



The Church of England **ROCHESTER**

Diocesan Annual Review 2017



The Diocese of Rochester is reliant principally on payments of Parish Offer, which represent 86% of total income.

A detailed financial report as well as full diocesan support team reviews are available to view [here](#).

You can also request a hard copy of this review and financial report via the Diocesan Office.

WHERE OUR MONEY CAME FROM



WHERE THE MONEY IS SPENT



MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP OF ROCHESTER

The past year has been a time of great excitement as we were able to share details of the **Called Together vision** that will guide us through the next five years together. We spent much of 2016 talking, listening and praying as we sought to discern together the 'mind of Christ', to discover what the Spirit might be saying to us about the kind of Church we want and need to be.

I have spoken in the past about the wonderful extravagance which is at the heart of God, an extravagance that we as Christians call grace; grace which is made manifest in Jesus Christ, his living, dying and rising again, and through which we know ourselves to be the children of God, to be the people of God.

Work in the Diocese this year has been about putting in place some of the building blocks we need in order to respond together to that generosity of God in Christ, as we are called together to be God's people in the world. In many ways 'Called Together' affirms much of what we already do, while supporting us to explore new paths. It also encourages us to be more confident about sharing our stories and best practice.

This is what this review of the year hopes to do.

Over the next few pages we will be offering you a just snap shot of some of the activities, projects and people that show the variety and breadth of work taking place across parishes, chaplaincies, schools, mission initiatives, and within the Diocesan support teams, that have already begun to: **Grow disciples** (page 4), **Enrich communities** (page 8), and **Resource mission and ministry** (page 12).

It is work that would not be possible without your generous support through your time, prayers and parish offers and so I would like to take this opportunity to thank you sincerely for your continued support.

This Review fills me with huge hope for the years ahead. I hope you too are encouraged and heartened by what you see and read.



+ James Roffen:

The Rt Rev James Langstaff
Bishop of Rochester

GROWING DISCIPLES

Our Growing disciples aims now and going forward are:

- To better live out the Great Commission, share the Good News, and **see more people find faith**;
- To build **confident disciples**, who have deeper relationships with God and are more confident for evangelism and mission;
- To make prayer the fundamental basis for life in the Diocese, to **harness the power of prayer** to transform lives; to encourage every individual to pray for five people to come to faith; and
- To offer **life-enhancing encounters** with Christ to children and young people.

The desire for more people to be brought into a living and life-changing relationship with God through Christ is a widely shared aspiration among us. As well as growing the Kingdom numerically, growth is about supporting richer and fuller discipleship and the deepening of our own prayer lives.

There has been much activity throughout the year to support this ambition.

Our short courses enabling people to deepen their understanding of the Christian faith have continued to prove popular. The two year Bishop's Certificate in Christian Discipleship and the Licensed Lay Ministry (LLM) course – an expression of lay vocation distinctive to our Diocese – have seen growth too.

Provision of materials like the Prayer Pack, personal support and guidance from spiritual directors and ordination advisors, as well as access to places of retreat and study like St Benedict's Centre, have offered a wide variety of opportunity through which people have been encouraged to deepen their faith, refresh their prayer lives, and discern their calling.

The diversity of pathways available for people to deepen their encounter with God appears to be bearing fruit; 2017 has seen an 100% increase from 2016 in the numbers of people offering themselves for ordination.

[Click here](#) for more detailed support team reports.



26
Short
Courses
delivered

14
New Licensed
Lay
Ministers

grow



Church Schools Festival 2017 at Rochester Cathedral

Art for God's fridge

With its roots in the medieval practice of illuminating manuscripts, Bible Art Journaling encourages creative reflection on passages from Scripture, which are then drawn onto the pages of a Bible or art book.

Hayley Usmar, leader of the Created to Create group at St Justus in Rochester, had been considering training for Licensed Lay Ministry but had been anxious. Then she started Bible Art Journaling:



"It's been a life-changer really. I have whole pages where I have illustrated 'Do Not be Afraid', 'Trust in the Lord', 'Here I am lord'. After having done all of those, I thought the only thing I could do was make the commitment, fill in the application form, go on the course and I've just finished my first term!"

Listen to Hayley's podcast [here](#).



'Closer' course

Recently baptised and confirmed, Allie Wallace was one of the first cohort of people to try **'Closer'**, a new one-year experiential course in Christian Spirituality, developed for lay people and introduced this year. The course is designed to allow people to develop their own relationship with God, try new ways of praying, and learn about different Christian Spiritualities.

Allie said of his experience: "Closer has been an invaluable way of deepening and expanding my spiritual toolkit with like-minded people. My everyday life can feel chaotic and cluttered, so it has certainly been welcome nutrition for my prayer life".

Two further Closer courses will be run in 2018, one in Chatham and one in Chislehurst.

Watch a film [here](#).

Prayer doesn't have to be dull with the prayer pack

6

Much of the work supporting spirituality, prayer and discipleship this year has begun with the recognition that every person has their own unique way of praying - there are no right and wrong ways.

St Mary's Island Church in Chatham found its prayer meetings have really benefitted from having a member of the Diocese's ministry team come and lead their small group in different ways of praying using the **Prayer Pack**.

"We were willing to give everything a go and discovered from this our own personal preferences to praying; from praying in silence, or using icons, to using our imagination or praying using scripture from the Bible.

"The prayer pack helped us to think and pray outside the box and introduced us to exciting, new and fresh ideas. Prayer doesn't have to be dull!" *Sally Bloor*

A **Prayer Festival** to promote different ways of praying will take place in September 2018.



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT



Colyer-Fergusson Charitable Trust

Through a network of highly dedicated youth workers, diocesan officers and clergy and lay people, our commitment to giving the younger members of our churches and communities life-enhancing encounters with Jesus has continued. Full detailed report available [here](#).

It saw a big step forward this year with the launch of the **Children and Young People's Fund**. Significant financial support from the Colyer-Fergusson Charitable Trust has been matched from a diocesan fund designated for work with young people and funding from Trust for London, which will see half a million pounds released over the next 5 years to support local children's and young people's initiatives, in particular those working with excluded young people.

The highly valued **Diocesan Youth Council** has also continued to meet on a regular basis this year - and flourishes. Open to those between the ages of 11 and 18, it provides a great opportunity for young people to contribute to the life of the Diocese. Highlights this year have included a residential gathering, a Midnight Skate and a visit to General Synod. To get involved contact the Children and Young People team via Sarah Cabella on sarah.cabella@rochester.anglican.org. Watch a film [here](#)

Pancake and Light parties at Pip'n'Jim's



A party on Shrove Tuesday has become a fixture of the church's calendar at St Philip and St James' Church, Chatham - also known as Pip'n' Jim's. With bouncy castle, face painting, quizzes, pancake themed games, and of course pancakes, the team were delighted to see some 465 children and adults attend this year's event, mostly from the local community.

Their Light Party - an alternative to Halloween - also went down 'a treat' too, with over 130 children having the opportunity to enjoy games, be warm and have fun in a safe environment.

Spirit Squad

Spirit Squad brings together a lively group of teenagers each week at St David's Church in Lordswood. It's in this friendly, and sometimes noisy, atmosphere that some of life's biggest questions get discussed, as some of its young members explain:

"Spirit Squad is not a group or youth club it is family. It can change how you see things."

"A lot of people my age don't think it's cool to talk about God, so sometimes it's nice to have that space once a week to ask questions about God and faith."

The Rev David Kichenside, Team Rector for the Holy Trinity South Chatham Parish Local Ecumenical Partnership agrees: "They know when then come here that they get good drinks, good snacks, good friendships, good fun and answers to some of the questions they really want answers to."

Listen to the Spirit Squad podcast [here](#).



48

Employed Youth, children and family ministers/workers within the diocesan network

30

Training courses and Events

40

Employed worker visits

10

Youth Council meetings and event

1

Residential

ENRICHING COMMUNITIES

Our Enriching Community aims now and going forward are:

- Community Initiatives: **Enrich every community** through the activities of the local church;
- New and Re-missioned Places: **Establish and renew Christian presence** in response to the significant predicted population growth over the next 30 years;
- **Working with Schools**: Increase Christian influence in schools across the Diocese; and
- Supporting Chaplaincy: **Encourage more people to consider chaplaincy** and seek to create collaboratively energised ministries.

In a year when political and economic issues have converged to create a time of immense challenge for individuals and communities, churches across the Diocese - with support from diocesan teams have risen to meet the need.

From church-based community and dementia cafés, CAP debt advice centres, community lunches, Messy Church activities, school banks, food banks, night shelters, and Men in Sheds projects, a huge cross-section of extremely exciting work in our churches has brought hope and connection to local communities.

The Diocese is pioneering some of this community engagement work, such as with dementia; the Diocese now supports 24 Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends in their work with the elderly and those with dementia. On fostering and adoption too, our unique collaboration with the Home For Good

project, launched this year, is bringing new hope to children in need of a loving home and is being viewed by other dioceses with interest.

As well as developing our relationships with our existing partners, the Diocese's Community Engagement and Social Responsibility Advisor, Caroline Clarke, has worked to bring new organisations into partnership with us.

She says: "On issues such as homelessness, addiction and social isolation, these partnerships have helped bring knowledge and expertise we may not have ourselves, bringing sustainability and benefits to the wider community."

A series of videos called **'Hope...Stories that Need to be Told'** have been created by Rochester Arts in Mission coordinator, the Rev Mandy Carr, to help share the stories of these partnerships in a creative way.

Click here for more detailed support team reports.



"We didn't have much, but we did have a church hall. So as a PCC we prayed about it, and then we just decided to go for it!"

The Rev Carol Avery of the Greenhithe Community Café and Mary's Child Project

enrich



The Rev Ruth Bierbaum, Mental Healthcare Chaplain for Kent and Medway Partnership Trust
Credit Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust

CHAPLAINCY

Often ecumenical in nature and increasingly led by laity, Bishop James has spoken about **chaplaincy** as being a vital and growing area of outreach, but one which is often 'on the edge', as chaplains are 'always a guest on somebody else's territory'.

From schools, hospitals and care homes, to retail parks and

prisons, each day across our Diocese, chaplains are carrying out this largely unseen part of the Church's mission and ministry.

A new shared role of 'Area Dean' of Chaplains has been established this year, so we can engage with them and Area Deans to better support and promote this particular area of ministry.

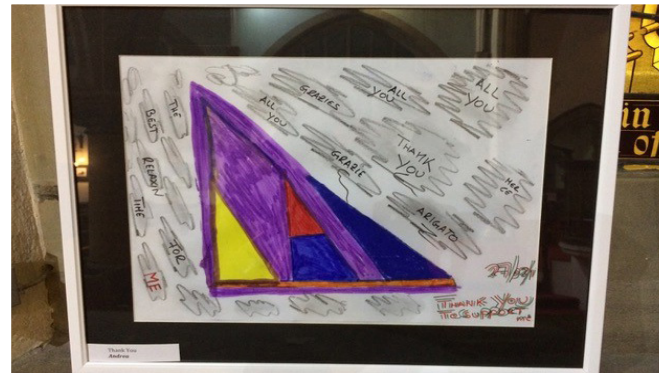
Winter Shelter Art Project

Art afternoons run by the chaplaincy team at the Tunbridge Wells Winter Shelter have had a big and unexpected impact.

These afternoons, held in space kindly offered by the library, were run by community chaplains the Rev Dr Miriam Barker and the Rev Rosheen Browning.

They said: "There was much laughter and good conversation as we worked, ranging from sharing memories of the past to deeper discussions of life and faith."

As a result there were some very welcome and entirely unexpected consequences, such as library cards for people without an address which allow them to borrow books and also access to the internet for extended time, which is very important when homeless.



WORKING WITH SCHOOLS

Some 23,000 children and young people are learning and flourishing within our schools each day. The new Bishop Chavasse School has been welcomed into the diocesan family this year; two others are at advanced stages of development in Rochester Riverside and St Andrew, Paddock Wood. Ninety six per cent of our schools are judged good or better by Ofsted and SIAS/ SIAMS. [Click here](#) for more detailed report.



"Our aim is to actively promote and support Christian distinctiveness in our schools through developing high quality teaching and learning, leadership, and effective governance of our Church schools."

John Constanti, Interim Director of Rochester Diocesan Board of Education

New school for Tonbridge Church Schools Celebration



Currently housed in temporary buildings, work recently began on a new state-of-the-art primary school building for the newly established Bishop Chavasse Church of England Free School, which opened in Tonbridge in September 2017 and is part of the Tenax Schools Trust.



Nine hundred Year Six pupils from across our primary schools met over four days for praise, prayer and celebration in Rochester Cathedral. It was organised jointly by the Education Teams of the Cathedral and of the Diocese.

10

PARTNERSHIPS

Enriching our communities extends to us drawing alongside fellow Christians of other traditions and denominations, with our **companionship link partners**, and with those of **other faiths**.

This has included visits by parishes to their overseas links, welcome by the Diocese to visitors from companion links including Estonia, the development of an award-winning Interfaith women's group, shared Iftar meals and Pancake Parties, and the re-launch of the Bexley Interfaith Forum (see photo).



NEW AND RE-MISSIONED COMMUNITIES

With the population across the Diocese of Rochester predicted to grow by over 300,000 in the next 30 years, major housing and planning developments are to be found scattered across the Diocese.

Some, such as those in **Ebbsfleet, Kings Hill and Chatham**, are considerably advanced. Others, such as those in Malling

Deanery, Bexley and elsewhere in Medway, like Gillingham Pier are still evolving but are equally important and demand attention and prayer.

Our response has been characterised by prayerful, creative thinking, as we have continued this year to be involved in these new developments by helping with planning, creating partnerships and seeking new buildings for worship.

Innovative posts

Creative thinking around posts that support mission and bring about community cohesion among new and established communities has been one expression of our vision in this area this year.

It's included development of an externally funded new Youth and Community Worker post to cover the Swanscombe, Greenhithe and Ebbsfleet area, and the licensing of Terry Whittaker as an Associate Lay Minister under a Bishop's Mission Order for Reach@ Gillingham Pier - an exciting new community outreach project for the area. Watch a film [here](#)



"It is important to think not only about what is needed now, but also the shape of what might be needed in 50 years' time to assure the Church's place in the fabric of these communities."

Matthew Girt, Diocesan Director of Strategy and Implementation



St John's On Tap



Since arriving last summer, Vicar and Mission Lead for Chatham town centre, the Rev Carol Morgan has had an exciting, if big, job on her hands. The church - which has stood empty for the last 20 years - is currently being renovated in readiness to serve a congregation in the near future.

With the church building out of action but a new team on board, a new base and missional opportunity has been 'tapped' into, with Sunday services now being held in the Tap n Tin nightclub next door to the church, creating 'St John's on Tap'. Carol says:

"We are hoping to draw in people who wouldn't normally want to go to church...The energy and enthusiasm is palpable each week as we draw together to worship."

Listen to Carol's podcast [here](#).



Christ Church, Orpington 75th anniversary

12 resource

RESOURCING OUR MISSION AND MINISTRY

Our resourcing mission and ministry aims now and going forward are:

- Resilient Growing Churches: [Enabling parishes to run efficiently and sustainably](#), so that they can focus more on ministry and mission;
- Administration & Support – [Making it easier for parishes to access resource material and guidance](#) on a range of topics, to work with the diocesan support teams;
- Planning for Growth: [Enabling parishes in establishing local mission action plans](#) which give focus and energy to worshipping communities and achieve measurable outcomes; and
- Project Initiation Support: [Enabling, equipping and supporting parishes to define and deliver major projects](#), such as property redevelopment or significant community projects.

Support around buildings and planning, legal advice, safeguarding, IT, finance and communications, has continued to play a significant role this year in helping churches - and those within the diocesan support teams - to achieve their goals, carry out their day-to-day duties, and plan for the future.

Emboldened by 'Called Together', this year has seen the building blocks being put in place for the processes and cultures that will allow us to free up parishes and the diocesan support teams, so that they can focus on their main roles for the mission and ministry of the Church.

This has included signposting to resources and initiatives, developing funding opportunities, and preparing guidance for churches around GDPR.

Steps to encourage a more two-way, transparent, and user-friendly culture of communications have also begun, including the introduction of a new monthly e-newsletter. This vision for communications will be led by the newly appointed Communications Officer.

[Click here](#) for more detailed support team reports.

"We are planning future work around shaping and aligning Diocesan Office administrative and other functions with 'Called Together', so that we can continue to be as supportive as possible in building and supporting local church communities that are resilient, sustainable and growing."

Geoff Marsh, Diocesan Secretary



ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

14

Enabling users to 'work smarter, not harder' has been the aim of improvements particularly around administration and IT this year.

Projects enabling people to take that smart approach include extension of the cloud infrastructure, introduction of the National Church's Contact Management System (CMS), and the bringing-in of the Online Faculty System which has made managing faculty applications and obtaining approval far easier and quicker.

In the realm of data management, the Deployment Database will form a key tool in the discernment process that Area Deans

and Archdeacons take as they grapple with the complex issues of ministerial provision.

Future plans include the reintroduction of a property management database, which will remove much of the administrative burden for the Diocesan Surveyor and this team, giving them the ability to do far more when they are out visiting properties.



RESILIENT CHURCHES

Resilient churches are ones where people feel safe and welcomed.

This year, significant developments have been made to increase and improve the provision of our support around **safeguarding**. We are committed to ensuring that anyone concerned about a child, young person, or vulnerable adult should feel confident about what to do and how to get help.

This has included the appointment of Archdeacon Julie Conalty as safeguarding lead and chair of a newly established Safeguarding Executive Committee (SEC) to organise and implement safeguarding practices and training. In addition, a Bishop's Safeguarding Advisory Panel, providing professional support

and advice to the diocesan safeguarding advisers, and taking a strategic overview of safeguarding throughout the Diocese, has also been formed.

A new Deputy Safeguarding Adviser, Greg Barry, has been appointed, providing additional capacity to handle cases and deliver the Safeguarding training modules.

Delivery of the new national safeguarding training modules has been rolled-out. These include the foundation online (C0 / C1) modules for those in the church needing a basic awareness of safeguarding, the C2 and C3 face-to-face modules for leaders, clergy and lay ministers, and C4 for senior staff, which is delivered by the National Safeguarding Team.

Card Readers in Churches



With people increasingly no longer carrying cash, the Rev Mark Montgomery of St Gabriel's Church, Kings Hill, was one of a number of churches in the Diocese who helped trial card reader technology to help make payments easier.

He said: 'We have had significant positive feedback from visitors and on Christmas Eve the card reader amounted to around half of our collection.'

New stewardship campaign

During the year a new Financial Strategy was implemented with five-year financial projections.

We acknowledge that it will take longer to get to a balanced budget than had been hoped. We are now aiming to achieve this in 2020.

Work has also begun to help parishes become more sustainable and therefore more resilient.

All Saints, Belvedere, became the first church in the Diocese to conduct a stewardship campaign with support from the new **Diocesan Stewardship Initiative**; a scheme developed in response to Called Together.

The Rev Jane Edwards said: "We've had great support on this occasion. We trust God that this Lenten Stewardship Campaign will enable further resources to be forthcoming in terms of finance, time and talents, in order to further God's mission in Belvedere."



The Rev Richard Williams with Liz Mullins

PROPERTY

Those within the property team have continued to work hard this year to establish and maintain sound working relationships with parish clergy in relation to clergy housing and to be available to them for consultation at any reasonable time; they are often the main contact clergy will have with the Diocesan Office.

Although the restricted budget of the past two years has led to a delay of some repair and maintenance works,

"We aim to provide houses to the best standard possible, within the budget available and maintain property to the best standard. We hope to help incumbents and other clergy with all property matters to enable them to focus on their demanding role."

Mark Trevett,
Diocesan Surveyor



SUPPORTING OUR BUILDINGS

A large number of parishes have been supported this year with issues around maintenance, repair, and the planning and preparation of significant extensions and re-ordering improvements. Watch a film [here](#)

Over half of the parishes in the diocese have received advice from the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) in 2017.

This support has led to the welcome completion of some long-standing projects over the last year at Ash, Plaxtol, and Crockenhill. Each of these churches has been discussing and developing plans with the DAC over many years.

Plaxtol Parish Church: internal reordering works took place over the summer and were completed in autumn 2017. It included a tea station and WC at the base of the church tower, as well as the creation of a new welcome area at the west end of the nave have brought new missional opportunities to the church.



101
faculties
issued during
the year

200
DAC
applications

Full detailed report available [here](#).

326
staff/volunteers
completed
C0 training
online

1433
DBS worker
& volunteers
checks

405
completed
C3
training

1,569 property work orders were still undertaken.

A number of self-financing developments have been completed, or are currently under way. These include the sale of the old parsonage at King Charles the Martyr, Tunbridge Wells. A new purchase meant there was some reserve for a study extension to be added in 2017.

Full detailed report available [here](#).



Celebrating our companionship links around the world: Estonia, Harare, Zimbabwe, Kondoa and Mpwapwa Tanzania



Diocese of
Rochester



The Diocese of Rochester. Registered Office: St Nicholas' Church, Boley Hill, Rochester, Kent, ME1 1SL. The Rochester Diocesan Society and Board of Finance is a company limited by guarantee. Registered in England No. 140656. Registered Charity No. 249339

This has been printed on Forest Stewardship Council sourced paper