



Diocese of Bristol
Creating connections

STATEMENT OF NEEDS

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Heavenly Father,
in your Son, Jesus Christ,
the whole Body of the Church is joined together as one
with Christ as the Head;
be with us, by your Holy Spirit,
as we pray for the appointment of a new bishop.
Preserve our unity and guide all involved in the appointment process,
that with prayer and honest reflection,
they may discern your will,
that your Kingdom may come,
in this diocese, and in the world,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

PRAYER

The next Bishop of Bristol will arrive in a diocese that is confident in its faith and full of hope.

Across a varied area that includes the city of Bristol, the growing town of Swindon and a swathe of towns and villages either side of the M4, our vision of *Creating connections* - with God, each other and our communities - is reinforcing our sense of shared identity and purpose.

The Diocese has had a strong focus on encouraging spiritual and numerical growth for several years. However, a realistic assessment of our situation means that our priorities of making disciples, growing leaders and engaging younger generations are more urgent than ever.

Work in Bishop's Council and Diocesan Synod has generated a clear strategic plan. Clergy and laity admire a commitment to good communication and a determination to offer support and encouragement.

This is a diocese that will not give in to decline. There is a dedicated and gifted diocesan team that has aligned its work to the stated priorities.

Confident of our strengths and successes we also know that there is work to do. Although many of us subscribe to the stated vision, some of us feel a little less included than others. We must think about how we relate to one another and how we engage with the wider community.

Here we identify four areas of focus, under headings drawn from the Ordinal, which we believe we must address with our new bishop:

- [Leading God's people in the way of holiness](#)
- [Leading God's people in mission](#)
- [Sharing in the oversight of the Church](#)
- [Proclaiming the Gospel boldly, confronting injustice and working for righteousness and peace](#)

INTRODUCTION

The Diocese of Bristol is justly pleased with the work it has done in supporting and empowering lay and ordained ministry.

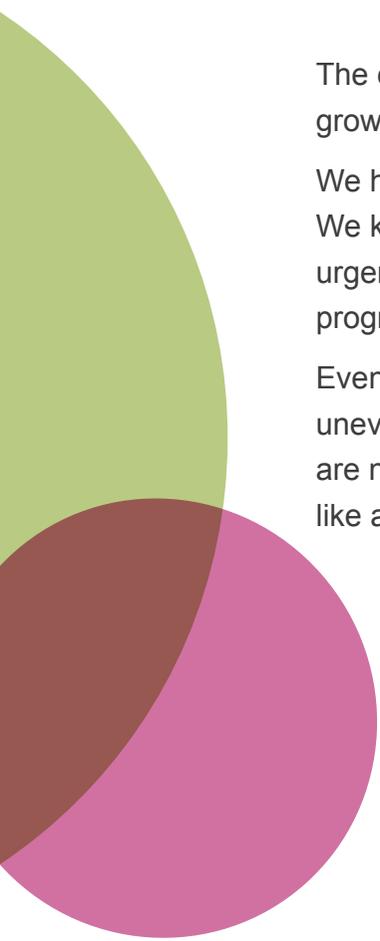
There has been a stimulating investment in leadership development and we provide attentive pastoral support. Colleagues in ministry speak of a 'permission giving culture'.

We have benefited from the ministry of a bishop working with a unified team, focused on vision and priorities in a diocese with an increasingly confident and generous evangelical culture. We believe that the next step we must take is to broaden, deepen and renew our understanding of Christian discipleship.

We want to be led by example in the way of Christ. It is time for us to enter more deeply into prayer and learning, to see God more clearly and, above all, to have the confidence to celebrate the breadth and depth of Christian commitment.

We long to proclaim the faith we hold in common whilst recognising that holiness takes many forms.

LEADING GOD'S PEOPLE IN THE WAY OF HOLINESS



The efforts and prayers of the Diocese are focused on growth and evangelism.

We have recently re-examined our vision and priorities. We know that the work of sharing the Good News is urgent. There are significant initiatives that are making progress, and some great successes.

Even so, we notice that our ambitions bear fruit unevenly. There are too many communities where we are not effective and our churches are not anything like as inclusive or diverse as we would wish.

We hope our next bishop will have the wisdom to discern what is best in our evangelism and sustain it, whilst also having the imagination and courage to help us seek out new opportunities. We know we need to take risks for Christ, we know we need to reach younger generations. We do not lack energy or enthusiasm, but we do acknowledge a need for critical and creative appraisal.

We look for guidance, encouragement and challenge as we address a failure to serve God across the whole Diocese.

LEADING GOD'S PEOPLE IN MISSION

This Diocese can name and face challenges.

We work together well, we understand governance, and we have a strategic and ambitious approach. The small Bishop's Staff and Diocesan Office teams are focused and outperform expectations. We are a welcome partner, exemplified both in opening new schools and supporting those that are well established. In short, the Diocese makes the most of its limited resources. Reflecting on that experience, funding has been made available for a second archdeacon.

These limited resources have been a significant issue for us. We expect our new bishop to help us find creative ways to share and release resources so that we might fund our aspirations with faith and confidence. Building on what we have done well, we look for someone who can lead a conversation about the way we do things whilst always reminding us of *why* we do them.

Finally, we need guidance as we negotiate the debate about human sexuality, which is still in its early stages here. Our bishop will need to be chief pastor to all who participate in that conversation.

We recognise that a diocese which includes a city like Bristol, much of it radical and liberal in culture, is home to a range of opinions, some of which will also be reflected in our churches. However, it is also clear that there are many who hope for a bishop who will reaffirm the Church's traditional teaching, some of whom understand this to be an issue that defines our communion.

The Diocese of Bristol was the first diocese to ordain women as priests in 1994 and its Diocesan Synod voted unopposed to approve the proposals for women bishops in 2011. We feel that the Bishop of Bristol should be someone who will ordain women.

SHARING IN THE OVERSIGHT OF THE CHURCH

This is a compact diocese full of contrasts and creative tension.

It has two major, and very different, urban centres at each end and a patchwork of rural communities and growing market towns in between. Ours is a changing population with increasing diversity and some deeply disturbing disparities in wealth and opportunity.

In the communities across the Diocese, there are some powerful and even strident voices campaigning for change and there are those who need to be better heard.

Our next bishop must have the Christian confidence, the learning and the grace to enter more deeply into discussions about what divides us and what unites us.

The ability to speak in a clear and engaging way out of a deep understanding will be crucial. Our bishop must be able to proclaim the Gospel, both in churches that hold Scripture in reverence and in a contested public square.

PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL BOLDLY, CONFRONTING INJUSTICE AND WORKING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE

QUALITIES

The Ordinal describes the work of a bishop and we have deliberately framed the challenges we face by referring back to the language that is used there. The liturgy for the Ordination of Bishops begins: 'Bishops are called to serve and care for the flock of Christ'.

We know that we need a pastor in this diocese who will care for the people of God and give time to getting to know us. We are conscious that we might be seeking more than any one person can give. We know that there are tensions in being asked to be both visionary and yet reverent to what is already here; to be confident in one theological tradition and yet be generous to all others.

The Ordinal sets the bar high and asks for great gifts from a bishop.

We need a Bishop

with the capacity to inspire us

Someone

- whose personal spirituality enables us to see God more clearly
- who has a deep and infectious spirituality
- who is incisive, articulate and engaging, both theologically and in public affairs
- who has the resilience to manage difficult situations in leadership
- who is able to lead and inspire by example

who can recognise what is best in us and then lead us into the future

Someone

- who is a proven team leader and team builder
- with an ability to encourage, enable and hold accountable
- who will own and look to build on our collective sense of purpose
- eager to address our need to reach out to younger generations
- keen to work in creative partnership with senior colleagues in the Diocese, Cathedral and Diocesan Office

who can engage in debate and help us to be united and inclusive

Someone

- who will value and affirm the diversity of the Diocese
- who, as diplomat and teacher, can help us navigate our disagreements and call us into a truth we can share
- who, as evangelist, can help us reach beyond the Church family, and, as prophet, speak with a relevance that others can acknowledge
- who is theologically robust and confident intellectually, willing to debate and express his/her views on the difficult issues
- who is a good communicator, skilled in addressing contemporary society in all its complexity

who is open, innovative, and risk-taking

Someone

- who can bring a fresh perspective, and new ideas, which will enrich our thinking
- who is ready to take risks for God prayerfully and collegially
- who believes that with God all things are possible

VISION, PRIORITIES AND PLANS

Creating connections – with God, each other and our communities – captures the vision of the Diocese of Bristol.

It is how we respond to Jesus' invitation to follow Him and play our part in making the Kingdom of God a reality.

Connecting with God, we become more like Christ; connecting with each other, we reflect the unity and the diversity of the Body of Christ; connecting with our communities, we are an incarnational Church, proclaiming the Good News afresh and being signs of God's Kingdom amongst all people and in all places.

Across the Diocese, our priorities in fulfilling the vision and addressing the challenges we face are making disciples, growing leaders and engaging younger generations.

The Diocesan Synod has endorsed a Strategic Plan 2016-20 to ensure activity and resources at diocesan level are directed most effectively to support the vision and priorities.

The Diocese of Bristol's vision, priorities and plans are embedded in the Church of England's Renewal and Reform programme.

“From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

EPHESIANS 4:16

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-20

VISION	PRIORITIES	IMPACT				
<p>Our vision as a diocese is:</p> <p>Creating connections – with God, each other, our communities</p>	<p><i>Making disciples</i></p>	 Increase weekly attendance by 1,800 people	 300 more baptisms and confirmations a year	 One in two church members part of a discipleship group	 Grow number of children in church schools	
	<p><i>Growing leaders</i></p> <p><i>Engaging younger generations</i></p>	 Increase number of ordinands by 50%	 A third more clergy taking part in leadership development	 Giving to parishes increasing by £1.4 million	 Parish Share increasing by £1 million	 Total diocesan income increasing by £1.6 million
<p>WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS AT DIOCESAN LEVEL BY:</p> <p>Resourcing and multiplying effective mission</p> <p>Optimising ministry and leadership</p> <p>Enhancing financial resources</p>		<p>FOCUSING ON THESE STRATEGIC CHOICES:</p>				
<p>Helping parishes make disciples, grow leaders and engage younger generations by spreading six practices.</p>		<p>Growing Christian influence and the number of children in church schools by strengthening the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust.</p>		<p>Sharing and renewing mission and ministry by establishing mission areas around the Diocese.</p>		
<p>Growing new leaders by resourcing recruitment and development programmes.</p>		<p>Increasing financial resources available for mission by supporting parishes and establishing the new approach to Parish Share.</p>		<p>Investing in strategic initiatives by realising surplus assets.</p>		

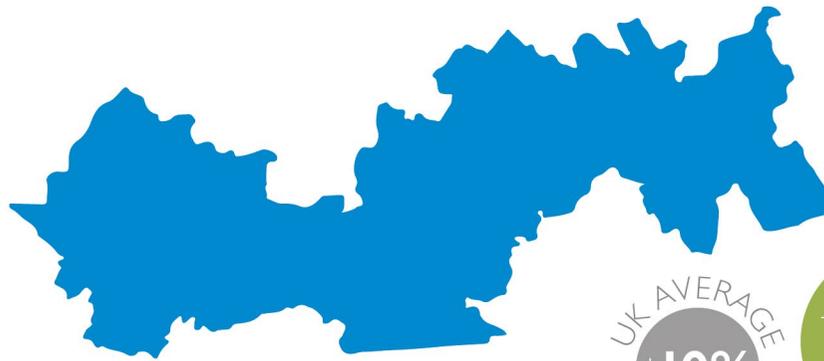
SOCIAL CONTEXT

The Diocese of Bristol is both compact and full of contrasts. Bristol and Swindon are two major, growing, but very different, urban centres that, although connected by the rail and road network, do not naturally relate to one another. The towns and rural communities either side of the M4 also have their own identities.



The following pages show the make up of the various parts of the Diocese and the differences between them.

DIOCESE OF BRISTOL



POPULATION
1,010,000

UK AVERAGE
+10%

+15%
SINCE
2002

■ UK AVERAGE

POPULATION



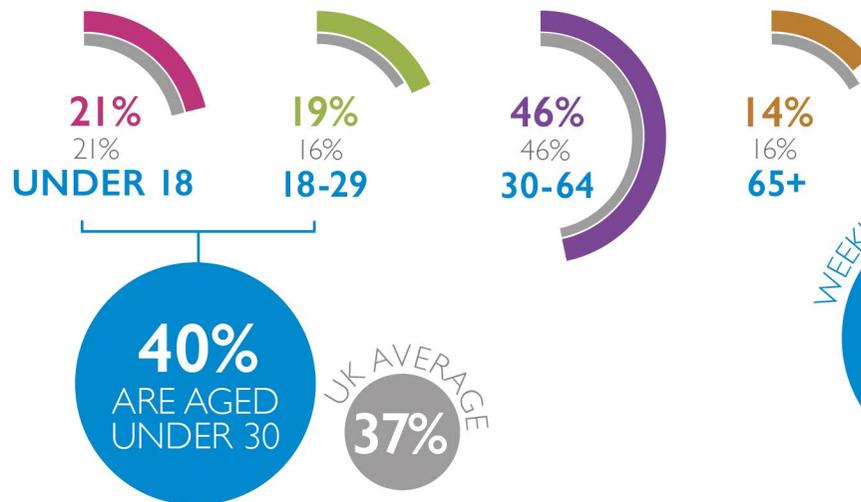
MOST DEPRIVED PARISHES



RELIGION



AGE



CHRISTIAN
54%
59%

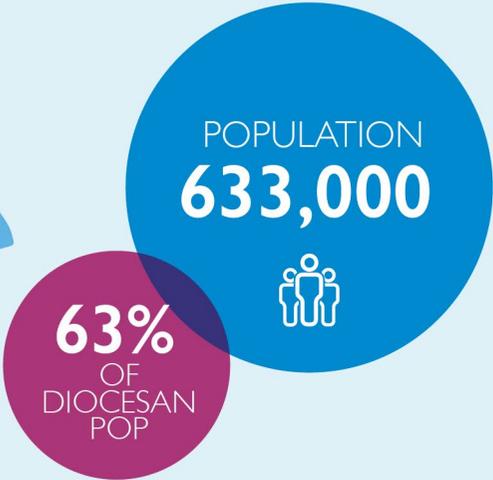
NONE
41%
32%

OTHER
5%
9%

WEEKLY COFE ATTENDANCE
OF
POPULATION
1.5%

UK AVERAGE
1.7%

BRISTOL URBAN AREA INCLUDING INNER BRISTOL



■ UK AVERAGE

POPULATION



MOST DEPRIVED PARISHES

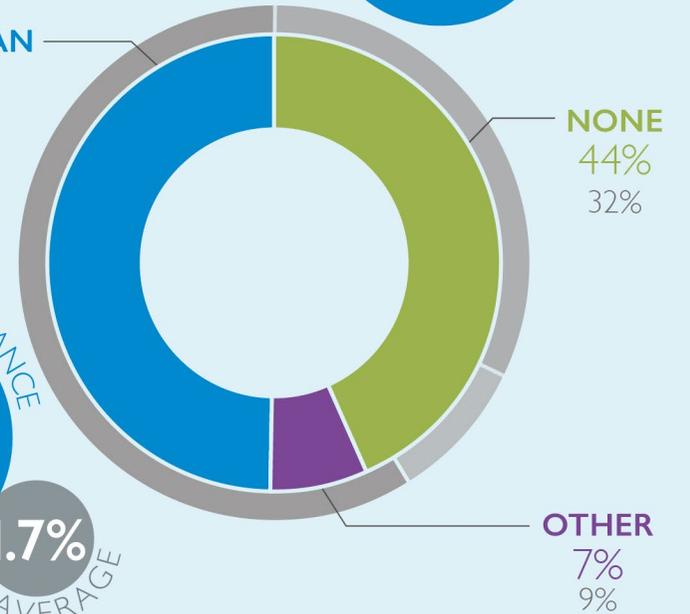
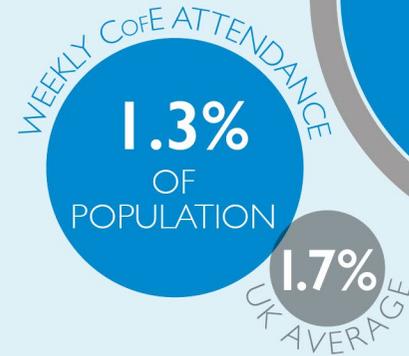
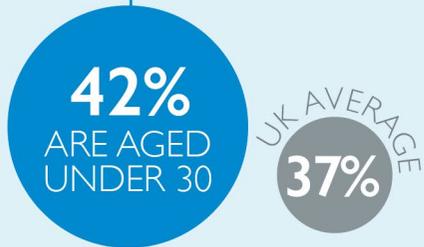
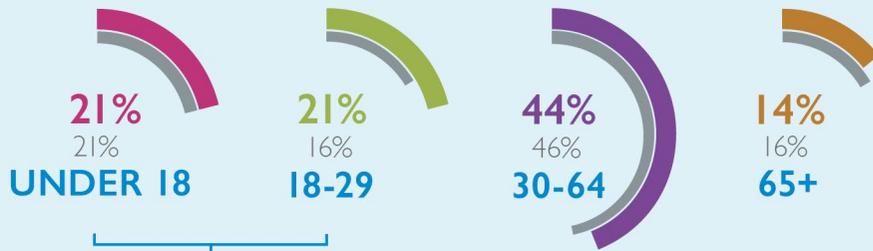


RELIGION

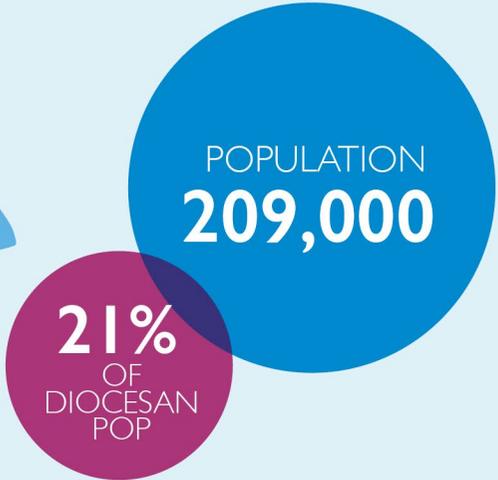
CHRISTIAN 50% 59%



AGE



INNER BRISTOL



■ UK AVERAGE

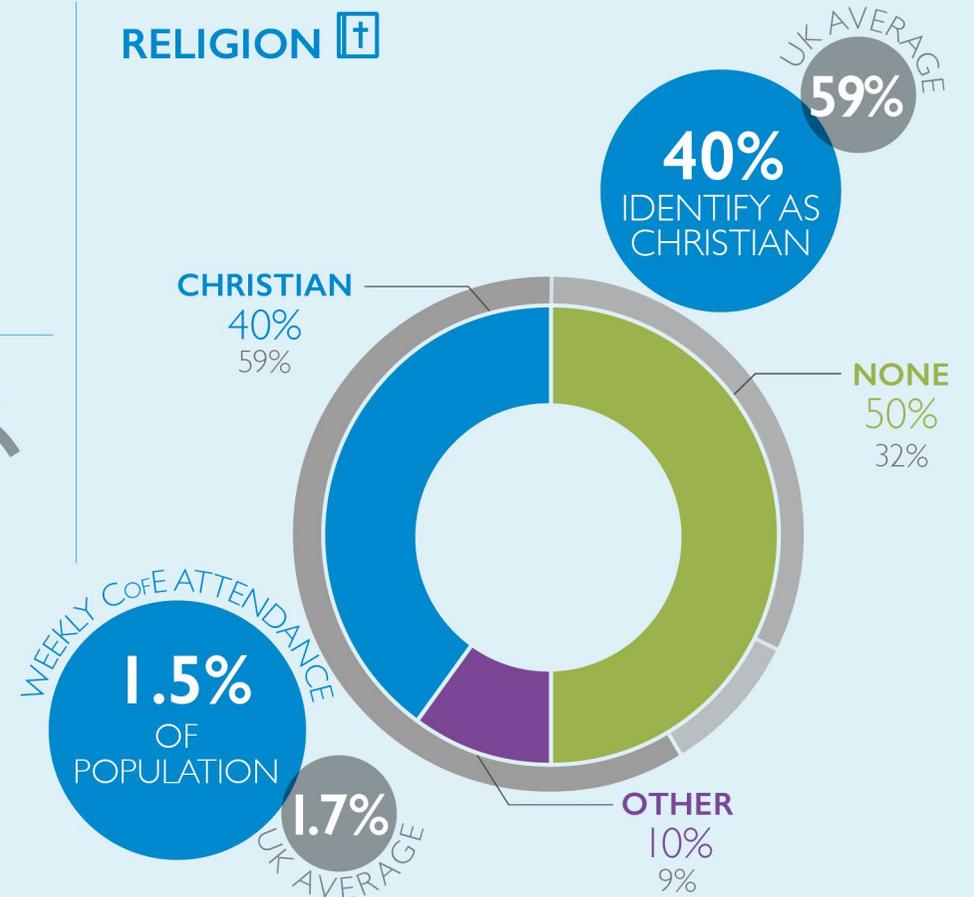
POPULATION



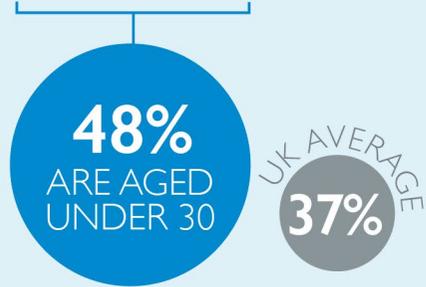
MOST DEPRIVED PARISHES



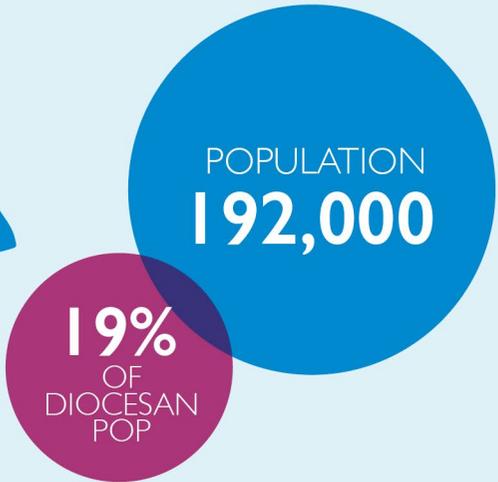
RELIGION



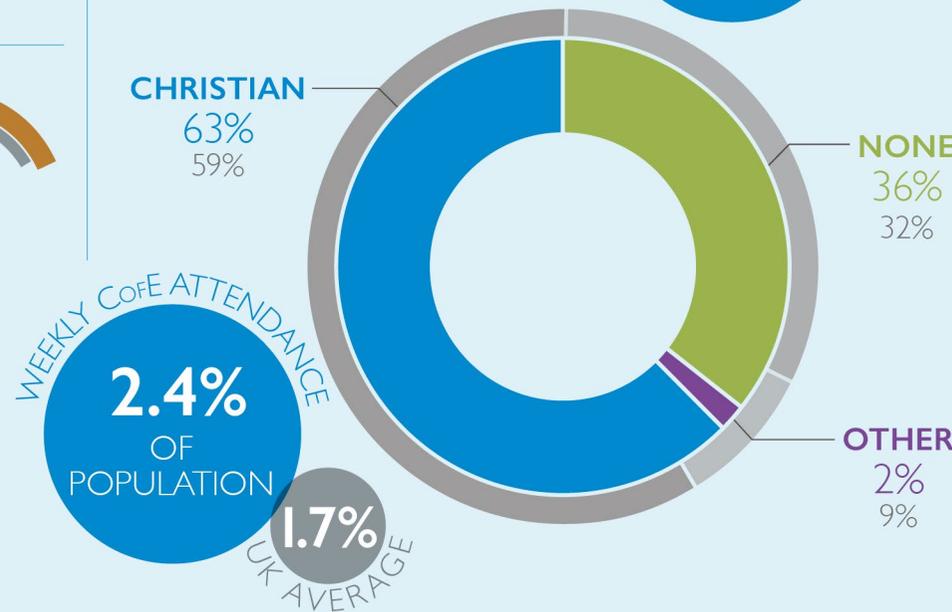
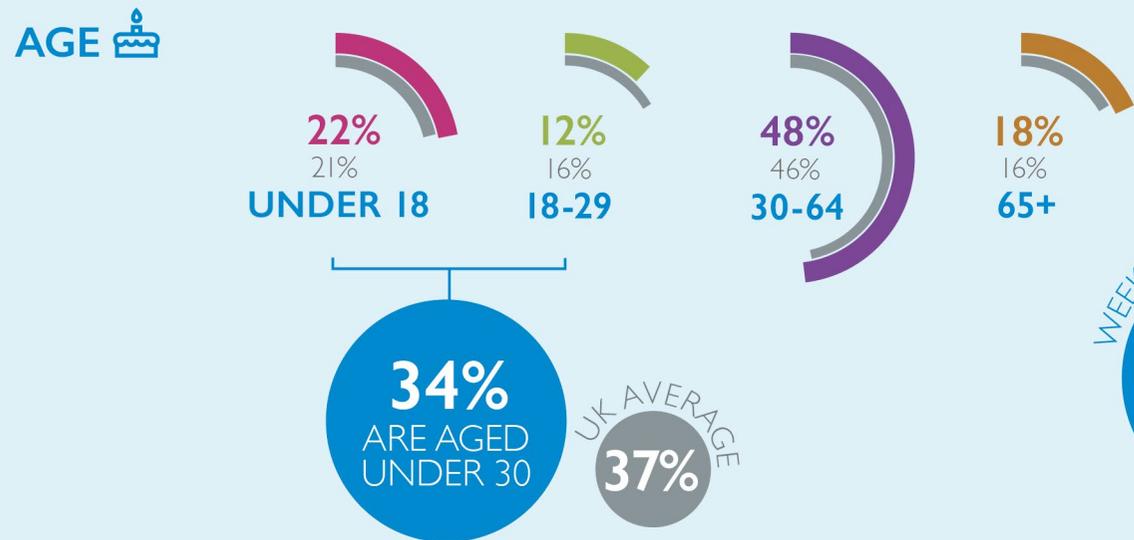
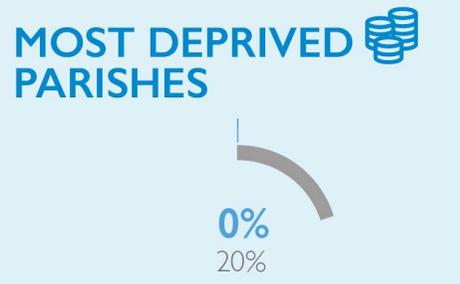
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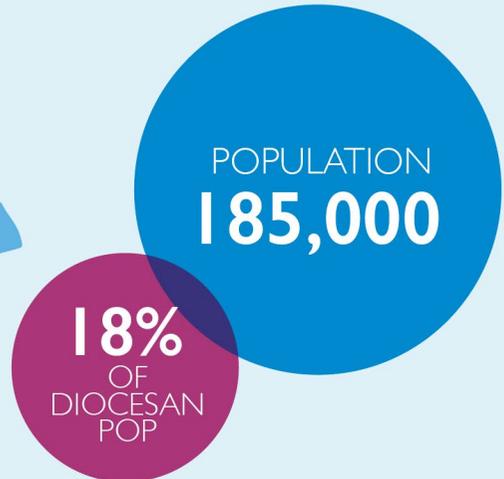
TOWNS, VILLAGES AND RURAL AREAS



■ UK AVERAGE



SWINDON



■ UK AVERAGE

POPULATION

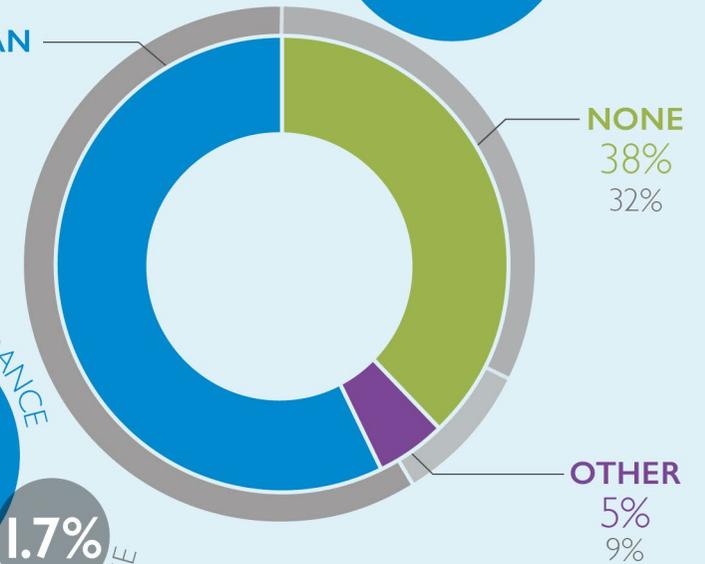


MOST DEPRIVED PARISHES

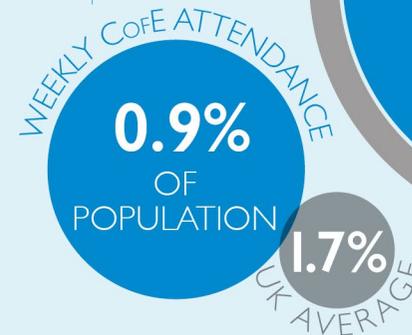
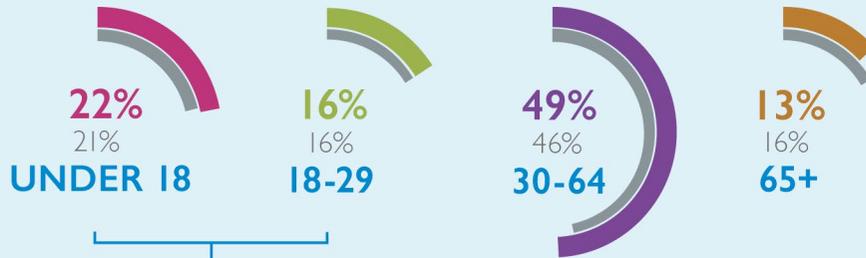


RELIGION

CHRISTIAN
57%
59%



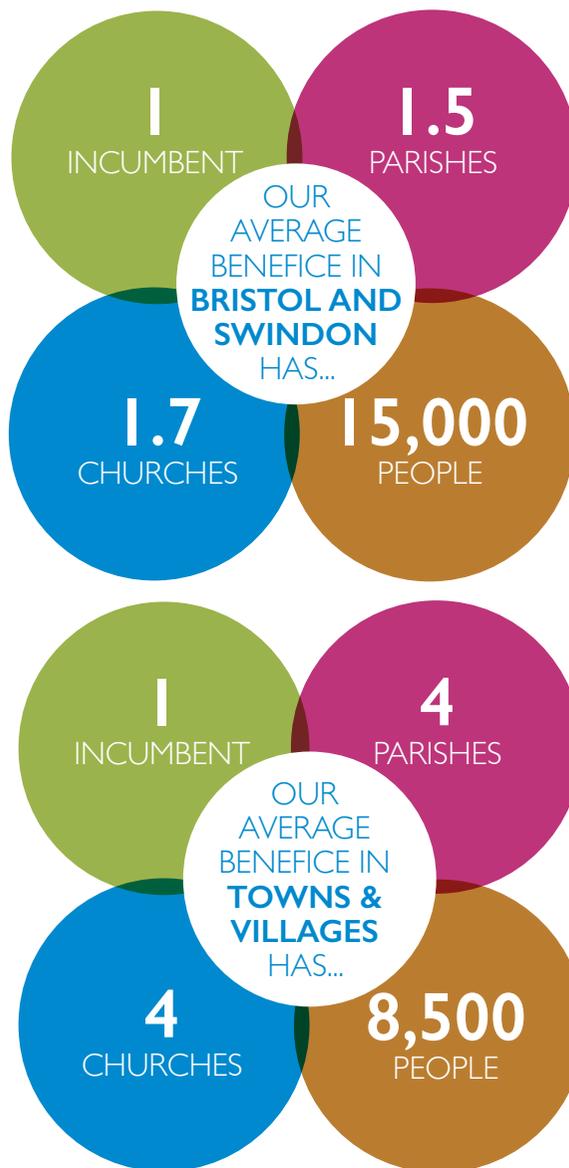
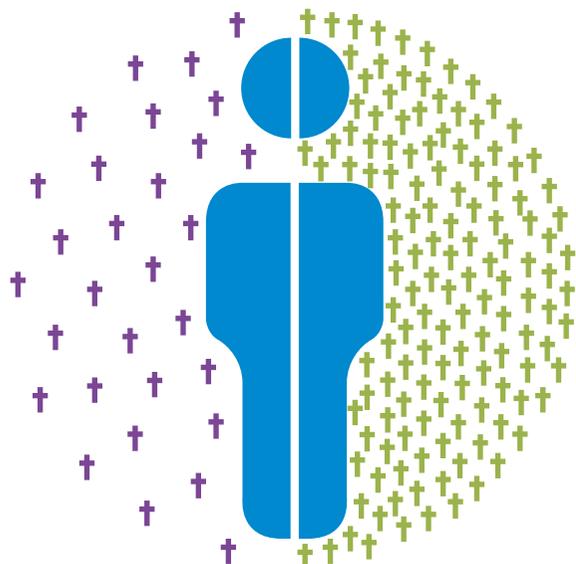
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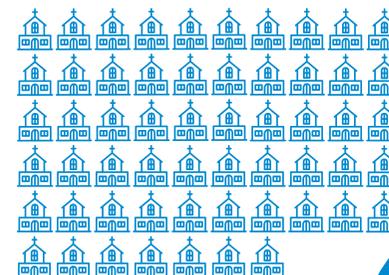
CHURCHES, PARISHES AND DEANERIES

Given the mix of urban, town and village contexts in which we minister, there are variations in size and make up of congregations and benefices.

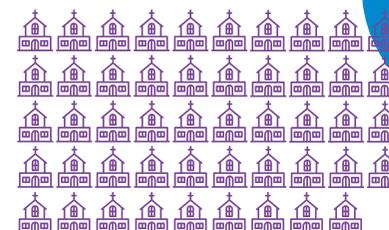
50% OF OUR WORSHIPPERS GO TO 30 PARISHES THE OTHER HALF ATTEND 135 PARISHES



GRADE I 57



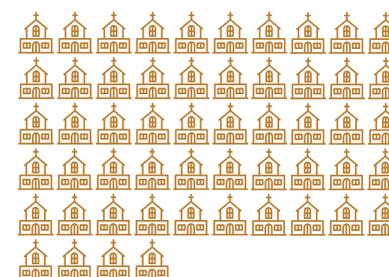
GRADE II* 49



GRADE II 40



UNLISTED 54



TOTAL OF 200 BUILDINGS IN THE DIOCESE

The Diocese of Bristol has a recent history of entrusting extra responsibility to leadership in its seven deaneries where good relationships have been built. Area Deans and Deanery Leadership Teams now focus on promoting the diocesan priorities of making disciples, growing leaders and engaging younger generations at a more local level.

There are two archdeaconries, Bristol and Malmesbury, although the distinction has been dormant in recent years with one archdeacon who has had responsibility across both.



SPIRITUAL AND NUMERICAL GROWTH

For the last ten years, the Diocese of Bristol has been focused on encouraging spiritual and numerical growth first through the Diocesan Growth Programme and now through Creating connections. In churches across the Diocese, in all contexts and from all traditions, there are many examples of lives and communities being changed.

However, we are not connecting sufficiently with, and therefore reflecting, the make up of our communities. Only 1.5% of the population attend a Church of England church each week – even lower amongst younger generations, those in deprived areas and in BAME communities.

Although some of our churches are growing, those leaving or dying still outnumber those joining or coming to faith and as a result the reduction in attendance is accelerating. In a few cases, congregations have reduced significantly.

ADULT WEEKLY ATTENDANCE

2006 13,826
2016 11,986



IN THE LAST 10 YEARS
-11.5%

IN THE LAST 5 YEARS
-9%

CHILD SUNDAY ATTENDANCE

2006 2,501
2016 1,672



IN THE LAST 10 YEARS
-30%

IN THE LAST 5 YEARS
-23%

**More than
4 out of 5 parishes**

- have a regular prayer gathering
- have small groups for discipleship
- have a family-focused expression of church
- connect with a local school

Creating connections and the Diocese's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan seeks to address this challenge.

Each parish is being supported in developing their own plans through the Creating Connections Toolkit. The "Making disciples in your parish" resource provides practical ways to support spiritual and numerical growth.



1 out of 5 church members

- is part of a small group for discipleship
- serves in a ministry or leadership capacity

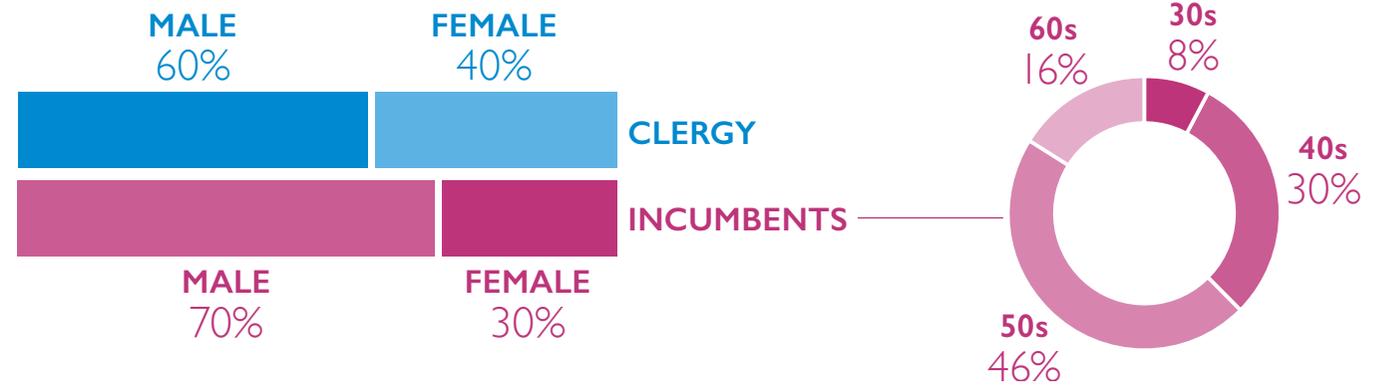
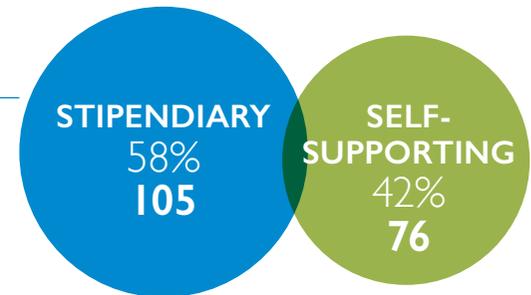
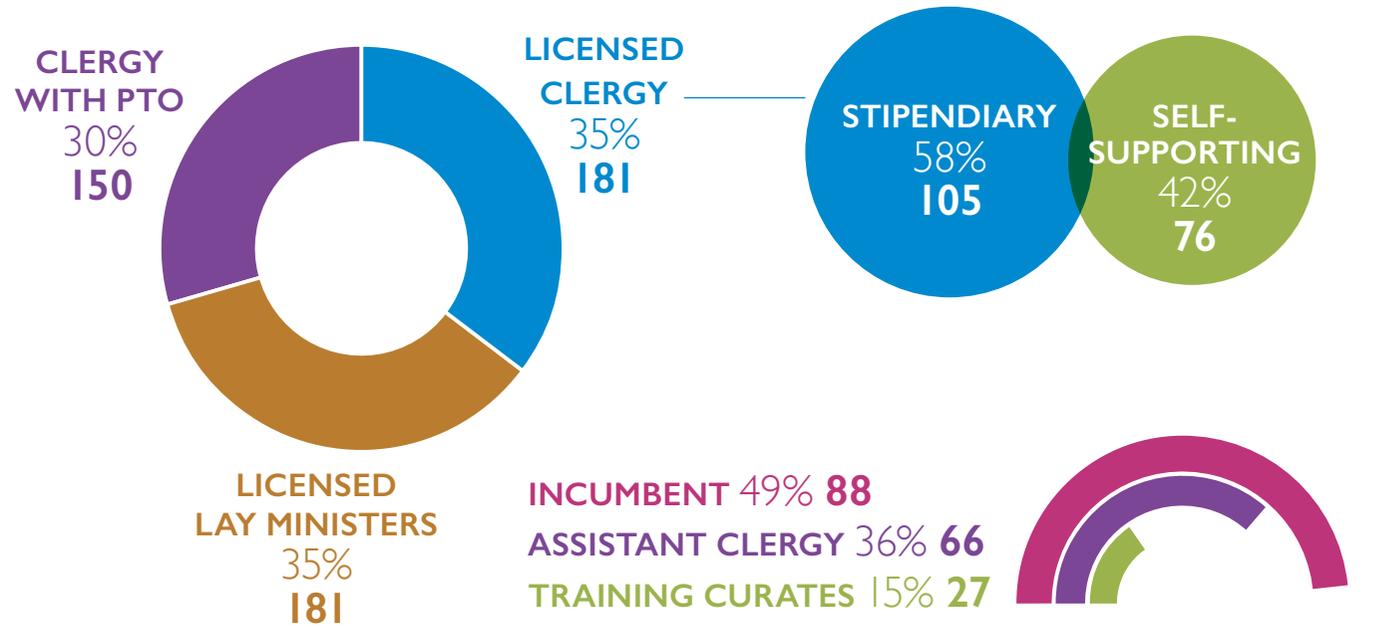
2 out of 5 parishes offer an opportunity to explore the Christian faith

"Creating connections contains a strong plan for spiritual and numerical growth. The launch has been successful and parishes understand how it fits into their context"

MINISTRY IN THE DIOCESE

There is a collaborative and complementary mix of licensed ministers in the Diocese of Bristol. Numbers of licensed clergy, licensed lay ministers and clergy with permission to officiate (PTO) are broadly even. Each churchmanship is represented although there has been an increasing proportion of clergy from the evangelical tradition.

The Diocese was rated by its clergy to be one of the top five dioceses in three out of four of the ministry development categories, with a particular focus on leadership development.



The numbers sponsored for ordination by the Diocese of Bristol have been high relative to its size (top quartile of dioceses). Current ordinands are younger and more ethnically diverse than has been the case in recent years.

The Diocese has a strategic initiative to increase the quality, quantity and diversity of its new ministers.

Ordinands train on courses and in colleges in a variety of institutions. Trinity College is located in Bristol and enjoys a good relationship with the Diocese and its parishes.

A large number of Bristol ordinands train at Trinity.

“The Diocese’s work on vocations and on recruitment and deployment of ministers is strong; pastoral support of clergy is highly effective”

OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS:

Eight candidates sponsored for ordination each year

Equal numbers of men and women

Three out of four sponsored as Incumbent Status

Three BAME candidates sponsored for ordination in 2017

Two out of five incumbent status ordinands under 32

RESOURCING CHURCHES AND MISSION AREAS

As well as encouraging spiritual and numerical growth in every parish, the Diocese is committed to focusing energy and resources in ways that will have a substantial impact on making disciples and growing leaders.

The Mission Areas and Resourcing Churches strategic initiative is the particular way the Diocese is doing this. In a Mission Area, parishes across a wider geographical area partner in a co-ordinated approach to mission. Mission Areas also provide a mission-focused context in which new ministers can train and develop.

The Diocese is providing extra capacity and support to churches with mission potential to become resourcing churches. These resourcing churches will have a vision for wider mission, be learning communities, develop leaders and resource others.

Strategic Development Funding (SDF) has been awarded to develop three Mission Areas in different contexts (suburban/outer estate, new town and surroundings, market town and rural) across the Diocese from which we will learn to expand the initiative across the Diocese from 2020.

The Diocese is in the process of planting resourcing churches in the centres of both Bristol and Swindon to launch late in 2018. These have the particular objective of building capacity to plant new congregations. SDF applications have been submitted to help resource these projects.

OVER FIVE YEARS:



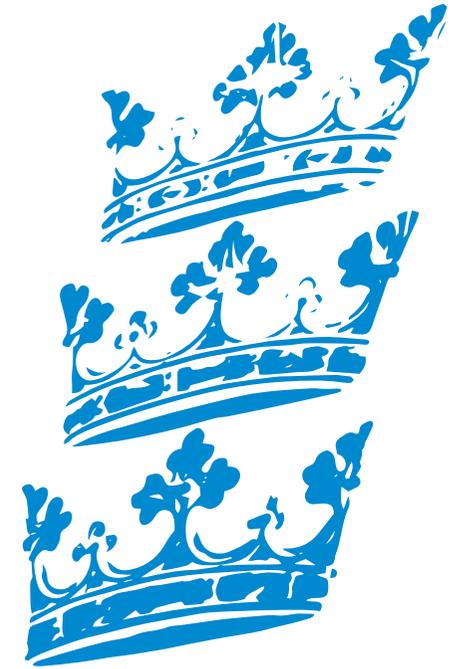
BRISTOL CATHEDRAL

Bristol Cathedral stands at the civic heart of the city and is the Mother Church of the Diocese of Bristol.

Centred around a daily rhythm of prayer and worship and a building designed to reflect the Glory of God, the Cathedral's ministry seeks to engage with people across the city and the Diocese in [worship](#), [word](#) and [witness](#).

In recent years the congregation has grown and there have been significant increases in attendance at major festivals. It has a growing focus on issues of social justice on behalf of the wider Diocese and has an important role to play facilitating engagement between partners in the city of Bristol. This has included facilitating discussions around education, helping older people and the legacy of slavery.

Cathedral governance is both good and improving and, although it has some major upcoming fabric projects, its financial position is secure.



BRISTOL-UGANDA LINK

The link between the Diocese of Bristol and the Province of Uganda is well established, celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2019. The link is highly valued by many, both in the Diocese and in Uganda. Bristol deaneries have individual links with Ugandan dioceses, there are regular visits to and from Uganda, a programme of mutual learning and a commitment to partnership in mission.

As differences and tensions in the Primates Meeting have grown, Archbishops of Canterbury have encouraged this link, as a bridge within the Communion. The Bishop of Bristol has built and maintained constructive relationships with Archbishops of Uganda. Alongside those who see great benefits in the link, there are others with questions about the relationship and its future.



EDUCATION

Schools

There is a varied mix and growing number of Church Schools across the Diocese where children receive a distinctively Christian education.

The Education Team supports schools in leadership, governance and Christian distinctiveness, as well as links with churches. Outcomes reflected by Ofsted and SIAMS inspections are of a high standard across Church Schools and continue to improve.

70
CHURCH SCHOOLS

11
ACADEMIES IN DBAT

15,000
CHILDREN
EXPECTED TO GROW
BY 3,000

The Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust (DBAT) has made successful bids to open five new schools, including the first Church of England secondary school in Swindon.

The Diocese is committed to strengthening DBAT and increasing Christian influence and the number of children educated in Church Schools. The Cathedral Schools Trust is currently being established as a “church-led” Multi Academy Trust.

94%
OF CHURCH SCHOOLS
GOOD OR
OUTSTANDING
(OFSTED)

98%
OF CHURCH SCHOOLS
GOOD OR
OUTSTANDING
(SIAMS)

“The Diocese’s schools work is well regarded and has a strong focus on encouraging and sharing learning and good practice in school-parish links”

Higher Education

Bristol has two major institutions of higher education: the University of Bristol, a “redbrick” chartered in 1909, and the University of the West of England (known as UWE), which received university status in 1992. In the last 10 years, student numbers have increased by 10,000 across the two universities.

The Diocese of Bristol employs full-time co-ordinating Anglican chaplains in each university.

Swindon is the UK’s largest centre of population without its own university. In March 2008, a proposal was put forward for a university-level institution to be established in the town within a decade. However, these plans are currently mothballed.

The Diocese is working to strengthen its links and chaplaincy work in a number of further education institutions.



22,000
STUDENTS
AT BRISTOL
UNIVERSITY

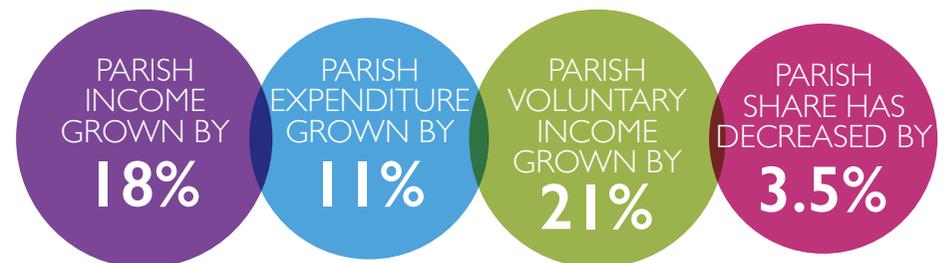
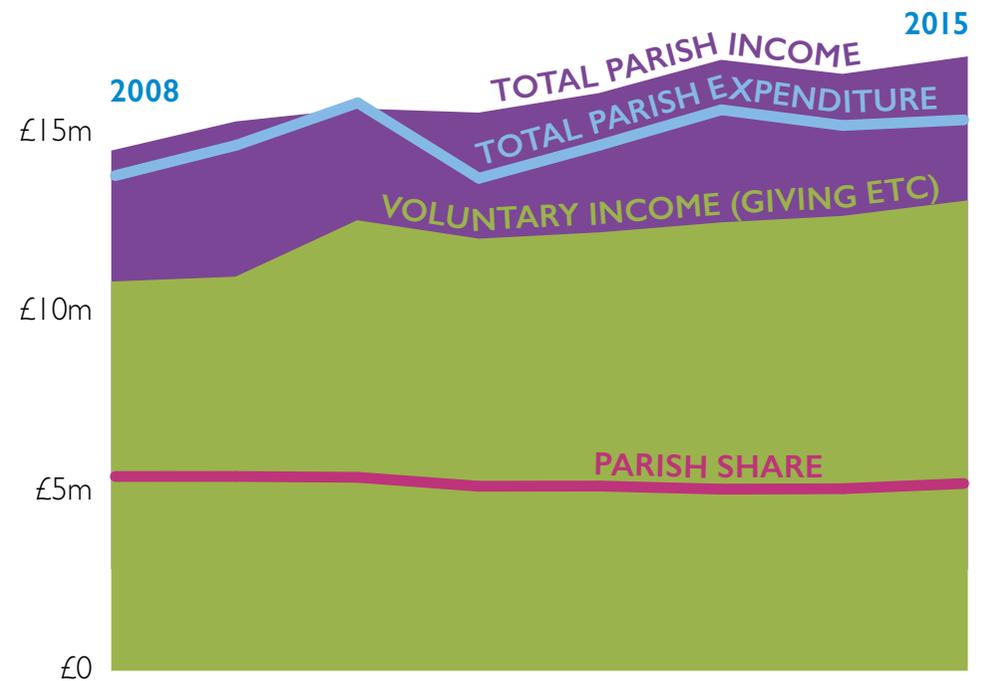
28,000
STUDENTS
AT UWE

FINANCES

Across the parishes in the Diocese, giving levels are relatively high and income overall outweighs expenditure. In the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) investments perform well, grant income is stable, property is well managed and its balance sheet is strong. Diocesan expenditure is accurately budgeted and tightly controlled.

Paradoxically, Parish Share has been a matter of concern over recent years. The approach to Parish Share between 2010 and 2015 led to a significant reduction in real terms. Over the last few years, there has been a targeted reduction both in stipendiary posts and central costs. Nevertheless, reductions in Parish Share have still led to several years of financial challenges.

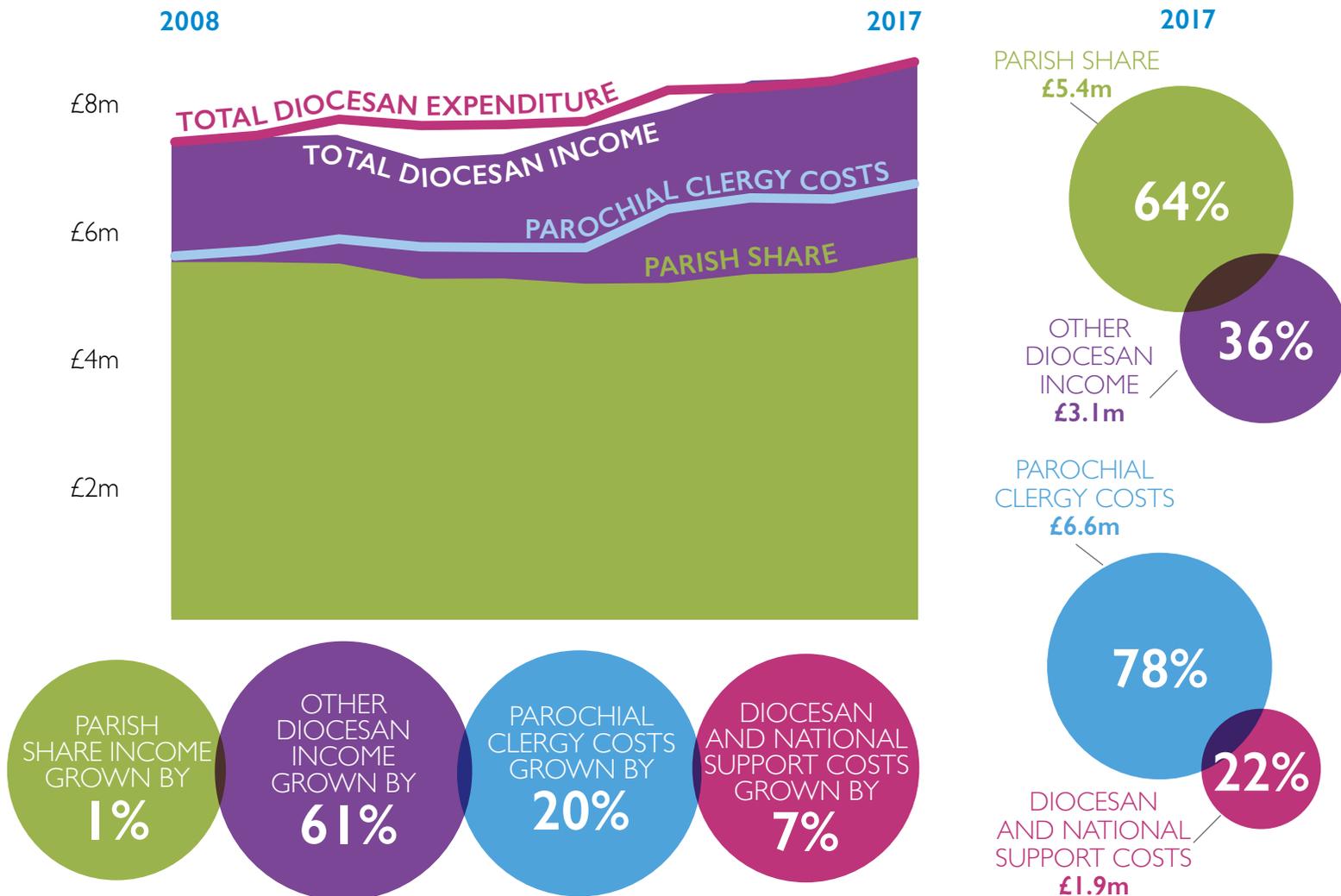
PARISH LEVEL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE



DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The Diocese has a strategic initiative to encourage generosity in parishes to increase financial resources available for mission. A new Parish Share approach was successfully introduced in 2016 which led to a 5% increase in 2017. The DBF is also realising surplus property assets to invest in strategic initiatives.

However, Parish Share needs to grow significantly to maintain the level of stipendiary posts and central costs and to fund an increase in ordinands and curates.



DIOCESAN TEAM AND GOVERNANCE

The central diocesan team and governance structures are characterised by being lean, focused on core and strategic activity and well managed.

The Bishop's Staff Team currently consists of the Bishops of Bristol and Swindon, the Archdeacon, the Dean of Bristol, the Diocesan Secretary and the Head of Ministry Development. The Ven Christine Froude retires in September 2018 and finance is available to appoint two archdeacons in the future.

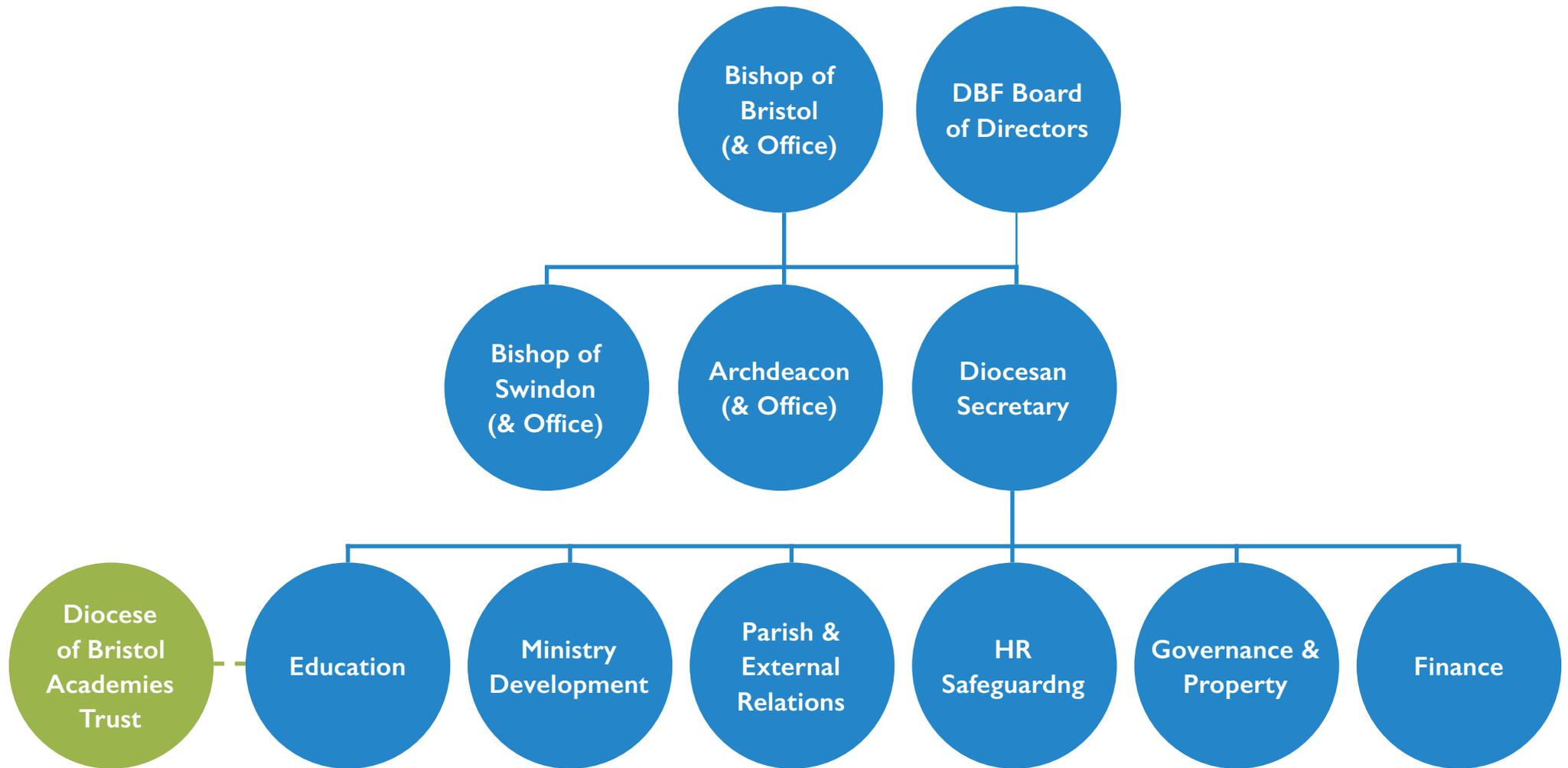
The Diocesan Support Services is made up of six teams under the Diocesan Secretary's leadership, working closely with the two Bishops' Offices. Staff of the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust work as an integral part of the Education Team.

In recent years, the Diocesan Synod has become larger, more representative and engaged. The Bishop's Council is a small, committed board, set within streamlined governance structures.

“The Bishop's Staff is a united, collaborative and strategic team, supported by strong governance structures, including a highly effective Bishop's Council”

“Capacity has been strengthened by reforms but is still very stretched”

“Parishes welcome the Diocesan Support Services' strong ethos of service”





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