

Our Vision and Strategy for Church Growth 2024 – 2030: Proclaiming Christ and Growing Disciples

1. Background

Our first diocesan Mission Action Plan (or strategy) created in 2016 was developed from a series of 'Follow' events around the diocese. In summary, it built a shared understanding across our diocese which sought to encourage people to play a part in God's mission. The themes were very similar to those in our renewed strategy and focus was placed on inspiring each generation - our families, friends, neighbours, colleagues, the people we meet - to follow Jesus Christ so that lives and communities change, and God's kingdom can grow in Hereford Diocese. A strategic investment was made in five market town areas to develop intergenerational mission and deaneries were encouraged to develop mission action plans as a cornerstone for local activities.

In 2020 following the appointment of our new diocesan Bishop and the subsequent global covid-19 pandemic, plans to review the previous strategy were interrupted. In Autumn 2021 as the old strategy ended, we began a new series of listening and engagement events to understand the impact and effectiveness of the previous strategy. Events took place across the diocese, hosted by Bishop Richard, which sought to understand what changes we needed to make to develop a plan for the decade ahead.

The first question posed during the event asked people to consider what the diocese central staff could do to help parishes, benefices and deaneries to flourish. Core to our planning is partnership to support parishes to flourish whilst recognising the reality of our current situation.

300 people from across our diocese attended one of the 10 in-person listening events which took place during November and December 2021. For those unable to attend in-person events, an online survey encouraged wider engagement alongside several focus groups which were convened via Zoom: enabling an estimated total engagement with nearly 1000 people from churches across our diocese.

The feedback and analysis led to a number of key decisions:

1. To retain our mission statement as this remained at the heart of what we are here to do: "Proclaim Christ and Grow Disciples".
2. Clearly identify three simple core values which are recognisable to everyone across the diocese: Prayerful, Christlike and Engaged.

3. To set clear priorities which allow churches and schools the freedom to develop local plans whilst setting a focus for the activities of the central diocesan structures.

The summary presented to Bishop's Staff and deanery leadership teams in January 2022 asked these groups to help shape the next stage of discernment and identify the priority areas of focus that were presented to the Bishop's Council in February 2022. In October 2022 Bishop Richard launched our vision for the diocese, setting the journey to 2030.

The strategy holds firm to our vision which is "to proclaim Christ and grow disciples", underpinned by our three behaviour values: Prayerful, Christlike and Engaged.

The following strategy covers three areas of the strategy: Mission and growth, our age profile and increasing lay leadership. It follows is a framework to enable the local church to flourish but recognises that there are some things that will need to be stimulated centrally due to a lack of existing capacity or resources in parishes across our diocese, which were identified during the initial consultation period in Autumn 2021.

2. Executive Summary

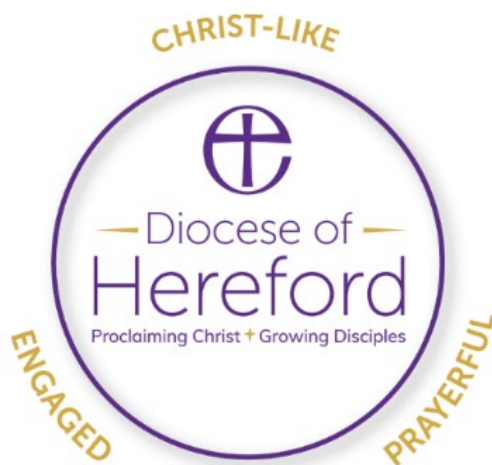
This document details the strategic aims, goals and outcomes that we believe take account of the views of those consulted across our diocese who have said what they want to see by 2030. It shares our journey to this point and how we plan to implement our plan.

This strategic plan explains how we will journey together, making some bold changes. These take account of our geographical limitations and seek to create new administrative and ministry roles in seven areas – one in Hereford City and a further six areas focused on identifying and growing the number of people attending larger churches. Deaneries will be encouraged to work in partnership to respond to local needs and new posts would be resourced from the Mission Fund. These new posts are designed to release local lay and ordained leaders for mission so that parishes – which are at the heart of our diocese – will flourish.

A phased rollout of this strategy recognises the opportunities to learn lessons and adapt to local needs as they arise. We seek to create 50 church communities with at least 50 people attending (in larger market towns these will be churches with at least 100 people attending). These churches will enable clergy to share work more evenly across a deanery/benefice, enable lay ministry to flourish and make joining a church more attractive to the wider public. However, the dispersed and rural population centres of our diocese mean numbers must not be the sole measure of success and our approach will always seek to take account of local factors. Currently 14 churches in our diocese have a regular congregation of 50 people, this picture makes growth challenging, when so much falls to so few people. Our ambitious plan is accompanied with financial investment and in strategic resourcing.

3. Our Vision

Our overall vision remains unchanged: “To proclaim Christ and Grow Disciples”, with the addition of our three core values: Prayerful, Christlike and Engaged.



4. Our Five Strategic Aims

Fundamental to our strategy is local and diocesan-wide action for growth in our values of prayerfulness, Christlikeness and engagement through the following five strategic aims:

1. FAITH/DISCIPLISHIP: Welcoming new disciples and encouraging deeper faith in all.
2. LEADERSHIP/TEAMS: Expanding the number of both clergy and lay leaders as well as supporting and equipping them.
3. YOUTH/INTERGENERATIONAL MISSION: Growing a younger congregational profile.
4. FINANCE: Achieving sustainable finance through generous giving and asset management.
5. BUILDINGS: Developing a clear future for every church building.

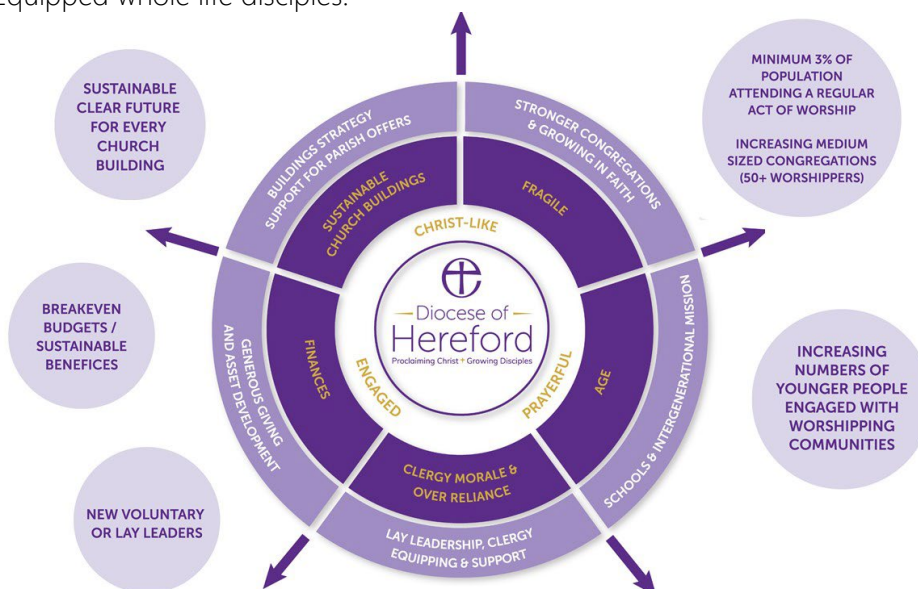
5. Our Six Strategic Goals

We have identified six practical strategic goals that will help us to achieve a sustainable status by 2030 these are:

1. (Growing) Many (at least 50) of our benefices having one church congregation with a usual attendance of over 50 in rural areas (or 100 in our market towns), with a minimum of 3% of the population attending a regular form of worship (FAITH/DISCIPLESHIP)
2. (Discipleship & wellbeing) We want worshipping communities to reflect our values, to be taught to know clearly what they believe and to feel able to share their everyday faith with others. We want to love, equip and care for our lay and ordained leaders to feel supported to carry out their calling and mission to enable a Christian presence in every community. (FAITH/DISCIPLESHIP)
3. (Sustainable) We want at least 200 new voluntary or lay leaders to be trained and commissioned to support our stipendiary clergy to increase our ministry on offer. We want 75% of benefices to be sustainable, covering ministry costs and contributing towards others. (LEADERSHIP/TEAMS – FINANCE)
4. (Younger) We want to see an increased focus on children, youth and families to double the number of young people in church, alongside existing ministry with specific mission centres established that can support the wider diocese leading to growing 'intergenerational' worshipping communities of all ages. (YOUTH/INTERGENERATIONAL MISSION)
5. (Schools) We want to build on our network of 78 church schools by establishing close links between school, home and church. We will further develop chaplaincy support in schools and colleges. (YOUTH/INTERGENERATIONAL MISSION)
6. (Buildings) We want to support our PCC's by creating a practical strategy to manage our buildings. We want to see many churches providing a range of engaging patterns of worship beyond the traditional Sunday morning service. We want to honour and cherish our existing, smaller congregations by providing them with more regular non-stipendiary ministry but give permission for churches to close at the PCC's request. (BUILDINGS)

6. Our Seven Bold Outcomes by 2030

1. 3% of population (10,000 people) regularly attending worship in our churches
2. Many (at least 50) benefices with a congregation of 50 people (100 in market towns).
3. Double the number (to 1000) of young people choosing to attend worship regularly.
4. At least 200(+) self-supporting or lay leaders trained and commissioned.
5. 25 skilled, trained, paid youth church leaders.
6. 50 New Worshipping Communities (25 for children and young people, including FLOURISH ^[1] Worshipping Communities).
7. Equipped whole life disciples.



Our overarching aim is to have 50 healthy and growing churches with a congregation of 50 people in rural areas or 100 in our market towns, with a minimum of 3% of the population attending a regular form of worship.

¹ A FLOURISH Worshipping Community is about partnership with Church of England Schools - recognising God's call to see children and young people, communities and churches transformed through growing faith.

Each of these churches will have:

- A clear mission and purpose with missional and enabling leadership.
- A team of lay and ordained ministers.
- Clergy and congregations who want to see growth and are willing to change and adapt.
- A clear path for all to grow in faith.
- A culture of welcome and good relationships.
- An all age missional worshipping community.
- Youth/Intergenerational mission in school, home, church and community settings.
- Young people involved in decision making and leadership.
- An engaging digital presence.
- Sustainable buildings and finances.

Each church will need slightly different support and resource to achieve this, and they will have the flexibility to access the support that is most beneficial to them. However, we know that we need to invest in new things on a wider scale so to support the achievement of this aim we want to create the following:

200+ lay and ordained self-supporting / volunteer leaders

We seek to recruit, train and licence or commission 200+ ministers, a mix of lay and ordained leaders and volunteers who can support ministry:

- Continue to enable volunteers to step into lay and ordained ministry roles, including Local Worship Leader, Local Pastoral Visitor, Local Missioner, Local Minister (all three of the previous ministries), Reader / Licensed Lay Minister and ordained Self-Supporting Minister.
- These ministers may serve in Churches as part of the team, in traditional Parishes and Festival Churches or with Rural Church Missioners serving according to gifts and calling.

Create Seven Youth / Intergenerational Mission Hubs

Each youth hub connected to at least one of our growing churches and resourcing other churches through training and support. Each Youth Hub will have:

- at least one new youth-focussed worshipping community surrounded by a youth mission and discipleship vision and approach.
- at least two workers in each hub who, along with local leaders and diocesan support, will create long-term faith pathways for young people.
- support from the central diocesan team and Missional Youth Church Network
- support from two or more local mixed ecology churches.
- links with churches interested in developing mission with young people.
- training pathways for volunteers and local ordained leaders to enable young people to be at the heart of the church's mission.
- ongoing learning, Church Army Research Unit partnership, shared locally / nationally.
- Develop and expand our existing network of school chaplains.

Seven Ministry Area Co-ordinators

Our seven ministry area coordinators will aim to:

- Offer administrative support to the Rural Church Missioner teams as below.
- Oversee good benefice administration – church buildings maintenance, treasury services, safeguarding / safer recruitment compliance.
- Work with Rural Churches and Life Events Missioners to support local incumbents and PCCs.

Seven Rural Church Missioners

Our aim is to have seven rural church Missioners who will work 0.5 as incumbents of rural parishes and 0.5 to support smaller rural churches to develop clear missional plans for the future of every church community and building in the ministry area. These won't be 'new posts' but recruited into existing full-time incumbencies with a renewed focus. They will:

- With PCCs and local incumbents, identify churches as potential growing churches, sustainable smaller churches, Festival Churches or churches which the PCC may decide they wish to close.
- Support the development of plans for each church community.
- Train and support local ministers and encourage the development of missional worship and events.
- Together with Ministry Area Co-ordinators, ensure systems are in place for basic administration such as rotas, bookings, records and Safeguarding paperwork.
- Inform the central diocesan team of the needs and concerns of smaller rural churches.

Seven Life Events Missioners

We aim to have seven life events Missioners who will work 0.5 as incumbents of rural parishes and 0.5 to develop teams which offer excellent Life Events ministry in the ministry area. We believe this addresses a need that has been identified, particularly in our urban areas, where we are missing out on substantial numbers of occasional offices. However, we believe this idea needs significant further consultation and refinement. These wouldn't be new posts but recruited into existing incumbencies. Together with Ministry Area Co-ordinators, they will:

- Be a first point of contact for all baptisms, weddings and funerals in an area.
- Work with local churches and ministers to allocate Life Events requests appropriately (this should be agreed with each incumbent).
- Offer excellent Life Events ministry themselves.
- Train and support other volunteer ministers, including lay funeral ministers, in the local area, building a team of specialists who can offer excellent Life Events ministry.
- Build good relationships with local providers relating to life events, e.g. funeral directors.
- Ensure excellent administration of fees and other arrangements with local churches and the Diocesan Board of Finance.
- Enable good communication with local churches to welcome families for Life Events.
- Ensure good pastoral care and follow up is in place.

7. Our Strategy For Delivery

Initial Stages

- Identify 30-35 possible churches for potential growth across the diocese matched to data analysis and local information.
- Identify 7 deanery pairings the current proposal is to create the following pairs:
 - Ross and Abbeydore Deaneries (Ross Youth Hub)
 - Ledbury and Bromyard Deaneries (Ledbury Youth Hub)
 - Hereford City Deanery (South Wye Youth Hub)
 - Leominster and Kington and Weobley Deaneries (Leominster Youth Hub)
 - Ludlow and Condover Deaneries (Ludlow Youth Hub)
 - Clun Forest and Pontesbury Deaneries (Bishop's Castle Youth Hub)
 - Bridgnorth and Telford Severn Gorge Deaneries (Bridgnorth/Telford Youth Hub)
- Begin conversations with Deanery Teams and Diocesan Committees about the plan.
- Hold conversations with Deanery Chapters and Synods about what the plan might look like in their place and what their priorities are in terms of timing and shape of additional support.
- Develop a communications plan.
- Formulate Mission Fund Bid(s) for the additional funding for the Co-ordinator roles – these posts could be flexible, e.g. 1 full time or two 0.5 posts – they should not duplicate other Ministry Fund funded posts.
- Identify priorities and timeline for implementation based on feedback from Deaneries.

Early implementation

- Build on existing Youth Hubs in Sutton Hill, St Peters and the work of School Chaplains in Tupsley and South Wye. Encourage proposals for a Chaplain in Ross.
- New Youth Hub pilots begin to be established in Leominster and Bishop's Castle
- Conversations with possible church leaders in other areas (e.g. those with later Youth Hubs).
- Mission and Ministry team beginning to work with churches to develop plans for mission, enabling leadership and ministry teams, a culture of growth and adaptation, welcome and good relationships, discipleship routes, all age worship and youth/intergenerational mission including youth leaders, and a sustainable plan for buildings and finance.
- Develop pioneering Missioner approach being piloted in Craven Arms.
- Archdeacons identify where additional 0.5 Missioner posts may be placed in consultation with local clergy and deaneries, for example with currently vacant 0.5 parish posts.

- Job descriptions, processes and oversight for Rural Church Missioners (*and Life Events Missioners*) and Ministry Area Co-ordinators developed and these roles launched in other areas (e.g. those with later Youth Hubs).

Later implementation

- Detailed plans for implementation of each of the strategies for support will be developed and adapted based on learning from the first stage of the work.
- The Archdeacons with the Mission and Ministry Team will be responsible for overseeing the work with Mixed Ecology Churches – any additional mission projects funded by our Mission Fund relating to these churches will be overseen by the diocese's Strategic Project Management Board (SPMB).
- The Youth Hubs will be overseen by their own project board and the Strategic Project Management Board (SPMB).
- The work with smaller rural churches through the Rural Churches and Life Events Missioner roles will be overseen by Archdeacons, Mission and Ministry Team and the Strategic Project Management Board (SPMB).

Expected Outcomes (see Seven Bold Outcomes above)

- 50 churches with at least 50 attending regularly, growing healthily, with strong diocesan support.
- 7 Youth/Intergenerational Hubs connecting school, home and church, enabling young people to grow in faith and form worshipping communities.
- Support for smaller churches to serve their local area as traditional Parish churches, Festival churches or growing into larger churches.
- Support for churches considering closure of their building.
- Excellent Life Events ministry.

8. Resourcing Our Strategy

The following provides a rough **financial** outline of possible costs for the strategy implementation from 2024 – 2031 (Totals based on 7 year youth bid timespan).

New Youth Hubs:

- Estimated cost over 3 years £850k, £450k secured from National Church and £377K Strategic Mission Fund (SMF) allocated

Existing Mission Fund/Youth:

- Between 2024 -31 £0.75M SMF allocated (SPSJ, West Hereford, Craven Arms, Chaplains, IMs)
- Annual cost to DBF / Strategic Mission Fund – c£150k pa over next 5 years i.e. 2024-28

Rural Church / Life Event Missioners:

- No additional cost / existing budget (altogether resisting any reduction in numbers)

Increase in Lay leadership:

- No additional cost / existing budget

Ministry Area Co-ordinators:

- £1.75m (7x £36,000 for 7 years)
- Annual cost to DBF / Mission Fund – c£252,000

Total:

- Circa £3m SMF allocated between 2024-31.
- Currently £1.75M unallocated SMF up to 2031 which could pay for Ministry Area Co-Ordinator roles. However if we want to invest in additional SMF projects, we will need to increase the annual SMF budget.

9. Additional activities to expand/initiate the need for additional resource.

The delivery capacity within our senior clergy is severely hampered by the volume of parish issues, complaints, pastoral breakdowns, faculties and triennium inspections. This will intensify now that Bishop Richard has joined the House of Lords and this is before any major change initiative is undertaken across the wider Church of England or within the diocese.

This must be addressed as a matter of urgency, and it will have a financial implication.

10. Appendix 1: Statistical Data: Deanery Profiles

The information in the following table has been collated from Church of England information management systems and conversations with Rural Deans. It pairs deaneries into seven groups to show the volume of life events and size of population.

This information accompanied with conversations with Deaneries/Benefices will be used during the implementation phase to develop locally focussed plans that help us deliver our strategic goals.

Area (pop 57,108)	Area (pop 41,459)	Area (pop 46,260)	Area (pop 35,780)
Bridgnorth and Telford Severn Gorge Deaneries	Ross and Abbeydore Deaneries	Leominster and Kington and Weobley Deaneries	Ledbury and Bromyard Deaneries
No of churches in area: 40	No of churches in area: 76	No of churches in area: 81	No of churches in area: 53
No of Life Events in area: 510 122 Baptisms+ 81 Weddings+ 307 Funerals+	No of Life Events in area: 380 63 Baptisms+ 79 Weddings+ 238 Funerals+	No of Life Events in area: 492 150 Baptisms+ 73 Weddings+ 269 Funerals+	No of Life Events in area: 306 60 Baptisms+ 80 Weddings+ 166 Funerals+
Area (pop 66,246)	Area (pop 26,227)	Area (pop 48,538)	
Hereford City Deanery	Clun Forest and Pontesbury Deaneries	Ludlow and Condover Deaneries	
No of churches in area: 20	No of churches in area: 51	No of churches in area: 76	
No of Life Events in area: 209 71 Baptisms+ 12 Weddings+ 126 Funerals+	No of Life Events in area: 368 100 Baptisms+ 65 Weddings+ 203 Funerals+	No of Life Events in area: 563 128 Baptisms+ 84 Weddings+ 351 Funerals+	

11. Appendix 2: Growing Churches Development Plan - An overview of proposed implementation

This overview will guide the work with Churches identified for growth and can be used flexibly as a template, with more detailed plans attached.

The first stage of the work will involve finding out what is already in place, and this will be followed by looking at how to develop areas which have not yet been addressed or which need to be renewed. The work of supporting and accompanying larger Churches will take place over 2 years (minimum) working with the church leaders in groups, individually and with neighbouring churches, drawing in resources from the diocesan office as necessary. This will largely come from existing resources (e.g. Accompanying, Mission Enabler). Our strategic mission funding may be sought if more capacity is needed.

Growing Church Aims	Action	By whom
Clear mission and purpose	Develop a shared vision for the church community and key priorities for mission. <i>E.g. Vision Day</i>	<i>E.g. Church leaders and Diocesan Mission Enabler</i>
Missional and enabling leadership	Identify strengths and learning needs in church leader(s) and equip for missional leadership <i>E.g. Servants and Stewards</i>	<i>E.g. Church leader(s) and S&S leaders</i>
Develop team of lay and ordained ministers	Meet with and ensure authorisation of lay and ordained leaders; discern gifts and skills and meet as a team to plan ministry and mission. <i>E.g. Train and commission new Local Ministers</i>	<i>E.g. Church leaders with support from diocesan officers if needed</i>
Culture of growth and adaptation	Identify ways of praying, teaching and sharing in discussion with leaders, PCC and congregation <i>E.g. Season of Invitation, missional experiments</i>	<i>E.g. Church leaders with congregation, support from diocesan officers</i>
A clear path for all to grow in faith	Ensure that there is suitable discipleship opportunities for longstanding and newer church members, run a nurture course. <i>E.g. establish regular small group discipleship, run Alpha or similar</i>	<i>E.g. Church leaders with support from diocesan officers if needed</i>

Growing Church Aims	Action	By whom
Culture of welcome and good relationships	Identify ways of praying, teaching and sharing in discussion with leaders, PCC and congregation <i>E.g. training a welcome team, exploring the Difference Course in small groups</i>	<i>E.g. Church leaders with PCC and congregation, support from diocesan officers</i>
An all age missional worshipping community	Ensure / establish an all age worshipping community based on local needs <i>E.g. Messy Church or similar</i>	<i>E.g. Church leaders with support from diocesan officers</i>
Youth/Intergenerational mission in school, home, church and community settings	Ensure / establish an intergenerational mission plan including school, home, church and community. <i>E.g. Experience Easter run for schools in church, with families invited to all age Easter celebration / event; a Toddler group that links to Messy Church etc.</i>	<i>E.g. Church leaders with support from diocesan officers if needed</i>
Young people involved in decision making and leadership	Consider how to involve young people in leadership and decision making and ensure their voices are heard and acted upon. <i>E.g. involve young people in leading worship or welcoming people, ask for their views on key decisions</i>	<i>E.g. Church leaders with support from diocesan officers if needed</i>
Engaging digital presence	Ensure an up to date, accessible online presence for information and contact. <i>E.g. ACNY, Website, Facebook Page</i> Consider ways of engaging actively online. <i>E.g. via social media</i>	<i>E.g. PCC with support from diocesan officers if needed</i>
Sustainable finance	Develop a financial plan to include generous giving, fundraising and asset management (including buildings).	<i>E.g. PCC Treasurer with support from Finance team</i>
Sustainable buildings	Consider how each church building (including halls) will be cared for, what repairs/re-ordering may be needed, if there may be further opportunities for income generation or assets which could be realised.	<i>E.g. Churchwardens with support from diocesan Buildings team and DAC</i>

12. Appendix 3: Smaller Rural Church Development Plan - An overview of proposed implementation

Initially, the Rural Churches Missioner (RCM) will meet with incumbents and PCCs to decide how they will work together and identify the status of each church building / community as:

1. A Church which shows some of the signs identified above and may have the potential to grow into a bigger church.
2. A Traditional Parish Church which is offering weekly or fortnightly services.
3. A Festival Church which has fewer services in a year.
4. A church which the PCC believes may need to close.

The RCM will then put together a plan for the church's future with the incumbent and PCC, with support from the Ministry Area Co-Ordinator (MAC) and central diocesan team as appropriate. The incumbent and PCC will be able to decide how much the RCM is involved and how much of the plan they and their team will do themselves.

The RCM may be involved in training and supporting local ministers and encouraging the development of missional worship and events.

With incumbents and PCCs as well as support from the MAC, they will ensure systems are in place for Life Events ministry and basic administration such as rotas, bookings, records and Safeguarding paperwork.

Smaller Rural Church Aims	Action	By whom
Identify potential churches for growth.	Begin to assess areas of strength and opportunities for growth. Establish a plan to enable the church to move towards being a Mixed Ecology Church.	Incumbent, PCC and RCM, support from the Mission and Ministry team

Smaller Rural Church Aims	Action	By whom
Identify Traditional Parish Churches.	Formulate a plan for continuing parish ministry, including missional worship led by lay and ordained volunteers as well as stipendiary clergy. Where needed, train and encourage local ministers in offering missional worship and events. Establish how ministry for Life Events will be organised. Ensure that people who engage with the church are able to access further spiritual care and discipleship opportunities. Ensure a financial and buildings maintenance plan is in place.	Incumbent, PCC and RCM, with support from (the LEM) and MAC.
Identify Festival Churches.	Formulate a plan for missional Festival Services, led by volunteer lay and ordained ministers. Where needed, train and encourage local ministers in offering missional worship and events. Establish systems for Life Events Ministry to continue. Ensure people who engage with the church are able to access further spiritual care and discipleship opportunities. Ensure financial and buildings maintenance plan in place.	Incumbent, PCC and RCM, with support from the (LEM and) MAC.
Identify church buildings which the local PCC may need to close.	Formulate a plan supporting a local PCC for consideration of church closure, consultation and legal action. Include a pastoral plan considering re-settlement and care of existing congregation, alternative provision for Life Events and any required legal changes to the parish (e.g. Chapel of Ease status, parish merger). Include a financial and buildings maintenance plan for the PCC until building is closed. Consider any capacity issues relating to the PCC officers prior to closure.	Incumbent, PCC and RCM, with support from the (LEM and MAC).as well as the diocesan buildings and legal team.
Inform central diocesan team of needs / concerns of small rural churches.	Keep a record of relevant issues, SRCs progress and review plans as needed.	RCM to meet regularly with Archdeacon / DMM

13. APPENDIX 4: Life Events Development Plan - An overview of proposed implementation

As said earlier on in the paper, feedback suggests this idea needs a lot more work and may not be applicable in every deanery grouping.

The Life Events Missioner (LEM) will begin by working with incumbents and PCCs to identify current practice and existing Life Events ministers. Where an incumbent and PCC are keen to explore different ways of supporting Life Events, the LEM will work with them to develop their Life Events ministry as detailed below.

Life Events Aims	Action	By whom
Be a first point of contact for all baptisms, weddings and funerals in an area.	Identify a phone number / email contact which will be responded to promptly every day of the week. Agree who will respond and ensure a swift, positive, pastoral response. Ensure that any other enquiries direct to incumbents or parishes are communicated to the MAC who will keep an overall record.	Incumbent, PCC, LEM and MAC
Work with local churches and ministers to allocate Life Events requests appropriately (this should be agreed with each incumbent).	Clarify which churches / incumbents / Life Events ministers will be involved in the co-ordinated Life Events scheme and any special considerations. <i>E.g. Minister x is only available on a Tuesday.</i> Agree protocols for allocating Life Events and ministers available to do them. <i>E.g. In Benefice A: All weddings to go to incumbent; baptisms in x churches to go to incumbent; baptisms in y churches to go to Life Events team; church member funerals to go to incumbent; funerals of non-church members to go to Life Events team.</i>	Incumbent, PCC, LEM and MAC
Offer excellent Life Events ministry.	Keep informed of the latest best practice in terms of Life Events ministry, continue to review and improve practice as a team based on feedback	LEM and MAC with all Life Events ministers including incumbents

Life Events Aims	Action	By whom
Train and support other volunteer ministers, including lay funeral ministers, in the local area, building a team of specialists who can offer excellent Life Events ministry.	Develop and deliver suitable training for Life Events ministry. Missional baptisms and weddings for clergy. Creative and pastoral funerals for clergy, Licensed Lay Ministers and Local Ministers. Possibly develop specific training and commissioning for Funerals Ministers.	LEM and incumbents with support from the Mission and Ministry team
Build good relationships with local providers relating to life events.	Identify and make contact with key providers. <i>E.g. local Funeral Directors</i>	LEM and team
Ensure excellent administration of fees and other arrangements with local churches and the Diocesan Board of Finance.	Agree procedures for handling money and administering fees. <i>E.g. In Benefice B: for baptisms, the MAC and relevant minister will do the paperwork; Churchwardens will provide practical support on the day; all monies collected will go to the local PCC and the local PCC will pay the travel expenses of the voluntary minister; for weddings and funerals, all fees will be dealt with by the PCC and all other administration will be completed by the MAC and relevant minister etc.</i>	LEM and MAC with local churches
Enable good communication with local churches to welcome families for Life Events.	Identify who will be aware of the details of a Life Event at the church and how this will be communicated to the wider church family so that they can offer their prayers and support. <i>E.g. Churchwarden aware of bookings and ensures Life Events are publicised and prayed for in Sunday services</i>	LEM and MAC with local churches
Ensure good pastoral care and follow up is in place.	Develop a plan for baptism and marriage preparation and follow-up for all Life Events	LEM and team with local churches