to small group learning, and helps nurture vocations.
- Redeveloping Patterns for Kingdom Living as a personal discipleship plan that encourages people to appreciate their gifts and give themselves goals for using those gifts in living out their everyday faith.

- Continuing to work with ecumenical chaplaincies and others in Faith at Work to support people relating their faith to their workplace.
- Promoting and communicating national initiatives such as Everyday Faith which support personal discipleship.
- Developing a culture of small group learning (house / study / fellowship groups) which can help people become more articulate about their faith, and support them in their everyday discipleship.

Comments

We are working on curating existing material and seeking to help parishes share good practice with one another. This and other developments depend on nurturing good conversations among and with parishes. Small steps such as these can contribute over the medium term to a substantial culture change, and the work of discipleship impacts and is impacted by all other areas of mission and ministry.

Supporting Area 8: New Housing Development

Key data:

There is considerable new housing development in the planning pipeline.

We commissioned a report from Bluestone in 2021 to determine plans within the current planning horizon. This shows around 79,000 new houses in the planning horizon at that time (which includes housing developments where a number of homes have been built but where the development is still under construction). If all sites were to proceed, this would represent around a 35% increase in the number of homes. It should be noted that:

- A wide range of housing developments that are up to 500 homes in all six deaneries.
- Broomhall being the largest site with current approval (2200 homes). Reasonably adjacent developments e.g. Rushwick mean that around double this number of homes are being built around south/west Worcester.
- A further site at Throckmorton Airfield is currently going through the planning process. This may be larger than the current Broomhall site and is likely to have other development alongside housing.

Our approach:

We have a small group looking at New Housing. This is led by Mark Badger, Hugh Richards and Nikki and a range of other clergy and lay people with relevant professional expertise from around the diocese.

An application was made to Benefact Trust (formerly AllChurches Trust) to seek funding for a practitioner based in Broomhall, but who could provide advice to other parishes. This wasn't approved at that time, but has been given opportunity/encouraged to re-apply next year.

We will consider investing in one or two significant buildings e.g. in Throckmorton or look to develop a coffee shop that can become church on a Sunday. Alternatively, we may seek to use a neutral space. Can we find partners who would share our values/aspirations?

Comments:

Developing a cohesive strategy for mission amongst new housing areas is difficult, as each new housing area is different, and cover a range of parishes. Some are in stronger existing parishes where some additional support in developing resources to help them reach new homes may be sufficient. Others are in areas that are part of rural parishes that are unlikely to have sufficient resource to reach out.

Yet most of the housing developments are too small in themselves to warrant dedicated pioneer type ministry. Housing is built gradually over time, and so the challenges are for us to find a way of covering the range of new developments with someone who is skilled in this, and with the aptitude for it.

SECTION SIX: The People Plan

As we look across the coming decade, we see a range of challenges for recruitment, retention and development of the human resources needed to deliver the programme.

- a. **Stipendiary Clergy.** We expect the number of clergy that we will require to be approximately the same as today (if we are successful in achieving the growth objectives outlined here) although the nature of some roles, and the skills required may change. To support this change, we will need to ensure that those leading renewed churches are equipped to do so, and we will need to achieve development amongst many of our clergy to increase their capacity to establish new worshipping communities and enable good discipleship pathways. (See our ‘underpinning priority’ for more details on this).
- b. **Non-Stipendiary Clergy.** We are currently running an initial phase of an Auxiliary Pathway, with 16 prospective ordinands. This seeks to enable a number of mature Christians to serve as priests in their local communities. Further replications of this programme may need additional support from external providers.

We also have five non-stipendiary incumbents to provide a focused ministry presence in a smaller and often rural church, and expect this number to rise slightly over the decade.

- c. **Children, Families and Youth Workers.** We anticipate a need for around 25 Children, Families and/or Youth workers. At the end of 2021 we had five employed workers in the diocese, and have since made three HCF grants, of which all three have been successful in recruitment. We expect that maintaining high quality will be challenging, and we are developing a plan to give the diocese a competitive edge in recruitment and retention.

Ongoing support will be crucial – and the Diocesan Youth Officer’s role will shift to become network leader.

- d. **Lay Ministry.** We expect that many of the new worshipping communities will be led by lay people, who will need equipping and authorisation. We also anticipate that leadership of some of our smaller local churches will be held by a lay person. We term this CHILL - “Churches held in local leadership”.

SECTION SEVEN: The Finance Plan

There are a variety of funding sources that we expect to resource our progress towards achievement of our diocesan priorities:

- a. **Diocesan Investment,** principally through the Healthier Churches Fund (HCF). In 2021 we earmarked a fund of £2.5 million from the decision to switch to Total Return. We hope to be able to allocate a further tranche in 2026 although the size of this will be influenced by equity returns. Bishop’s Council have approved funding from the Healthier Churches Fund for increasing the number of Children, Families and Youth workers in our parishes, and for supporting the development of New Worshipping Communities.

- b. **Lowest Income Communities Funding.** We expect to receive £0.8 million a year for the next nine years (or a total of around £8 million over the nine years 2023 to 2031 after adjusting for inflation). Our policy is to use two thirds of this to support stipendiary clergy and one third to engage in mission projects in our lowest income communities. This mission project funding has been considered as a part of our Healthier Churches Fund, but only available to Lowest Income Community parishes.

We see the above two elements funding £3.62 million towards the priorities identified here. £2.42 million is expected to come from the 2021-2026 funding (Total Return and LInC), and an expected minimum second tranche of £1.2 million for 2026-2031.

- c. **National Funding.** Indications are that the national church will be willing to fund our second priority – the first phase of the Renewals programme, with funding over the next seven years of £6.82 million plus some additional capacity for the programme.
- a. We further expect that they will be willing to fund additional support for the underpinning priority for coaching and accompaniment support.
 - b. Future requires may include an extension renewals project application for two or three further renewals, to extend funding of our Resourcing Churches, and some additional planting curates – with the application for funding from July 2025, alongside a further capacity funding request

On the assumption of the renewals extension being around £1 million for three further renewals, this would total £10.2 million across the nine year funding period to 2031.

- d. **Parish funding.** We hope that parishes will continue to be able to part-fund some initiatives including new worshipping communities and children and youth workers.

In overview, the source of funding for each of these priorities is envisaged to be:

Children, Families and Young People:

- We hope that the majority of parish-based workers would be part funded by the respective parish (with a minimum of 20% funding from the parish apart from our LInC communities which would not be required to contribute).
- Workers placed in renewal churches would be funded as part of the renewal – see next section.
- It is proposed that the funding needed to top up local contributions for other workers would come from the HCF, as would the funding for training and network development.

Renewals & Resourcing Churches:

- We anticipate around ten or eleven renewals in addition to our two resourcing churches.
- Our first application for national funding is for renewals in Greater Dudley and Redditch.
- Funding for future renewals may need to form a follow-on application to the national church, or there may be scope to fund through the Healthier Churches Fund, as it may not be expensive.
- We anticipate an application to provide longer tapering towards sustainability for two resourcing churches (current funding ceases in 2025).

New Worshipping Communities:

- We would fund the diocesan lead on this from the Healthier Churches fund (a 50% role, with the other half funded through Ministry Share)
- Funding of support and training would initially come from Myriad (£20,000 over two years), and then through a capacity grant request.
- We are also making provision for half of the costs of a University Chaplain for the University of Worcester, who would seek to develop a new student and young adult congregation. This is also sourced from the Healthier Churches Fund.
- Funding of small grants to enable new worshipping communities would come from the HCF.

Underpinning Priority: Equipping Ministers for Mission

- This would be funded from a number of sources.
- Extension of the Mission Accompanier programme is funded from the Healthier Churches Fund.
- Our capacity funding application will extend clergy coaching provision.
- Funding of the training elements would come in part from re-focusing the existing training budget on the changing training needs of clergy, in part from funding within project streams e.g. training for CF&YP workers, in part through a capacity grant (to support renewals and NWCs and the provision of a part-time officer) and in part through the Healthier Churches Fund.
- The source of funding of the additional costs of clergy supervision is as yet unidentified.

Programme Management Capacity:

- We anticipate making a further capacity bid to extend Rob Quarton's and Alison Maddocks' roles from 2025. (Deputy Diocesan Secretary – Transformation and Dean of Smaller Churches).
- We will seek capacity funding for a Renewals' Programme Manager, possibly alongside the role of an Ops Manager at one of the renewal churches
- Children, Families and Youth programme managed by Simon Hill within existing budgets – changing the focus of his work.
- New Worshipping Communities managed within HCF project funding above.
- The capacity request will also seek to extend the Project Finance role given increased complexity in the funding of several renewal churches, and also a Transformation Communications Officer.

Other work flowing out of Mission Accompaniment:

- Applications from parishes would be met from the Healthier Churches Fund.

Resourcing Churches and additional Curates:

- Funding of additional planting-type curates at the Resourcing Churches – we would ideally see this as part of an extension funding request for our Resourcing Churches, or alternatively, a separate approach could be a 'Strategic Ministry Fund' type application depending on the national funding model.

SECTION EIGHT: Our Readiness for the Change

a. Model for Leadership and Governance.

Our model for leadership and programme management for the transformation programme is that we have two people leading the change programme, supported by the Diocesan Secretary:

Diocesan Leader for Transformation and Change: Nikki Groarke, Archdeacon of Dudley.

Deputy Diocesan Secretary – Transformation: Rob Quarton

Each of the Priority Areas has a Diocesan Lead and a Project Chair:

Children, Families and Young People:

Diocesan Lead: Simon Hill, Youth Officer.

Project Chair: Nikki Groarke

Church Renewals / Church Planting:

Diocesan Lead & Project Chair: Martin Gorick, Bishop of Dudley

Project Programme Manager: [new role to be appointed](#), possibly in conjunction with an Operations role in one of the Greater Dudley Renewals.

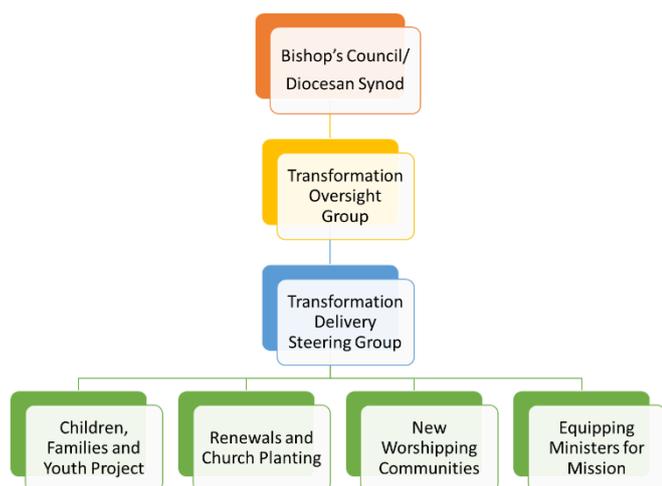
New Worshipping Communities:

Project Chair: Nikki Groarke

Diocesan Lead: [new role to be appointed](#), as a half time clergy post as practitioner developing NWCs in the SaltwayTeam Ministry, and half time as Diocesan Lead for NWCs.

Equipping Ministers for Mission:

Diocesan Lead: Director of Mission and Ministry (**Monitoring and Governance** has three levels (existing) with periodic reporting to Diocesan Synod and Bishops' Council.



Each priority will have a project group with chair and practitioners from within that priority area – e.g., the Renewals Group will have our two Resourcing Church leaders and some of the leaders of our Renewal Churches. Their aim is to focus on developing and sharing learning relevant to the priority area from within and outside the diocese.

The Transformation Delivery Steering Group (TDSG) brings together project leads with some other senior independent leaders (e.g., Chair of Houses of Clergy and Laity, Director of Communications) and is chaired by the Diocesan

Secretary. This group holds the priority projects to account, and verifies progress is being made. Where appropriate it manages resources between projects, and has delegated approval for grant approval for the Healthier Churches Fund. The Strategic Programmes Group would be merged with the TDSG following the completion of the Calling Young Disciples programme in July 2023.

The top level is the Oversight Board, including Diocesan Bishop and Chair of the DBF, but we would also wish to include external stakeholders from the national church, and independent experts able to provide insight and a helpful degree of challenge. This group takes an overview of resource allocation, progress towards goals and major issues affecting diocesan transformation.

b. Engagement and Communication

We have had three rounds of “Open Conversations” on the transformation programme, with the first in-person events in early 2020 prior to the pandemic attracting 1100 people (13% of USA). These have built a broad understanding across the diocese of the need to change, although we will need to keep this at the forefront of minds.

We judge our Communications Team do an excellent job of showcasing stories demonstrating good practice, and we have one of the highest levels of engagement with our Facebook page despite being a small diocese.

Being a small diocese is often a drawback, but with only six deaneries, it makes communication and gaining buy-in easier as the Area Dean and Lay Chair cohort is a manageable number for planning meetings, and we are able to give appropriate support and engagement with each Deanery as the strategy is cascaded and implementation plans developed.

Worcester has historically been a relational diocese – again one of the advantages of small size – with the Diocesan Bishop being widely liked and respected. In recent years we have not had significant disagreements within Bishops Council or Diocesan Synod, although the LLF process has the potential to derail some of the relational capital that has been built up.

Having said this, we see a need to extend our Communications resource by 0.5 FTE to build the resource necessary to communicate the extent of change required.

c. Delivery Confidence

What gives us confidence?

Our transformation programme is already rolling, and a number of strands are already up and running:

- We have 25 Mission Accompaniers working with 45 churches.
- Our Healthier Churches Fund has £4.0 million to fund transformation work around the diocese through targeted grants. Grant applications demand clarity as to impact and intended outcomes, and we have a process of following up to ensure that projects are on track. This arises from good financial management, closing a £1 million deficit and allowing us to now focus on resourcing growth.
- Our Calling Young Disciples project is entering its final stage, having exceeded two of its three principal objectives and working to close the gap on the third. The project has taught us a great deal as to how to manage strategic programmes.
- Growth in the two Resourcing Churches was hindered by the pandemic, but is now regaining momentum. The first renewal has proven out the concept and is making good progress.
- The first three Children, Families and Young People's workers to be funded through the Healthier Churches Fund are now appointed.

From a financial perspective, Ministry Share has been received well. It will require careful management, but together with our Smaller Churches programme, we expect it to help reduce over-investment in areas of lower population and invest in larger areas of population. We judge our financial management to be good, and believe the financial performance of recent years demonstrates this.

Although we are one of the smallest DBF teams in the country, the majority of the team are rated good or exceptional and are delivering. Capacity for managing the additional strands of the renewal is inadequate, and we have highlighted earlier in this strategy where we see the need to increase resource.

d. Risks

There will be others who will monitor detailed programme and delivery risk (a combination of Transformation Delivery Steering Group, Strategic Programmes Group and ultimately Bishop's Council at a high level), but five high level risks are presented here to give an overview of the principal risks.

- a. **Depth of discipleship:** The additional disciples that we hope, under God's grace, to see as a result of this plan may not develop a sufficient depth of discipleship to play a full part in the life of the church. This has implications for the faith of the individuals concerned, but also for the sustainability of our churches in terms of both volunteering and giving.
- b. **Complexity & Capacity:** This is a complex and sophisticated plan seeking change across a wide variety of areas. We have three priority areas, the underpinning priority and a desire to progress a number of supporting areas. The inter-relationship of the various priorities is essential to delivering the degree of impact we seek. At the same time, we are a small diocese, with a small DBF team. We have identified above that the current resource is inadequate and will need enhancing if we are to achieve the impact we seek.
- c. **Recruitment:** A number of the elements of the programme require recruitment (and retention) that may be challenging – leaders for renewal churches, children's and youth workers and other mission workers may be difficult to recruit of sufficiently high quality to achieve the outcomes intended. We will also need to continue to recruit well across the diocese for all of our clergy posts, and in maintaining the level of DBF capacity and effectiveness.
- d. **Funding Current Ministry:** There are risks that sustained heating costs, continued decline in church attendance, increased pressure on costs of living reducing giving, may all flow through into lower Ministry Share than expected. In turn, this may either require greater subsidy than we have planned with the Ministry Support Fund or lead to further reductions in clergy numbers. In turn this could jeopardise our plans to minimise the rate of decline of existing congregations.
- e. **Distraction Risk:** We have identified a clear set of priorities, and are developing plans to address these. There is a risk that over time, General or Diocesan Synod introduce new and additional requests for activity that prevents us from delivering on the transformation plan.

ANNEX ONE:

Modelling the Possible Effect of our Plans

This seeks to model one possible scenario if our plans were to come to fruition under God's grace...

Base Statistics

2019 Average Weekly Attendance (AWA) figures 9725 adults and 1400 Children & Young People

2021 AWA: 7100 adult 700 C&YP

Estimated 2022 AWA: 8859 adult 1173 C&YP

(This assumes that 2022 regains two thirds of those lost in the pandemic – a complete estimate based on anecdotal figures from a few churches!)

Long term decline by 2030: 7661 adult 1014 C&YP

(8 years at 1.8% per year - net result of ins and outs)

but then activities to generate growth...

1. Church Renewals (including NWC and C&YP worker)

Phase 1 – Dudley and Redditch seeks to give an additional 795 adults and 315 C&YP

Phase 2 - Assume 4 further extension renewals giving an additional 400 adults and 160 C&YP

2. Children & Young Peoples workers

Workers in 12 further churches, generating 40 C&YP and 20 adults would give

an additional 240 adults and 480 C&YP

Wider impact on 12 additional churches, giving 10 C&YP and 6 adults per church would give

an additional 72 adults and 120 C&YP

3. New Worshipping Communities

In 40 further benefices leading to an additional 16 adults and 4 C&YP per church

and 20 more schools/church linkages leading to 20 C&YP and 16 adults would give

an additional 960 adults and 560 C&YP

4. Other growth arising from Mission Accompanier Work as local priorities determine

In 40 further churches leading to 10 adults would give an additional 400 adults

5. CYD and Resourcing Churches completion of projects

CYD: An additional 180 C&YP and an additional 100 adults sought in the final stage.

Resourcing Churches: An additional 200 adults and 60 C&YP from further growth

(Includes Bengeworth and Dudley hubs)

Total Growth 2987 adults and 1835 C&YP giving a

2030 Possible Projection

10648 adult 2849 C&YP



Kingdom People

love • compassion • justice • freedom

Our diocesan vision is to grow as Kingdom People, sharing the good news of Jesus' love in Worcestershire and Dudley through churches that are growing in health and sustainability.

As the body of Christ, we seek to join together to worship God, make disciples, share hope, and transform communities.

Priorities 2023 – 2030

Over the next few years, we aim to:

- **Double** the number of children and young people worshipping in our churches
- Create **100 new worshipping communities** offering a range of ways for people to come to faith and worship God. (eg Forest Church / Café Church / Walking Church)
- **Invest in the renewal** of around a dozen churches to ensure that each major area of population has at least one church with 150 people attending weekly, enabling them to support other local churches.
- Underpin these by investing in our clergy and lay leaders, providing **training and development** opportunities to enable them to grow and feel supported and equipped for mission.



One size doesn't fit all - we want to strengthen local churches and encourage and resource them to explore what it might mean to grow in health and sustainability in their context as they worship God, make disciples, share hope, and transform communities.

Our diocesan plan has something for everyone – these priorities will be supported by existing work including

Mission Accompaniers
Healthier Churches Fund
Support for smaller churches
Developing rural strategy

Find out more about our plans on the diocesan website www.cofe-worcester.org.uk