

What is the Resource Church in Newcastle Diocese?

It will be a new church located in the heart of Newcastle city centre to be a missionally active, growing church that will serve a demographic that we are largely missing at present: 67 thousand students studying at the 2 universities and central college within the city plus a wealth of young professionals and families working or living in Newcastle centre. That's not to say it excludes others but the style of worship is designed specifically to engage this demographic.

Why a Resource Church?

Church of England attendance is declining, it has halved in the last two decades and will halve again in the next 20 years if we do not change. Nearly half our attendance is over 65 years in age. It has been shown that if people belong to the church in their 20s then they will probably stay for the rest of their lives, so if the church is to thrive we must attract more people and more younger people. The creation of a Resource Church in Newcastle City Centre is one key element of the diocese strategy to reverse this decline and deliver our vision of **growing church bringing hope**.

Resource churches are a key initiative that the national Church has identified to help the work of a diocese in Mission and Discipleship, with a particular emphasis on Church Planting. Our Resource Church will work strategically with the Bishop to plant churches in other parts of the city and, importantly, to provide resources and ministry teams that will work with churches throughout the diocese to create new expressions of Christian growth.

Resource churches have been established in other parts of the country. They grow quickly and, once a significant, sustainable congregation has been established, plant new churches and congregations. Our Resource Church will also work with existing churches in the diocese, sharing resources together and learning from each other to help bring growth across the diocese.

What characterises our Resource Church?

In Newcastle Diocese, our city centre Resource Church:

- will be, first and foremost, a missionally active, growing church, primarily serving missing demographics;
- will be a centre of excellence in matters missional, and concerning church planting and contemporary worship;
- will act as a hub for sharing and developing good practice across church traditions and styles;
- will exist as a resource for the missional growth throughout the parishes of the diocese, for example in
 - training events;
 - a focal point for national missional resources;
 - offering training and fellowship to a growing cohort of Resource Curates and Resource Ministers;
 - staff time offered in mentoring or facilitation.
- will establish, host, and resource an 'extern' scheme, with externs stationed in hubs around the diocese and receiving training through the central hub. This builds on the good practice of the Church of England Ministry Experience Scheme;
- will have an active church planting strategy in line with that of the diocese to work with and support "resourcing clusters": a group of churches who have chosen to work together with the Resource Church to develop mission and planting.



Photo courtesy of Martin Hulse

Where will our central Resource Church be located?

A large building is required to house our projection of a congregation 400+ strong within 5 years in the city centre. Whilst we have had a number of ideas on where this should be, the lead proposal is to use All Saints church located in the heart of the city. This iconic building, just up from the quayside and 2 minutes' walk from Dean Street was a church from 1786 until it closed in the 1950s after which ownership transferred to the City Council.

Who will lead it?

The leader of our diocese Resource Church is Ben Doolan, you may have met him at our recent synod. Ben is very excited to be moving up from York to Newcastle with his wife Ellie. Ben brings a wealth of experience and skills from his time at St Michael le Belfrey and, whilst he already spends a day a week with us at present, expects to move here fulltime early next year. Ben expects to bring trusted colleagues as well as a congregation with him to help plant the Resource Church here in Newcastle.



When will this happen?

Work to create our very own Resource Church has already started. We have appointed the leader, are already engaged with Newcastle City Council to agree a lease for All Saints and are working with the architect on how to reorder All Saints in line with our requirements, which we are also discussing with Historic England and the Council. Over the coming months we will firm up on these activities and work will commence on the building, recruitment will continue, a legal entity for the Resource Church will be formed via the Bishop's Mission Order for which consultation is already underway, engagement with other stakeholders will continue and finally we will work with grant agencies to attract further funding. At the time of writing this we are close to submitting an application to the Church Commissioners for a significant investment towards our Resource Church. The Resource Church is planned to open in early 2019 and is expected to be fully live by September 2019.

How will we pay for this?

The Church Commissioners play a significant part in helping to make this happen, the diocese make an investment, Historic England and other grant bodies play their part and of course the Resource Church itself contributes to the running costs from year one and by year 5 is self-sufficient and is expected to be the largest single contributor of parish share to the diocese.

What is a 'Resourcing Cluster'?

A Resourcing Cluster will be a group of local churches who have agreed to work together, and with the Resource Church, in order to be a resource to the local area, and to engage in planting new expressions of Christian Community. Each cluster will be distinct as shaped by local context, tradition, and need, but will share some common marks and commitments. Thus churches in the diocese, either because they choose to pursue this for themselves or in response to an invitation, will work with the Bishop's team to explore setting up a Resourcing Cluster. Once a cluster has been designated by the Bishop, the Resource Church will typically provide further resources: Resourcing Externs, a Resource Curate based at one of the benefices within the Cluster and a Resourcing Minister to work alongside the Incumbents of the cluster.

How does my church get involved?

Pray... please pray for the plans and for everyone involved, as well as praying about how your church might get involved.

Once we have planted our Diocesan Resource Church in Newcastle, work will start to develop and resource 'Resourcing Clusters' throughout the diocese. You could start by talking with your neighbouring parishes and your deanery to explore and share your vision for the future. You may want to better understand the area and communities you serve, try new things to engage in mission and share your experience with others. Think of who and how to develop your human resources to better enable missional ministry in your area. This may all sound like a challenge which is why you could build on the relationships you have with other parishes that may form part of a cluster, share, learn from each other, work together and pray.

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