

Fit for Mission Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions and answers have arisen from the journey with cohort 1 deaneries (West Derby and St Helens) and cohort 2 deaneries (Warrington, Ormskirk, Liverpool South and Toxteth & Wavertree), and are given here as a helpful reference for everyone. They are real questions asked by PCCs, church members and clergy. In order to help you find a question of interest they are listed first below, with the answers starting on page 11. New or modified questions are given a revision number (i.e. v04).

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Readers

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Finance General

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168. Do you have a spreadsheet for our deanery with the finances of all the churches on it, with the expected and actual parish share amounts and a plan of how this will work as one? (v04)
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The mechanics of merging

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171. One or more of our original parishes were registered directly with the Charity Commission, which charity registration number should we use?

Running the Finances

172. Will Food Bank Funds be accounted for separately? Will our current team of churches be separate worshipping communities or one team unit? Will church halls be managed individually and will they have a separate trading account? (v02)
173. Will the contribution of each worshipping community towards the central bookkeeper come out of the collection plate? (v02)

- 174.** How will each church reconcile its accounts? (v04)
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Giving and Gift Aid

- 178.** I am a member of church A, when we merge with churches B, C, D etc where does my money go?
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- 180.** Who owns the loose cash on the offertory plate?
- 181.** Which church will be named on my offertory envelopes?
- 182.** What will happen to my Gift Aid, who will be claiming it?
- 183.** Because each original parish was able to separately claim under GASDS (Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme) won't we lose out when we become just one parish?
- 184.** I give my regular gift directly via the bank, either by Standing Order or by the Parish Giving Scheme (Direct Debit), where does my donation go?
- 185.** Am I right in thinking all the money goes into one pot? (v01)
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Bank Accounts

- 187.** Do we have to open a new bank account and close all the old ones?
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Budgets and Making Payments

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Restricted Funds/Legacies

- 204.** What if we receive a legacy – will it be spent across the whole Larger Parish?
- 205.** Church A has already raised £50,000 towards essential repairs and improvements; these are held in a restricted fund. Can church B now use this money to make improvements to their building?
- 206.** Can a gift be given so that it can only be used for a particular building or worshipping community?
- 207.** The new PCC is offered a large donation, but the donor wants to tightly restrict its use to only one small section of the new parish. Does the PCC have to accept this donation?
- 208.** What happens to existing and future legacies/bequests that name one of the original parishes?
- 209.** Will a legacy that has been left to Church X be absorbed by the new parish i.e. so it would not be available for Church X?
- 210.** Are there circumstances where a current PCC's assets will automatically be restricted to that location after a Larger Parish is formed e.g. if a house was bought with money from a restricted fund?
- 211.** Are there circumstances when asset use would be wholly determined by the new PCC?

Grants

- 212.** Would a grant application from a bigger parish be less likely to succeed, because the turnover would be greater? (v02)

Tithe and end use of funds

- 213.** Would the new PCC commit to 10% of all its income being tithed, as encouraged by the Church of England?
- 214.** Will our individual church still be able to support and give to causes that they have supported in the past? (v01)

Buildings and graveyards

- 215.** How will the upkeep of buildings, including houses, be paid for going forward?
- 216.** What if we want to raise money to repair our church roof?
- 217.** How will graveyards be paid for going forwards?
- 218.** Will the new parish own any property that is currently held? Would title deeds need to be changed? Will the rent be paid to the new parish PCC? (v03)
- 219.** If buildings are sold within an FFM parish what happens to the proceeds? (v05)

Answers - General

Why Fit for Mission? Why now?

1. What is the theology behind FfM?

It is rich and deep-rooted in a biblical understanding of the primacy of making disciples of all nations (Matt 28) and that this requires the people of God to step more fully into the harvest field (Luke 10), through to a deep understanding of the mutuality of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12) and the generosity of the people of God (2 Cor 8). There has also been a strong sense that like the people of Israel we have not been this way before (Josh 3). And much else besides.

2. How does FfM aim to reverse decline?

In a number of inter-connected ways. This includes:

- Creating a clear focus on the 4 agreed priorities of introducing people to Jesus, deepening discipleship, developing Christian leaders and working for justice.
- Investing significantly in training and support around planting new worshipping communities and justice initiatives.
- Investing significantly in making things easier at the parish level through more administrative, buildings management and other resources.
- Simplifying governance and administration to release more people with more time for outward facing activities.
- Creating a more mutually accountable structure so that everyone is able both to offer and require high levels of support.
- Developing more teams of people who are passionate about growing the church and reaching new people with the good news of Jesus in word and action.

3. Is FfM about mission or is it finance driven? Is it a missional gloss on a financial crisis? (v02)

There is no question we are facing a financial crisis, just like the rest of the Church of England. The impact of Covid has been huge, the impact of the cost of living crisis could be just as big, or bigger. The financial challenges are very real and it would be foolish to pretend otherwise.

But Fit for Mission was not born out of a financial crisis but out of a much deeper and a more deep-rooted crisis: the decades old, steady, unrelenting decline of the Church of England.

The single largest financial cost to our diocese is the stipends bill and the training and resourcing of our clergy. The direct annual costs of employment and training are nearly £70,000 per clergy person. Under Fit for Mission we have no plans to reduce the number of our stipendiary clergy and we do have plans to increase the number of self-supporting clergy (SSMs) including new permanent Deacons.

If we do have to reduce clergy numbers it will not be because of Fit for Mission but because of the ongoing decline that Fit for Mission is trying to address and the thoughtful, prayerful decisions of each deanery about how many clergy the deanery can afford.

Our second biggest cost is our buildings. Fit for Mission includes a Right Buildings programme to locally determine the buildings we need for mission in the future. But there is no plan for a wholesale closure of church buildings to save money.

4. Why is the Christian church struggling in this nation? What might be the answer? (v04)

There has been lots of research into this question and there is no single answer which can explain all the different factors at play, and as such there is no simple answer about how to resolve this too. However, research does show that there are some common factors in churches that grow – for example, a leadership that is focused on growth; priority given to outreach to children and families; clarity about each church's ecclesiology, tradition and worship style. There will be a strong focus across a larger parish on ensuring that these and similar factors are clearly in place for each church or worshipping community.

About Strategic Transformation Funding

5. What is the money that the Church Commissioners have given for?

The money from this fund is to help dioceses make a step change in the way they operate particularly focussing on growth and young people. The money is to get us to a new place where patterns of mission and ministry are sustainable and we can plan for a more confident future.

6. Why don't the Church Commissioners just give funding to existing parishes to support their ministry?

They do already. Liverpool has benefitted for many years, to the tune of £1.6m per year from the Lowest Income Communities fund. This amounts to funding for 20% of our stipend budget year on year.

7. How much money has been offered and is it enough?

£7.5m. This kind of programme has not been done before. We have prepared a very detailed case and programme plan. There are likely to be some unforeseen elements that we will have to work out as we proceed, but we are confident that this can be done. And we plan to maintain a close relationship with the national church so we are able to generate further investment where that is available and appropriate.

8. What happens when funding ends? (v01)

Funding is mainly for additional staff resources to enable the step change to take place in deaneries. When funding ends after six years the larger parishes will be operating in a new way and won't need the additional change staff – they will be supporting themselves as they do now, but working in a new way.

Being part of FfM

9. Does a parish have to be part of FfM?

No. Each parish is free to make its own decision. However, if a parish isn't part of FfM then it won't be able to access any of the resources which will be available through FfM. This is because the funding has been given specifically to help parishes make a step change.

10. How will a decision be made as to whether a deanery goes ahead? (v04)

There needs to be a certain scale to go ahead, otherwise there will not be enough people involved to work in teams and portfolios across the wider geography and they won't be able to support a shared Support Services team. We have been learning about this as we have been journeying through cohorts 1 & 2. We think that most larger parishes will be made up of something like 8-15 current parishes. However, it will still depend on the exact make-up of the group who want to join together, so it could be a little more or less than this range.

11. What are the positives about being part of FfM? (v02)

- FfM will kick-start the planting and revitalisation of local worshipping communities/congregations, through envisioning, training and supporting clergy and lay leaders. As a diocese we still have a significant capacity of great people, clergy and lay. While we have that capacity FfM will provide the opportunity to engage in an even more focussed way with our communities so that more of the 99% who do not currently engage in following Jesus in a worshipping community may come to know Jesus' love and Him as Lord.
- The Larger Parish can make decisions on priorities and use of resources to address those priorities e.g. if the local leaders agreed that much more of their capacity should be directed towards young people, they could make that happen.
- Increased wellbeing, especially for clergy, through being part of a supportive team; reduced isolation.
- Some admin can be dealt with more efficiently across a larger geography e.g. funerals to ensure that funeral directors receive as quick a 'yes' answer as possible. As a larger unit it is easier to use the latest software for managing finance and communication and adhering properly to GDPR. Financial management will be clearer and more transparent, enabling sensible and good decisions to be made to give greater opportunity for the gospel. This will free up clergy and lay time and energy for mission.
- Statutory compliance and the burden of regulation is generally a problem within our buildings (fire, electrical testing, boiler maintenance etc). This can be managed more consistently as a whole.
- There are savings to be made if some items are purchased centrally, such as insurance and energy. Wigan, our largest deanery, saved £55,000 per year on

insurance by combining everything into one policy, and that will increase as work is done to refine insured values.

- We need to face the buildings issue head on. This can only be done by considering the needs and opportunities within a larger area.
- Having fewer people involved in governance (PCCs) we can have more people involved in engaging with our communities.

12. What can a parish that isn't part of FfM expect?

To carry on as they are now. There won't be any additional resource available to them; all the additional FfM resource will be targeted on FfM parishes. But current levels of diocesan support will be available, as will the support of the bishops, archdeacons and area deans. And Parish Share will still need to be negotiated with the deanery. That said, most parishes in our diocese are in decline and the more isolated the parish the more reliant it is on its own resources to survive. We think there are better ways than that and are encouraging all parishes to think seriously about the positive benefits of being part of FfM. Every parish in our diocese will need to be working on the four priorities, whether they do that collaboratively or on their own.

13. What resources are not available to us if we say no? (v01)

The resources available in Fit for Mission are to help parishes that want to work together make a step change in terms of developing lay leaders, working as a larger parish team that is able to focus on the priorities, simplifying our systems so that more energy can go into mission, and dealing with our buildings issue. The resources listed in the answer to question 7 above are those that will enable the change to happen. Conversely those resources won't be available to those who don't want to go on the journey to becoming a larger parish team.

14. What will it be like after the Church Commissioners change support ends?

FfM support is mostly to facilitate change (coaching investment, decision-making and implementation support, systems development and such like). Other aspects are intended to start something that can then be sustained locally (e.g. leadership nurturing and training, administrative support). Creating sustainability is a crucial outcome of the project. Once changes have been made and practices embedded then the support will no longer be required. One outcome is for increased income and this will help ensure sustainability of ongoing costs. The diocesan budget may also need to reflect and absorb some of what is required on a sustained basis.

15. Will the result of FfM be to lose more of the old certainties – doctrine, our vicar, our buildings?

Yes and no. Some of these 'old certainties' have already gone in many parts of the diocese; very few parishes are self-sustaining on the one church, one vicar, one parish model. Most have either moved to shared leadership and/or significant cross subsidy to sustain ministry costs that they could not bear on their own. Equally, we know that worshipping communities function best when there is clear and consistent leadership, good

pastoral support and good buildings to meet in. So, where there are good buildings, housing and viable congregations they would no doubt remain; where there are potentially good buildings, housing and currently or potentially viable congregations and worshipping communities we hope they would be invested in; where there are unviable buildings and/or unviable congregations and worshipping communities there can't be any blank cheque that says they can be sustained for ever.

In terms of doctrine there is an absolute commitment within Fit for Mission to maintain, and indeed enhance, the breath and integrity of the Church of England. So no tradition within the Church of England should fear for its future under Fit for Mission – as long as it can show itself to be viable.

16. What will it feel like for the person in the pew?

It will be mixed, and no doubt for some change will be uncomfortable. But we hope that for many it will feel really exciting as people start to explore new vocations, new possibilities and new people start to join. We hope there's a greater sense of energy with people able to get stuck into what God is calling them to. But every parish will continue to offer the full range of worship services of the Church of England and many people will be able to attend church in the way that they always have done with the friends they continue to have.

17. What will happen to pastoral care in our parish?

If it's really good then FfM will ensure that it remains that way; if it's not we expect it will improve. One of the key commitments of FfM is to try to make sure that there is no pastoral deficit. Congregations and worshipping communities will have identified leaders; there will be people who have a particular brief to ensure that pastoral provision across the parish is as good as it possibly can be. We are also going to develop the role of deacon in the diocese, looking to identify the people God may be calling into this role so they can be selected, trained and ordained as distinctive Deacons offering pastoral care. This will increase pastoral capacity. And the final point – which is obvious but no less important for being obvious – is that pastoral care is all our responsibility as we offer it in formal and informal ways. So what will happen to pastoral care largely depends on our collective commitment to offering the best pastoral care we possibly can.

18. Does FfM mean that congregations will be joined together?

Only if that is a good solution that local leaders agree with. FfM is not primarily about joining congregations together to have bigger services that are therefore easier to run. That would reduce diversity and would be unlikely to encourage new people to join. The vision is to have many more worshipping communities that are places of belonging, communities of faith. Many of these will be around 30-50 people with a lay leader.

If a building was to close after the local review, it would not necessarily mean that a congregation or worshipping community would stop meeting or have to join with another congregation or worshipping community in another place. It could well find other places to meet and look towards the future with good consistent lay leadership. Such a group

would not have the burdens of parish administration, and could focus more on community engagement and mission.

19. Will one church be a lead church?

Possibly. It depends on the nature of the parish and the definition of church. Some larger parishes may opt for what is sometimes called a minster model where one or two worshipping communities consciously seek to resource and develop others. But this will not be feasible everywhere either because such worshipping communities don't exist or it is not appropriate. Whatever the situation a 'lead' church or worshipping community can never be a controlling or a dominant one. That is not how Fit for Mission works. FfM is about the whole of the body of Christ working together.

20. Is Fit for Mission Diocese or Deanery led? How much flexibility is there at local level to shape this? (v01)

Absolutely locally led. There are certain parameters – for example it has to be about the 4 priorities of introducing people to Jesus, deepening discipleship, developing Christian leaders and working for justice, and there has to be a commitment to working together in larger parishes. But how all this is done, what detailed choices are made and what this means on the ground is absolutely a local decision. The diocese has provided a framework which will enable a significant step change to take place; it has done a lot of thinking and has prepared and sought resources to make the step change possible. But the details are decided locally.

21. How can we keep the variety of different traditions in the deanery/diocese? Can you guarantee under Fit for Mission that our tradition and integrity will be preserved?

This is a simple question which has both a simple and a complex answer. The simple answer is that there is an absolute commitment within Fit for Mission to maintain, and indeed enhance, the breadth and integrity of the Church of England. So, no tradition within the Church of England should fear for its future under Fit for Mission.

The more complex answer is that in reality this commitment will depend on two things: people and money. To take them in turn.

People

Most churches in the Church of England have been in steady – and in some cases increasingly rapid decline – over many years. And most churches are significantly reliant on older people as the younger generations are largely absent. These are not criticisms; they are merely factual observations. The reversal of this decline and reaching out to new generations are key motivations behind Fit for Mission. But Fit for Mission of itself cannot guarantee this. It will be dependent on people.

So, if a church does not bring in new people then it will gradually die out. That is clear and unambiguous. The aim under Fit for Mission is for all churches in all traditions to flourish. But saying it or writing it down does not achieve that. So, part of the answer lies in how each congregation or worshipping community of whatever tradition seeks to grow.

Money

The majority of churches in the Diocese of Liverpool do not cover their direct ministry costs. In other words, they are reliant on financial support from other parishes and the national church to pay for the costs of 'our vicar'. The tradition in the Diocese of Liverpool is that this support, through Lowest Income Communities Funding from the national church and Parish Share within the diocese, is generously given and generously received. But there are limits as to how much can be made available and for how long. Again, this comment is not specific to churches of particular traditions; it is a statement of fact across the diocese.

So, the Fit for Mission challenge is for all congregations, all worshipping communities to become healthier and more viable. If they continue to do so then their future is increasingly secure. If they do not then there cannot be a permanent guarantee that they will be provided with stipendiary clergy leadership – with their 'own vicar'. This has effectively nothing to do with Fit for Mission nor is it tradition specific. The Fit for Mission commitment is to seek to ensure that every tradition in the diocese flourishes. But it will be up to people on the ground to work prayerfully, diligently and under God to realise this vision.

And finally, no Resolution can ultimately override this fundamental question around health and viability. But equally nor does staying outside the Fit for Mission structures give any greater security. The strengths and vulnerabilities outlined above remain within or beyond the larger parish. Indeed, there is a strong argument that staying outside the mutual support of the Fit for Mission structures creates a greater vulnerability for any current parish, including those seeking to preserve a particular tradition. There won't be any access to the support services or wider resources provided under Fit for Mission. It would really be down to the individual church, its own devices and its own resources. That could be a tough, vulnerable and exposed place to be.

22. How will poorer parishes be treated? Will they have resources taken away or more given to them?

The Diocese of Liverpool has a long-standing commitment to what Bishop David Sheppard termed a 'bias to the poor'. This is a matter of principle and necessity. We are committed to ensuring that we embody the biblical mandate towards the last, lost and least. It is also a matter of necessity – our demographics simply and rightly push us that way.

No parish in the Diocese of Liverpool is penalised for being in a low-income area. We have a whole system of mutual support and cross subsidy and that must remain. And the purpose of FfM is to offer more resources to enable the local church to grow, including in low income areas. That said, if ministry in low income parishes isn't proving to be fruitful then that will need to be re-thought (as it will in any other parish or context). So, there is no penalty for being in a low-income area; equally there is no unconditional guarantee that whatever happens a particular church can just carry on.

Our bias to the poor can be seen in our action - our Parish Share, and hence clergy deployment calculations, are weighted towards lower income areas. This is supported by

an intentional use of Low-Income Community funding (£1.6m per year from the national church), which varies in financial impact from 36% stipendiary support in the lowest income deanery to less than 1% support in the highest income deanery. There is also a related internal transfer of resources from parishes in higher income areas to lower income areas (a further 31% of parish support into the lowest income deanery).

There will, no doubt, be a need to modify aspects and assumptions of FfM to reflect different demographics. For example, the varying supply and availability of leaders and people with particular skills can often reflect the socio-economic make-up of the area, positively and negatively. We will work these out together as we progress.

23. What is the broad timeline for FfM? (v02)

It is initially a 6-year programme starting in April 2022. The initial investment in change and additional resources is around 2 years for each deanery. There were 2 pilot deaneries in 2022, West Derby and St Helens, 3-5 starting in early 2024 and the remainder starting early 2026.

24. What if Fit for Mission doesn't work? (v04)

We are confident that together we will solve problems and issues on the way. We are working within and abiding by existing church rules, just changing the way we organise ourselves within those so that we can focus on missional priorities more easily.

The 2-year change process then looks like this:

- **Engage phase:** finding out about FfM – 1-2 years, at the end of which...
 - Participation decision point: PCCs decide to go on the journey
- **Acting as if phase:** around 2 years, that includes a...
 - Confirmatory decision point: after about a year, PCCs decide to continue on to become a larger parish, or not.
- **Formalising phase:** the larger parish comes into effect around 2 years after the participation decision point.

25. Can churches opt out again once they have already opted in? (v04)

PCCs are being asked to consider and to agree (or not) to be part of a cohort with other parishes. This is essentially deciding to commit to participate with one another on the Fit for Mission journey, with serious determination. After that decision there will have been no legal changes. Legal changes would not begin until about 2 years later.

Legal changes will only take place after we have dreamed, made plans together, scoped out, experimented and developed how to work together and a formal proposal. This journey and final proposal will answer the questions people have about how it will all work because by then we will be well on our way to doing mission and ministry together.

The proposal will eventually go to the Church Commissioners who will review it after a formal two-stage consultation that will take around 6 months. During that consultation every PCC, clergy person, patron, and any member of the public with an interest in our deanery will be able to give the Commissioners their views on the proposal and whether

they agree with the proposal or not. The Commissioners will decide whether the proposal is in the best interest of the mission of the Church and will approve or reject it.

For complete transparency, if a PCC wanted to pull out during the next two years, then that would be possible, although not at all desirable. Pulling out at any stage would be relationally very difficult for all involved, because over the previous months the leaders and members would have started to work together and rely on each other to deliver mission and ministry. They would have made friends and built relationships through working together.

Learning from cohort 1 has led to the inclusion of a confirmatory decision point a year or so into the 'acting as if' phase. PCCs can pull out at that point. We would hope that would only happen after they have discussed issues thoroughly with their Navigation team and Archdeacon, and not just pull out without conversation.

If the PCC wanted to pull out after the confirmatory decision and after the formal consultation process on the new pastoral scheme had begun, then they would have to work within that process and engage with the Bishop/Church Commissioners.

26.Can the deanery decide to wait until Cohort 3? [Answered in respect to Ormskirk from where the question came] (v02)

A deanery could decide to wait to cohort 3 however there is urgency to move forward and as a deanery Ormskirk is well placed, in terms of the capacity of clergy and lay people, to make the change now. There is general urgency because change is upon the whole of the Church of England. It is likely that this might be the last chance we have to make a step change in the focus of clergy and lay to grow. If decline continues then as a Diocese we will be looking at clergy cuts, in the same way that other Dioceses are cutting a third of clergy. If you wait until cohort 3 Ormskirk Deanery will start from further back. It is highly likely that the first sets of decisions would then be about cuts in expenditure. Starting now gives Ormskirk Deanery its best chance of creating a positive future. So time is of the essence and Ormskirk is in a good position to focus on mission through being part of Fit for Mission.

27.What would change in our local community? (v02)

A particular church will still have oversight from a named clergy person, your current clergy person when the larger parish is formed. (Also see the section on Clergy below).

There won't be a PCC for each church/current parish, instead a leadership team will focus on ministry and mission in the local context. We will remove duplication of governance roles and administration by having one PCC for the larger parish that looks after overall finance, buildings oversight, employment and safeguarding; they are charged with being trustees of the larger parish and facilitating mission and ministry across the whole. But they won't be making decision on local mission and ministry.

A Support Services team, paid part-time local people, will use the best IT to do administration efficiently so that clergy and lay people can focus on ministry and mission, reaching further into our communities. This will particularly free up clergy who spend significant time on admin which is not what they were trained for.

All of this will mean that local leadership can focus on more local mission and ministry, engaging more and more with our communities, sharing the love of God and growing the church. That is the goal of this change and FfM!

28. What have been the three key benefits of Fit for Mission to date? (v04)

Collaboration, Cultivate and local decision making.

Collaboration – Clergy have begun working together, in a much closer, more defined way than ever before, and as a result, they have experienced renewed energy and excitement as they develop a shared vision for their future. Meeting together weekly and providing mutual support and accountability is helping to ease pressures and duplication of work, freeing up time and space to journey together, with a focus on introducing more people to Jesus.

Cultivate – Many local people have attended Cultivate, a lay missional leadership programme that is focused on helping them uncover what God might be saying to them, both as an individual and as a community. Understanding what God is calling us to do is a foundation in equipping us to become a growing church, filled with passionate and dedicated lay leaders. This is evidenced by the number of worshipping communities being planted/developed in our Cohort 1 areas, around 20.

Stronger relationships and local decision-making – By working together, and building relationships and a shared vision and understanding, local people are making good decisions about the difficulties we face as Churches. Examples of this are the Right Buildings teams who have developed sensitive recommendations for buildings in St Helens and West Derby. These proposals have been unanimously approved by PCCs, and despite their sense of loss and sadness about closing one or two buildings in each deanery, they have been able to agree and move forward, focused on the next steps of what their future could look like.

29. How does FfM benefit larger churches? (v04)

- By seeing greater missional ambition realised.
- Being a part of developing mission and ministry across a wider area.
- Raising up more leaders which is developing for individuals and will see fruit for God’s church. Cultivate is a lay leader development pathway. Some larger churches have gifts and skills to spare, but parish boundaries prevent those skills being nurtured and put to use for the Kingdom.
- Reaching out to more diverse people through planting new worshipping communities.
- Dealing with the issues of the deanery in a strategic way, instead of through crisis management (when clergy person leaves or there is a major building issue).
- More clergy time going into mission and ministry, less in admin.
- Better collaborative response/reduced loss of momentum during interregnum (the period when there is a clergy vacancy) because the team is responsible for the church in interregnum.
- Better wellbeing for clergy, better support and accountability working in a team.

30. How should existing parishes plan for the coming months knowing that FfM may be coming along? Should we stop any plans for major expenditure?

Not necessarily. But we hope that parishes will quickly get into the habit of having conversations about their plans and how these might connect with or impact on each other. Clergy chapters and deanery synods are places of connection and conversation

where these things can be talked about. We also hope that a parish will have conversations with their archdeacon and area dean before embarking on anything major.

Growth and Lay development

31. How do LYCiG, Cultivate, Directions, Joshua Centre and Together Liverpool fit together? (v04)

They all do slightly different things but do fit nicely together. **LYCiG** (Leading Your Church into Growth) helps existing worshipping communities grow by developing a real focus on outreach, welcome and nurture. **Directions** helps all people discover who and what God is calling them to be and understanding God's full call on their lives outside the walls of the church and inside. **Cultivate** is about helping people who may be called to plant new congregations and worshipping communities, or revitalise existing ones, identify their gift and put it into practice. **Joshua Centre** is programme closing in 2024; it offered support to churches looking to plant something new. Support for those new worshipping communities, as Joshua Centre ends, now comes under FfM in larger parishes or the local individual parish, all supported by the Cultivate network. **Together Liverpool** are encouraging and enabling the planting of many new justice initiatives across our diocese and particularly in larger parishes.

So depending where people are in the faith journey and how they want to go about reaching new people each of the above offers something complementary but slightly different.

32. What about evangelism in FfM?

How we introduce people to Jesus is a major feature of FfM. We won't be able to plant new worshipping communities and justice initiatives without an absolute commitment to witness and evangelism; it is a thread through everything. There will be portfolio holders in each larger parish with a responsibility for nurturing and encouraging evangelism across the parish; Directions will also be a key resource. But it is all part of the culture change anticipated in FfM.

33. Why is Cultivate the thing to invest in particularly?

Because it works, and it works particularly in our context. It will no doubt continue to change and evolve as we learn more but it is and will remain absolutely aligned with what we are trying to do. It is not an off-the-shelf product that we are trying to adapt for our purposes but rather it is something we have created to enable God's people in this diocese plant and sustain new worshipping communities and justice initiatives.

34. How will lay leadership be made easy and accessible as we try to launch new worshipping communities?

Leadership isn't generally that easy and we wouldn't want to imply that it is. But each lay leader will be identified, trained and supported as they step into their leadership context. Cultivate delivers this coaching and dedicated on-going support for local missional leaders. We will do everything we can to ensure that all leaders are resourced and supported. It is

also why we are so determined that leadership is understood as something done in teams rather than as individuals. This has to be about the body of Christ resourcing and supporting each other in prayer, encouragement, challenge and service.

35. Is there anything to support nurture and faith development with those not ready for Cultivate? (v04)

Yes, definitely. The diocesan Rule of Life (pray, read, learn, tell, serve, give) will provide all worshipping communities with a framework to enable everyone to deepen and more fully express their Christian faith. In addition, we have the diocesan Directions course, which has been developed for all kinds of people exploring differing ways of serving God in the church and the world. Following that, we run the SHAPE course, which is a 6-week video-based course to be used at home or in church, seeking to help people discover gifting and calling. For those who are not ready to step into Cultivate, or who have tried the course and think they are not ready to lead or join new worship communities, we then offer a series of quality online resources for groups and individuals, called Activate. And we need to remember that this has been the core work of the church for generations. We are not trying to imply that this hasn't been happening; it absolutely has. The challenge is how we amplify the best practice that has been in the diocese for years. We envisage a specific portfolio / team who will promote nurture within the larger parish.

36. Cultivate depends upon lay members of the church being developed into missional leaders. We have difficulty with obtaining volunteer lay workers already, how will this change? (v02)

Our experience in Wigan was that God called people, unlikely as it may have seemed at the beginning, to lead new worshipping communities that helped new people engage with God. More than 100 people joined in with Cultivate and 45 new worshipping communities were planted with 1400 people in them, 600 new disciples.

In addition more than 160 people already engaged in Cultivate in cohort 1, so we know that God calls people to engage with their communities. God has given us the people we need; we want to encourage/support/release them into what God is calling them to do.

37. These lay leaders, during their training, are to be intensively mentored by the clergy. Will clergy have the time and mentoring skills? (v01)

There will be a process of reallocating clergy time around the new priorities. A significant aspect of Fit for Mission is getting clergy doing activities that impact mission rather than maintenance/admin. We also hope that this will be a life-giver to clergy who went into the ministry for that purpose.

Cultivate includes training for mentors.

38. How will shared funeral ministry, and other occasional offices, still encourage local connection with families?

That sense of personal and local connection will remain key. The challenge we have is that we now lose funerals and weddings at source. The 'system' isn't geared to non-church people having funerals or weddings in and through church. It no longer occurs to most people in our communities that we are an option. So we have to do two things: (i) make it

as easy as possible for people to find and engage with us through a better and more available administration and bookings service; (ii) continue to provide the very best service we can so that people recognise that the church is the very best place for these profound life events to take place. As Christians we know how and where we want to be married and have our funeral; most people don't, or certainly don't think of church as a first option. We have to work hard and differently to change that.

39. We don't see community in the four priorities identified by the diocese – why not? What does 'Justice' mean in FfM?

There are certain things that we take as given in our understanding of church and our priorities. So, for example, prayer is not mentioned as one of our four priorities; but we know and assume that everyone knows that FfM absolutely has to be rooted in prayer. Similarly, the whole of the Christian life is about community – the community of the church and the communities in which we find ourselves. So, we take community as a given. We understand justice in the Micah context of acting justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with God. So, our service, our commitment to justice is not manipulative or conditional; it is who we are as Christians and how we see the kingdom of God.

40. How do we get a new worshipping community when our church isn't full by any means? (v01)

This is the reason for planting new worshipping communities that look different from what we are doing today. Precisely because what we are doing today, while very helpful to many of us in our discipleship journey, isn't helping enough people come to know Jesus as Lord. Of course, a new worshipping community could meet in our existing buildings if that worked for them.

In addition, the aim will be to invest energy in our existing worshipping communities (through six-monthly pyramid reviews), to identify the opportunities they have for mission and help them to grow.

41. Will volunteers drop out when it's not 'their church'? (v02)

It will still be their church with its own local leadership. It will just part of a larger parish. So hopefully they will continue to volunteer as they do now. A larger parish isn't about having less worshipping communities, in fact it's about having more of them with multiple bases in our own buildings, in schools, in buildings owned by others. So, people will still feel a close connection to their church with its history and identity.

42. Will one big parish be able to grow as well? What are we doing to stop decline? Is there a focus on leading people to faith? (v02)

This will be the key leadership question and challenge. The aim of FfM is growth. The purpose of the change to a larger parish is to free clergy and lay (from governance and admin) so that they can put more energy into mission and ministry. The only way we will grow is to put more of the precious time we have into sharing and showing the love of God in the world.

43. How will teenagers be encouraged to stay? How can we see more youth development? (v02)

Again, this is about local leadership. There is no magic formula that any church can simply apply. FfM certainly does not have one. But a larger parish would hopefully consider youth to be a top priority and therefore prioritise creating a youth portfolio across the whole area so that greater momentum can be gained. Working across a larger geography will enable a clergy and lay team who are passionate about this work to be formed, for appropriate resources to be allocated and for grants to be applied for. Forming a larger parish gives the flexibility to focus the capacity of lay and clergy on priorities such as this. Growing a younger church is a key Diocesan and National priority so there is encouragement to develop a youth portfolio team in each larger parish.

44. Has there been any investigation to check for correlation between the loss of clergy (particularly in rural parishes) and lower numbers in church attendance? (v02)

Yes, there has and there is some but not complete correlation. However, FfM is not about reducing clergy numbers. Our experience is that also lay-led small worshipping communities can be very effective e.g. those planted by the Joshua Centre and in Wigan.

45. Workloads –how will this free up people into more mission and ministry when we’re still going to need people/teams leading on safeguarding, finances, children and youth work, buildings, bookings etc in each church. (v04)

In the following ways:

- a) There will be less people involved in Governance (simply 1 PCC instead of many)
- b) There will be more people involved in leadership teams wholly looking at mission and ministry, giving more focus
- c) Streamlining admin by having more of it done by a small Support Services team using best practice IT. Undertaking building compliance centrally.
- d) Clergy being freed up from admin by having the Support Services team
- e) Working hard to have less cash in the system, which takes volunteer hours to manage (maximising PGS, digital giving etc.)
- f) Having a supportive team for the whole parish for each of the following areas: safeguarding, churchwardens and finance

Children and youth work are key mission activities that will, as you say, absolutely require good teams in each local church.

46. What help will the poorest churches get to grow?

Quite simply the people of God catching and living out a vision for growth. Growth in the kingdom of God is not about wealth or about particular skills; it is about bold, brave, humble and generous service by and for God’s people. Poorer churches will get the same significant input as others.

47. Will there be a strategy for turning around declining churches through significant investment, like St Barnabas Penny Lane? Could areas of deprivation be prioritised in this?

There is already a plan for a resource-type church in the north of Liverpool. We will continue to work both with deaneries and the national church to see how and where else we can invest over time.

48. How will growth be encouraged in old and new congregations?

In a variety of ways including LYCiG (Leading Your Church into Growth), Cultivate, training in evangelism and nurture, regular preaching and teaching on the importance of growth, investment in new posts and areas of activity which are designed to reach new people and the missing generations. There is a strong expectation that the 4 priorities of introducing people to Jesus, deepening discipleship, developing Christian leaders and working for justice applies to all congregations, old and new.

Diversity

49. What would happen if we were part of a new Parish where people, particularly clergy, hold different views on some aspects of theology e.g. sexuality? Would policy be forced on churches and clergy? (v04)

There is a clear commitment within Fit for Mission and the Diocese to maintain, and indeed enhance, the breath and integrity of the Church of England. There will continue to be a range of positions and interpretations of scripture and how it applies to our current context and different theological and ecclesiological points of view. The larger parish will not be monochrome where everyone has to do, say and think exactly the same thing. It will be rich and diverse with people able to hold different views with generosity and integrity.

This is one reason why the larger parish has a named priest for each church, so that there is continuity of tradition. Bishops and Archdeacons are leading us to maintain diversity in the CofE so that everyone in our communities can find a place of belonging.

One of the on-going roles of the Archdeacon will be to ensure that the traditions and expressed wishes of each church will be maintained.

50. How are different traditions going to be managed? (v02)

All traditions will be encouraged to continue under the oversight of their named priest; all will be encouraged to grow and multiply through regular reviews and mission planning. This commitment to all traditions flourishing – not simply being maintained but absolutely flourishing – will be a key PCC and leadership responsibility.

See also, in the section *Being part of FfM* above: ‘How can we keep the variety of different traditions in the deanery/diocese?’

51. What will happen if a church has serious/ fundamental doctrinal or scriptural differences with possible future controversial changes e.g. same sex marriage?

Will a church be able to 'opt out' if there are serious differences or will they be forced to accept the majority decision. (v02)

In terms of theological differences between churches in a larger parish, see the first question in this section. The larger parish will be looking to offer a wide range of opportunities for worship and belonging to Christian Community across its geography. The only limits to that will be that each needs to be healthy and viable.

In terms of possible future changes, all the churches of a deanery, whether within a FfM larger parish or not, will need to work through the implications of being part of the Church of England at any point in time. Closer relationships and better communication because of those relationships are likely to enable good decision-making on the ground and helpful local solutions.

Larger Parishes

52. Is making a larger parish legal?

Yes. There is no legal limit to how big or small a parish can or should be.

53. Why just one larger parish in a deanery, why not more? (v01)

In order to get the scale required to work in portfolio teams so that missional priorities can be addressed, you need a large number of participating churches. Despite 65% decline in the last 30 years we still have capacity that we can direct towards mission if we work together. A much larger parish size enables it to benefit from a Support Services team doing admin very efficiently across the whole area, allowing more people to focus on engagement with our communities. Being a large unit also enables us to partner with other organisations such as Councils (in Wigan this means that during Covid, Church Wigan became the vehicle who delivered the Councils food poverty programme).

The Wigan experience (which pre-dates FfM), where they went from 29 parishes to 7, is that having more than one parish is still far too complex in terms of coordination and they are looking to reduce down much further.

54. Has this worked elsewhere? (v01)

There are individual instances where it has worked, but it hasn't been tried on the scale the FfM envisages. We are breaking new ground in this respect. Ashford in Kent now has a larger parish on a similar scale as is proposed in Fit for Mission.

55. Could we make small changes instead e.g. join together with a smaller number of parishes?

The learning in the Church of England is that forming 'multi-parish benefices' just multiplies the problems and exhausts everyone, especially priests who generally end up running around all the parishes trying to keep all the services going. We want to release people from having to do bits of everything so they are free to focus more on what they are good at. The smaller parish doesn't have enough resource to have the support and

administration that it needs; we get bogged down in endless repetitive meetings about the same thing in each neighbouring parish. The aim is to have a larger parish to enable us to simplify decision-making, create better support services and free people up from cranking the many handles of the institution of the Church of England and instead focus on taking the good news of Jesus to a lost and broken world.

Merging multiple smaller parishes into one larger parish, which will then have more than one licenced place of worship, will always be an exercise in trust. Trust that the new PCC will honour agreements made by the previous PCCs and trust that the new leadership will work for the benefit of everyone.

56. Couldn't we get benefits from centralising admin and services without becoming one parish?

It's highly unlikely. There would need to be complicated employment and cross-charging arrangements. There would be no guarantee of continuity of service or provision. Policies and procedures would need to be negotiated and agreed multiple times. And we would observe that such collaboration simply hasn't happened in the diocese – largely, we believe, because it is too hard and complicated to make it work if we all stay separate.

57. What impact will working in larger teams have on churches and people?

We hope it will be liberating; that is certainly the plan. We don't want to create teams to hold people back or to spend time in endless meetings. Rather we want to free the people of God to work together in service and mission. Some of the teams will be structured and fairly permanent; others will be informal and shorter term. But we don't want anyone to feel that they are having to carry things on their own, as is currently the case for some people.

58. What training will be offered for teams?

It will be varied according to the need. Some of it will be cultural – how to lead in such a way as to release the whole people of God. Some of it will be technical – how to work the new book-keeping system. Some of it will be personal – how do I understand my gifts and contribution in the context of the wider team. Some of the training will be one to one; some will be in groups; some will be coaching, some will be more instructive. But there will be lots of it.

59. How will the way clergy and lay people work together change? (v02)

We hope that FfM enables all people more fully to live out God's call on their lives. We hope for clergy that they are freed up from the massive expectations currently that they are everything to everyone and that they can get back closer to the Ordinal and understand their vocational call more fully in that context amid the current challenges. We hope that lay people are able more fully to express their gifts and step into spaces previously unoccupied or were seen as one of the tasks that clergy were expected to do. We know that the PCC will be a mix of lay and ordained; we know that the portfolio teams will be a mix of lay and ordained; we know that the Rector will be ordained. We will need to work carefully so that all people can understand who they are in God, where

accountability and authority lies within the new structures and how we are all humble before God and each other in our service and mutual support.

There will be greater opportunities for clergy and lay to work together in teams and therefore work more closely to strengths and passions.

60. Who will decide who is on the PCC, the Navigation team, the Portfolio teams etc? (v01)

The new PCC will be elected by the Annual Meeting, as it is in the current parish set-up (it's just that it will be a larger APM in a FfM parish).

The members of the Navigation team and the Portfolio teams will be discerned locally through a transparent process defined locally. In cohort 1 deaneries, the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee (DMPC) and Archdeacon were involved with reviewing expressions of interest from lay and clergy.

See also the sections of the Scoping document that relate to the PCC (including terms of reference), the Shadow PCC and the Navigation and Portfolio teams.

61. What happens if we don't have anyone with the skills to lead a particular portfolio team? Or people for the team?

The parish leadership would need to see if they could identify and train someone to step into this portfolio over time. Otherwise it would be a question of deciding how significant the work is and whether someone should be brought in from outside the parish to hold the responsibility. Ultimately, however, it will be a matter for the parish to resource the work that needs doing.

62. Can we continue to discern what God is saying to us as a church and start new initiatives or close things down?

Absolutely. This will be essential. But it will need to be done in a transparent, agreed and accountable way.

63. What measures would there be to prevent the bigger congregations in the deanery dominating decision making? (v01)

The new communication networks will mean that everyone has a clearer voice and an ability to be heard. For example, during transition the Navigation team will be tasked with coordination and communication - regularly liaising with the portfolio leads and worshipping community leads to make sure that everyone has a voice.

The governance set-up as described means that the PCC trustees have responsibility for the whole larger parish. There shouldn't be room for dominance in the system. Larger congregations are of course a great blessing as well because they have more people resource to help work as team to increase mission.

64. We had a plan to work in clusters in our deanery, maybe three or four of them. Can we do that in Fit for Mission? Or could those clusters become three or four larger parishes? (v04)

A much larger parish, larger than this question mentions, doesn't stop clusters of churches working together on certain aspects of mission. However, the opposite probably isn't true; three or four larger parishes would prevent some aspects of ministry being organised across the whole geography. Our experience from Wigan, where the deanery moved from 29 to 7 parishes, is that such collaboration is still too complicated; the Wigan team would rather now move to having just two or three parishes.

The FfM working assumption is that most larger parishes will be made up of something like 8-15 current parishes. (However, it will still depend on the exact make-up of the group who want to join together, so it could be a little more or less than this range.) But how churches and worshipping communities are formally or informally grouped under that structure is a matter for the new PCC. Each larger parish is different. FfM enables the larger parish to organise itself in the most appropriate way for that context.

65. What will happen to existing parish boundaries? (v02)

When a larger parish is created it is exactly that. The old parish boundaries disappear and the new geography is the sum of the geography of the old parishes.

66. An observation, bigger is not always better. The NHS is certainly an example that bears this out. (v02)

The parallel to the NHS is often suggested. However, the NHS has experienced an overload of change in recent decades, sometimes as often as every 2-4 years in some aspects of its organisation! Change fatigue has set in. I'm not sure the same can be said of the CofE which has stayed largely the same for decades. Perhaps schools are a better parallel, in their move to be multi-academy trusts?

The flip side of this is that smaller is not always better. Just as some things are too big to succeed, some things can be too small to flourish, and even to survive. FfM is about ensuring that as far as possible everything has the support and resource it needs to have the chance to flourish.

67. What other models can we explore that don't see churches giving up their individual charitable status/PCC? (v04)

The problem has been that the parish boundary / individual charitable status is a barrier to collaboration. If we just managed to do the best practice in ministry of each type that is already happening somewhere in our deanery, across the whole deanery, we would grow. But for decades our efforts to collaborate have come to very little because we revert to the parochial. And we all have to replicate all the functions of a parish. Generally clergy are not used to sharing best practice, they weren't trained to, and this is why on the FfM journey there is a lot of time spent coaching clergy to work as a team, so that their different skills can be brought to the fore for the benefit of all.

FfM is the culmination of 16 months of collective thinking of people like you and me – Lay people, Clergy, Bishops and Archdeacons. Every aspect of our shared life was considered, with a deep desire not to lose what is good, but knowing the need to move on amid the challenge of decline. The larger parish is part of missional development, lay leader development, development of teams, support and accountability, governance and admin

streamlining, dealing with buildings – these are all part of a package that hangs together. That is the change for which the FfM funding was given.

68. Will support for ailing churches be to the detriment of growing churches? (v04)

The intention is that this is not the case, the plan being that each church has a balanced budget so is not taking funds from another church to keep afloat and that each church will benefit from the practice of working more closely together, sharing skills and wisdom.

Governance

69. Alongside the single PCC, will there be other forms of governance?

There will be a regular Parochial Church Meeting in addition to the usual Annual Meeting. Any member of the parish electoral roll will be entitled to attend, speak and vote at these parish meetings: deanery synod members, assistant wardens and licensed ministers will be expected to attend. There will not be other formal governance structures, such as District Church Councils (DCCs).

70. How will a single PCC relate to leadership of a church or worshipping community? (v01)

The aim of having a single PCC is to streamline governance and practical oversight and release time for missional activities in the churches.

However, there will need to be a local leadership team for each church (with a collection of congregations / justice initiatives) or for a new worshipping community that will be planted. The leadership team will have more time to focus on mission and ministry because most of the governance and much of the admin will be centralised. The aim is to focus on mission and ministry, not maintaining duplicate CofE structures that we have today in each parish.

71. Which church officers will be required by the new larger Parish? (v01)

The same officer roles as in a current parish (wardens, treasurer, secretary etc). Overall there will be less officers with formal responsibilities, as there will be a lot less parishes, but their roles will change to be more oversight of a team. So, the Treasurer will head up a finance team, the Churchwardens will have a team, there will be a Safeguarding team – all under the new PCC. Each church will have a representative on each of these teams. These team members will ensure that each church / worshipping community attends to what needs to be done.

72. Does FfM change the role of wardens? (v04) [Previous Q about only 2 wardens removed following revision of plans regarding number of wardens]

Yes. The updated plan, which has emerged through conversations with cohort 1 teams, increases the number of planned wardens so that they are a team - one churchwarden per current place of worship. So in cohort 1 deaneries about 10 churchwardens working together across each larger parish – two of these wardens will be on the PCC.

There is evidence from elsewhere that two churchwardens (the original idea at the start of FfM) are not enough in large parishes, e.g. Ashford (Kent) started their new larger parish with two churchwardens for 10 churches and one new worshipping community, and are now requesting an increase to seven churchwardens.

The reasons for this approach are:

- It fits with team concept of FfM
- Enough churchwardens to do the work while reducing from current number
- Better chance of good connection with different worshipping communities, buildings and clergy team members
- Churchwardens, rather than assistant churchwardens, will have well-understood status and authority by election

The burden of statutory checks and regular maintenance will be undertaken by the Support Services team. So, the Churchwardens will major on their oversight responsibilities.

Locally, each churchwarden will work with a team of sidespeople to ensure good order at services and that day to day activities are well managed.

See Scoping document for more details on the Churchwarden role.

73. How much autonomy will worshipping communities have? What decisions will they still make? (v04)

Plenty. There will be an expectation that each worshipping community works clearly to support the four priorities, but how that is done will be a matter of choice around ecclesiology, local context etc. It absolutely won't be a case of one size being expected to fit all. We really do want choice and variety across the parish.

They will still be developing their plans for mission and community engagement, their budget (including approving spend against that budget), and for their life of prayer and worship.

74. Would an outreach project (eg TANGO) be brought within the new PCC?

Yes, everything done in the parish comes under the PCC, unless it is a separate charity.

75. How will a wholly PCC-controlled Pre School or Hall be managed and financed? (v01)

Your specific context may need to be checked, but in general terms, if a Pre-School or hall is wholly run by the PCC and the PCC appoints a committee to manage it, then in the future the new PCC would also appoint that committee. The new PCC would want local people to make up that committee as now. In the first instance it would be most reasonable to reappoint the current committee if they are willing to stand. You should not be concerned that non-local people would be put in charge of making decisions about such local matters. The principle is that local people make good decisions about local community engagement.

76. Would a Church still be called by the same name e.g. St Peter's Church. (v01)

Yes.

77. Are existing PCCs still undertaking governance during the transition period?**(v01)**

Yes, existing PCCs maintain responsibility until the pastoral reorganisation takes effect which creates the new larger parish.

78. What happens to the existing PCC members when their PCC no longer exists?**(v01)**

Churches and worshipping communities will need a local leadership team. However, the leadership team will have more time to focus on mission and ministry because most of the governance and much of the admin will be centralised. The aim is to focus on mission and ministry, not maintaining the structures.

Some people may feel loss by losing a more practical role. Of course, there will still be some practical roles required locally, but they will also be connected into the wider teams. And the new PCC will need good trustees so maybe that is you!

79. What will the constitution of the new all-embracing PCC be? (v01)

Exactly as the Church Representation Rules in force at the time dictate i.e. no change in PCC constitution. The parish system, laws, constitution are not being changed, we will be working completely within the existing rules, just having larger parishes. This should give comfort because they are the rules we know.

80. Will churches have a legal requirement to maintain their own Electoral Roll?**(v01)**

The legal requirement will become the responsibility of the new PCC.

81. Do we have the foundations for this house? (v02)

We do. The new house is built on the foundations of the old house which is the Parish system with PCC governance. But we are going open plan (a larger parish) instead of individual rooms (smaller parishes)! The Church Representation Rules will continue to give us our reference for good order in church life.

82. How long does a new PCC member stay in role? (v02)

3 years, as normal.

83. Does FfM mean the patronage system will end? What will happen to the patronage of our church? Would our current patrons have a voice to safeguard our theology? (v04)

The issue of patronage and local influence over priestly oversight of each worshipping community to ensure compatible theology and churchmanship is an important area of work. Patronage will continue but who the patrons are may change. Archdeacons and the Bishop's Planning Officer worked through this in detail with cohort 1 patrons via a formal consultation process. Some patrons may be happy to forgo their patronage to enable a simpler patronage structure for the larger parish than simply the sum of all the existing patrons. Each prospective larger parish will be a specific case to be decided by consulting the patrons of those current parishes. The new parish will have patrons who are likely to reflect the patronage interests of existing parishes. Ultimately the Church Commissioners will decide on the patronage of the new parish through the formal pastoral reorganisation

consultation process, but before we get to that point they will be informally consulted, by the Archdeacon, so that what is written in the scheme will be a good agreed solution.

84. What is the risk of being a member of a larger PCC to the individual? (v04)

Reference is made here to the following document which is available on request: LEGAL ADVISORY COMMISSION'S, PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCILS: LEGAL POSITION OF MEMBERS 2013.

There are probably 3 potential concerns:

- 1) Limiting financial liability of PCC members for PCC responsibilities. The good news is that PCC members have no individual liability – paragraph 4 of the advice makes that explicit. (The reason is that the PCC has perpetual succession, so liabilities are always corporately held and can never become individual.)
- 2) Limiting potential liability of PCC members for breaches of fiduciary duty. See paragraphs 6-13. The best solution here is as proposed in the document paragraph 12 – for PCCs in larger parishes to have indemnity insurance for their members. That will then cover them from the consequences of any good-faith failure.
- 3) Non-financial responsibility for things outside the practical knowledge or control of the PCC e.g. buildings and safeguarding. These are covered by insurance policies and the PCC should be diligent in ensuring that it complies with the requirements of any policies.

85. Do existing electoral rolls automatically get merged for the new larger parish? (v02)

Yes, they do.

86. What will the membership of the new PCC be and will we have representation? (v04)

The suggestion is that the PCC will consist of Rector, 2 Churchwardens, 6 lay members elected on a three-year rolling term at the Annual Meeting, 2 clergy members elected by the clergy licensed in the parish and up to two other clergy or lay members co-opted by the PCC. So, there will be representation, but not of every single worshipping community.

The PCC will be elected following the same process that we have now, except it will be across several churches in the larger parish.

The new parish should see a significant increase in the number of worshipping communities, and representation would make a PCC unmanageable. Instead, PCC members should be chosen for their ability to be excellent trustees, focussing on governance across, and on the flourishing of, the whole of the larger parish. The new regular parish meeting will be an important meeting where anyone can speak with / ask questions of the new PCC. See Scoping document appendices: The New Parish PCC & Governance Transition.

It is important to remember that there will be a number of leadership teams to give voice and weight to churches and worshipping communities across the larger parish. Leadership is not simply down to one group of PCC members. Decision-making will be highly devolved, particularly in terms of local mission and ministry decisions.

87. What can we expect in the future in terms of: Communication with the new PCC, Local Decision Making and Finances? (v04)

Communication with the PCC

While the larger parish PCC will function as the governing body, looking after governance matters (i.e. finance & buildings oversight employment and safeguarding), mission and ministry will be the work of local leadership teams.

To ensure communication between the PCC and individual churches and worshipping communities, the following things would happen:

- The PCC will have three sub-committees; Finance, Buildings and Safeguarding.
- Each church or worshipping community, will have a local leadership team focussing on local mission and ministry.
- On each local leadership team, there will be a named clergy person, who has oversight for the church, or worshipping community.
- Each church will have one person on each of the three PCC sub-committees above. Each worshipping community will have access to a member of each sub-committee.
- Each clergy person will have a structured and accountable relationship with the rector of the larger parish, who is the chair of the PCC.
- Clergy will continue to meet together regularly, sharing support, accountability, and a shared vision for the future.
- In addition, a church may have someone on the PCC or someone co-opted.

Through these people the PCC will feel close and connected, not distant, as its trustees work for the benefit of all the churches and worshipping communities in the larger parish.

Decision Making

Fit for Mission is a vehicle for this journey to help us do best practice in mission and ministry across the whole of the larger parish. If we do the best we know how to do but do it everywhere, we will become a growing church. As deaneries and churches journey together, exploring what is possible, it will be local people, both clergy and lay leaders, who will make the decisions on the best way to move forward. The FfM team will help to implement the decisions once local people have made them, with the resources given to us by the Church Commissioners. There will be access to coaches to help clergy become a team who work to their skills, and there will be lay leader development and the joy of seeing growing congregations through Cultivate. There will be help and guidance about the change through a deanery change facilitator, a surveyor to help with assessing buildings, help with administration, and much more.

The feedback we have had from our Cohort 1 churches is that they hadn't realised how much local decision-making would shape how their larger parish looked.

Finances

In a larger parish, each church will have its own fund in the internal finance system. This can be accessed at any time by their finance team member to see current income and expenditure against their budget (which has been previously agreed with their finance team member and the leadership team). Any income generated locally, from giving or events, will be recorded as income to that church, and any expenditure related to the church, will be recorded as such. All restricted funds will retain their existing restrictions, e.g. a gift given for use on church building A will only be able to be used on the fabric of church A.

The PCC finance sub-committee, the finance team, will be working to make sure finances work for all churches and worshipping communities.

88.Can a single PCC, which has many less members than are presently involved in total, handle the governance of the larger parish? (v04)

The new PCC would be a governing body rather than performing the many tasks our current PCC's undertake. The tasks and responsibilities of the new PCC would be the legal and governance roles e.g. financial oversight, employment, buildings oversight, safeguarding, ensuring policies and procedures are in place across the parish. Ministry and mission decisions will be made in the local church by each leadership team.

Clergy

89.What happens if I want to be part of FfM as a clergy person, but my parish doesn't? (v04)

FfM is about the parish not about any individual. So, if the parish chooses not to engage then the clergy person will also sit outside FfM.

If the parishes of an existing team decide differently about FfM (some decide to journey together and others not), then the Archdeacon will lead on finding a good resolution for both parishes and clergy.

90.Do our clergy have to officiate at all services within all buildings?

No they don't. Clergy only need to officiate at sacramental services (Holy Communion and Baptism), all other services can be led by authorised lay ministers (e.g. Readers). Under current Church of England Canon, only one service of Holy Communion needs to be held in one church within the benefice on each Sunday and principal Feast Days.

91.Should clergy be worried about job security?

We think that FfM creates more security rather than less, albeit people working in a different and more collegial context, because we think it's the best chance we have to grow. Basically, we have the clergy we can pay for via Parish Share. FfM doesn't change that.

92.I felt called to be incumbent of a normal-sized parish. Why can't I continue with the same role? (v04)

It is possible to continue while the parish is sustainable and the PCC decision is to stay outside a larger new parish. However, we see that there is more security and more opportunity for growth when working collaboratively. Larger parishes will actually become the 'normal-sized parish', but while a current parish can pay its Deanery Share (used to be called Parish Share – money paid towards the costs of clergy) and meet its other bills then it would be free to carry on as is. It just won't get any access to the FfM resources.

93. How will training posts change because of FfM? (v04)

We need to train clergy in and for this new collaborative context, both for this diocese and for potential posts anywhere in the country. One parish, one vicar posts will be a rarity in the Church of England in the future. Our Bishop has instructed our Vocations team to place curates in contexts with planned opportunities for collaboration going forward. FfM parishes obviously would give that collaborative experience; other parishes would need to show that a collaborative training situation was available.

94. How will clergy be deployed? Will our congregation have a vicar? (v01)

All worshipping communities and justice initiatives – of whatever size, scale or focus – come under the oversight of a named priest. As we plant more and more worshipping communities and justice initiatives the way in which that priestly oversight manifests itself will be different. Some congregations will see the same clergyperson very regularly, Sunday by Sunday, week by week; others will be largely lay led and the congregation will only see the priest infrequently. In some congregations the priestly oversight will be quite hands on; in others it will be heavily devolved. But it will be there. And the priest will be accountable to the Rector for the spiritual health of all of the worshipping communities and justice initiatives under their priestly oversight.

95. How will clergy roles change? How will tasks and responsibilities be allocated?

Currently stipendiary clergy are usually in one small parish or in a small team of parishes with some shared work but usually not any shared responsibility across parishes. In the Larger Parish there will be one Rector and a larger number of other clergy who will fully work together as a team to ensure all aspects of ministry and mission in all areas of the parish are well served.

An individual clergyperson will still have some pastoral oversight of specific worshipping communities but will not have responsibility for every legal and ministerial task to be organised. They are likely to have a specific portfolio ministry responsibility in the whole new parish e.g. overseeing the children's ministry. This will not mean that they individually will do all of the children's ministry in every church meeting place in the Larger Parish, but they will be accountable for forming a team/teams, developing vision, supporting training, development and evaluation of children's ministry in existing and new worshipping communities and contexts.

Clergy will have significant pastoral, relational ministry and will be released from duplicated administrative and legal requirements so that they can focus on growing specific areas of ministry in a larger area with teams of other ordained and lay people that best uses their gifts and skills in a focussed way. Self-supporting ministers will become

part of the whole Larger Parish but will have the option of having a new agreement about the focus of their particular ministry which will also involve being part of a team but may also have some specific responsibilities in one or more specific worshipping communities. All of these ordained roles will be accountable to each other and to the Rector who will hold together the oversight of all of the ministry in the team to ensure that all areas of mission and ministry are well led and supported.

96. How will new clergy be appointed and how will theological stance be guaranteed for a church in the future? (v02)

The core features will remain the same – section 11 and 12 meetings, role description, process overseen by the archdeacon on behalf of the bishop, involvement of the patron, mixed appointment panel.

It will be appropriate for clergy appointments to involve members of the churches and ministries which they will be leading. For example, an interview panel could include members of the leadership team(s) of church(es) over which a clergy appointee would have oversight, or someone representing those working in a portfolio ministry which the appointee would be leading.

As reflected regularly through these questions the theological breadth and richness of the Church of England is not up for negotiation; it is to be upheld. The only caveat to that is that this also requires each congregation or worshipping community to be viable. There is no permanent guarantee for any tradition or theological stance if that congregation simply fades away into complete unviability.

97. If our parish doesn't join a Larger Parish, would we get a new vicar when our current vicar leaves?

As now, that will be a matter for the deanery to determine. And that will depend on an assessment of the level of Parish Share that can be collected and the number of posts that can pay for. So, there are no guarantees inside the Larger Parish; there are no guarantees outside the Larger Parish.

98. Who will preach at our church and who will plan the teaching programme? How do we know that our theological tradition will be upheld in our church? (v01)

That will primarily be a matter for the priest with oversight of the church/worshipping community and its leadership team. The idea of the larger parish is to encourage diversity and flourishing of every tradition.

99. Are we giving away control to a leader (Rector) over whose appointment we had had no direct input?

Control is the wrong word; nobody controls within the Church of England. The Rector will have a degree of authority but the whole culture will be about servant leadership, diversity and flourishing. The role of the Parish Meeting is also key – that will set clear tone and direction and will be a forum for ensuring that voices are heard. The Church of England is not a dictatorship and neither can nor will be under FfM.

100. How will the Rector be appointed, do the new PCC play a role? (v02)

There will be a formal appointment process very similar to the process for all clergy. Archdeacons will lead on this as usual.

In the future reps from the new PCC will be appointed as normal to be involved in the interview process. However, for the first Rector appointment before the new Parish is created the deanery synod will appoint reps. See Scoping document appendices for further information on this appointment process.

101. The plan is to have more deacons ordained to help particularly with pastoral care. How many are planned and will they be stipendiary? (v01)

The aim is to have min 25 deacons by 2027. The deacon would be self-supporting and deployed locally so they would be known and a pillar of continuity.

102. Who will have the 'cure of souls' for our current parishes? (v02)

The Rector and Team Vicars (but not members of the team ministry who are not team vicars) all share the cure of souls – Mission & Pastoral Measure 34(1).

The ultimate responsibility for ministry (the cure of souls) is with the Rector and that will be shared with the rest of the clergy team. They will be responsible for ensuring that every church/worshipping community will have a designated priest who has oversight of that church/worshipping community.

103. In one larger Parish, how many clergy will there be? (v02)

There will be the same number that we have now in the individual parishes initially. Going forward the larger parish will have as many clergy as it can afford and wants – that could be more or less. Also see Q3.

104. Even though each parish will be "allocated" an ordained person, won't that close personal relationship that comes through being resident and involved in parish matters be lost? I wanted to quote the words of Jesus in John 10v14, "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me". Will this aspect of ministry and pastoral care will be absent? (v02)

Rather than being 'allocated' an ordained person (which sounds distant), a named clergy person will have oversight of that church being the visible local presence that priestly ministry involves. We all know and value local incarnational ministry and FfM won't lose that.

105. Who is going to want to be the new Team Rector? Do they have the skills needed for this role as its more akin to being a CEO than a priest? (v04)

Not everyone will want to be the Rector. It takes a certain type of person, leader and calling to want to lead in this way. The formal appointment process will look carefully at the skills of each candidate, and they will only be appointed if the panel believe that they are the right person for the role. So far, in St Helens and West Derby, God has raised up two excellent Rectors.

The role of priest is very wide, as defined in the Ordinal. It is completely possible for a Rector of a larger parish to understand their calling as priest and as Rector.

There will also be a lot of training and support for the Rector as they establish themselves in role.

106. What happens to the church the new Team Rector was leading, who is then their priest? Clergy have been told it needs to be one of them. (v04)

It could be, as you suggest, that the Rector is full time without a church, or it could be decided locally that they will have oversight of a church or worshipping community. It would be up to the larger parish and Archdeacon to decide how that is resolved. In St Helens and West Derby this has been possible and solutions have been found for their full-time Rectors.

Readers

107. Will Readers be expected to do more/anything different? (v02)

Fit for Mission doesn't necessarily signal any change for the ministry of a particular Reader. It may however give more opportunities for a Reader to extend their ministry, should they so wish, especially within the diocesan 4 priority areas of introducing people to Jesus, deepening discipleship, developing Christian leaders and working for justice.

The Bishop's Licence gives permission but it is the ministry agreement that sets out the shape of each Reader's ministry. The agreement is made between the Reader and the named ordained minister to whom they are accountable. Ministry is agreed according to the gifts of the Reader and the needs of the church and parish in which they serve; the Reader should then work within their ministry agreement and not beyond it.

Being licensed to a larger parish means that potentially a Reader has a license to minister in any worshipping community in the parish because the parish boundary is bigger. But that doesn't mean Readers will be expected to work other churches.

Some Readers are already licensed to the deanery and not to a parish and some Readers have said to the Area Dean they are happy to minister anywhere in the deanery where there is need or opportunity. For example, a Reader with a heart for funeral ministry may wish to serve across a new larger parish and that would be part of their ministry agreement. Any Reader can include ministry beyond their own church context in their ministry agreement. So long as their named ordained minister and the Area Dean are happy that they do so.

108. Readers all have very different callings; it is not the same for each Reader. Will Readers still be able to use these skills or will they be needed far more for Sunday preaching? (v02)

Every Reader will want to minister in line with the gifts and calling that God has given to them and within the framework of Reader ministry as "Minister of the Word". A Reader is

completely free to agree with their ordained minister that their role stays the same if that is appropriate. Or a Reader's role might change. But everything is by agreement.

Preaching and leading worship is very often the core part of a Reader's call to be a minister of the Word. Readers have been trained theologically and their preaching, teaching and leading of worship has the DNA of that training and their life experience.

Preaching will remain central to Reader ministry but there is no expectation that a Reader will preach more, or less, because their church is part of a larger parish.

109. Will Readers have a base in a larger Parish? Will Readers be portable? Will they be required to minister at other churches, perhaps with very different churchmanship? (v02)

Every Reader will have a base, will be part of a worshipping community in a larger parish: the one where they are currently worshipping unless the Reader wishes to change of course. Readers will have a place or places defined where they minister.

Readers will not be "portable". Readers will not be required to minister at other churches whatever the churchmanship.

Each church / worshipping community will have a named ordained person who has oversight of that community. The Bishop's Licence that each Reader holds is permissive. In a Fit for Mission parish it gives permission for the Reader to minister anywhere in the parish with the consent of the ordained person responsible for the worshipping community. But no Reader can be required to do anything different if they don't want to.

110. If Readers are filling in for less clergy, is there a potential burn out? (v02)

Behind the understandable question is perhaps a wrong assumption: that Fit for Mission intends to reduce clergy numbers. Fit for Mission is not about reducing clergy numbers.

If we ever do have to reduce our clergy numbers that will be because the ongoing decline in the Church of England forces us to reduce clergy numbers. It will not be because of Fit for Mission.

On the contrary, the whole aim of Fit for Mission is precisely to reverse the decline in attendance and finances so we can sustain, even grow our clergy numbers. Working together as a team of lay and ordained Christians across a larger parish will allow our clergy, SSM and stipendiary, to minister more flexibly, playing to strengths, sharing resources, reducing the load of admin and governance so we are Fit for Mission. We can do all that more creatively in a larger parish than in our current smaller ones.

We don't want anyone to burn out in ministry. That's why a ministry agreement is so important and why Readers should be meeting and praying with their incumbents regularly and each holding the other accountable for those times together. And that's why, under the leadership of the Bishop's Officer for Reader Ministry, we invest time and money in ongoing ministerial training and development for all our Readers including times of retreat and spiritual refreshment.

111. What opportunities does Fit for Mission create for Readers? (v02)

Any Reader will have all the opportunities that they currently have. Nothing will change there, save by agreement with their ordained minister.

However, Fit for Mission will create further opportunities for Readers who want to explore them. If a Reader has gifts they think could be used elsewhere in the larger parish, if they feel called to work in other churches, or worshipping communities, then that can be discussed with the ordained minister responsible for that church or worshipping community with a view to an agreement being made to minister there.

An obvious example, mentioned above, might be a Reader with a heart for funeral ministry or perhaps for pastoral follow up with bereaved families. Another could be working with baptism families or helping run nurture courses for new disciples.

Within Fit for Mission parishes we will have "portfolio" ministry, small teams with a particular focus, such as running Alpha or Exploring Christianity courses and any Reader would be able to explore these opportunities for mission and ministry.

112. Who will Lay Ministers be Licenced to? Who will be a Reader's line manager? (v02)

Just as now, in a larger Fit for Mission parish every licensed Reader will be licensed to the parish. That legal arrangement does not change. What will change formally is simply the name and the size of the larger parish.

Also, just as now each Reader must have a named individual to whom they are accountable; in that sense a Reader's line manager. In most cases now that named person is the Vicar, Rector or Priest in Charge of the parish in which a Reader currently serves. In a larger parish every worshipping community, every church, will have a named ordained person with pastoral, missional and ministerial oversight. That person is very likely to be the person who is currently the ordained minister of that church and who will be a Team Vicar of incumbent status in the new larger parish. So in practical terms any Reader will be still accountable to, line managed by, the same ordained minister as they are today.

It could be that they are licensed to two clergy persons if they have a remit to minister in multiple churches/worshipping communities. The Reader will be accountable to each Team Vicar.

Deanery and Area Dean

113. What will happen to Deanery Synod, DMPC and the Area Dean if the whole of the deanery, or part of it becomes a larger parish?

This is one of the areas that we will need to work on as FfM shapes up. We know that we need Deanery structures as part of the governance of the Church of England. If some parishes within a deanery stay outside the larger parish then the deanery will continue to function more closely to how it does now, although we will need to work out how the

larger parish is most appropriately represented. If all the parishes join then it may be that some of the functions of deanery and parish can be held together – say the Parish Meeting can also act as the Deanery Synod. But these are things we will need to work out on the ground.

114. How can you know that this will be the best 'fit' solution for our deanery?

We can't, or at least not until we try it. But the main point is that we need to find out what will work best for the mission of God in the Diocese of Liverpool. If within that some structures need to change or flex – say we need to amend deanery boundaries – then we need to explore that openly and generously. But we want to start with the mission of God and work back to structures, rather than start rigidly with what we have and try to fit the mission of God into those structures.

115. How will FfM connect with our deanery mission plan/our parish plans?

We hope it will amplify them and give them greater drive and energy, especially given the extra resources available under FfM.

116. What will be the role of the Archdeacon?

The archdeacons will continue to be available to all ministers and church officers in their role of offering pastoral support, and advice on faculties, finances, rules and discipline etc. The archdeacon's role in oversight of mission and ministry in the diocese will be mainly expressed in their relationship with the new rector, clergy leadership team and the new PCC.

Buildings

117. Can the new PCC simply choose to close one of its buildings?

No. The closure of any place of worship is a consultative process between the church members, their PCC, the Deanery and authorised representatives of the Diocesan Bishop.

118. Can you guarantee my church building will not close?

No, but nobody can guarantee that now. The mission and ministry of the church, its clergy and its building are significantly funded by, and linked to the health of, the church community. Staying outside of FfM does not mean that your church building is protected either.

119. What happens to a congregation if a building closes? (v01)

The leadership team would need to do everything it reasonably could to support the members of the congregation to find where best they can worship. That may be in a building not owned by the parish, or it may be within another local church building. This would be vital and serious pastoral work.

120. What rationale will be used for deciding which/if church buildings will close? (v01)

This will be worked through carefully by the prospective larger parish. A local 'Right Buildings' team will work with a professional buildings strategy manager to do the work to make a proposal for the buildings needed in the larger parish for the future.

There's no simple tick-box formula for this. A process has been carefully constructed which looks at the following areas:

- *Social & Spiritual – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities*
- *Environment – enhancing and protecting our natural and built environment*
- *Economic – making buildings sustainable and fit for current and near future purposes/context*

The process considers key factors such as location of the building; current condition of the building; current use(s) of the building; current health of the congregation(s) meeting in the building; potential enhanced uses of the building; whether there are other assets that could be used to create resource to invest in the building; proximity of other suitable/more suitable buildings, and – increasingly in the coming years – carbon net zero assessments and impacts. The process has been successfully run in cohort 1 deaneries with all current PCCs agreeing with the final proposal before it was ratified by deanery synod.

121. How can we be confident of future proofing our buildings?

As mentioned above there are no guarantees. But having well-maintained, heavily used and financially viable buildings is generally the most effective way. Clearly the commitment to carbon net zero by 2030 will also become a more significant factor.

122. Will rural churches lose their buildings and therefore the heart of the community?

Not necessarily, no. We can't afford to keep any building going at any price, but equally we know how significant church buildings are in some communities, including rural ones. So, there will need to be open and mature conversations about how a parish gets the right balance between being a church for everyone and at the same time growing our way into a new and more sustainable future. Partnership uses may also be a possibility for rural churches.

123. Who will manage buildings day to day going forwards, managing bookings etc?

The aim is to create simplified processes and additional resources to enable buildings to be more efficiently managed and better maintained. There are specific posts within the FfM budget to get this process started. Most of the day to day management will remain with those who use the buildings. However statutory compliance / maintenance and some purchasing of services is likely to be done more effectively across all the larger parish buildings.

124. Has the diocese already got a plan for which buildings to sell? (v01)

No. No central planning has been done.

125. Will all churches be designated as parish churches?

The larger parish will have multiple sites with multiple buildings. They may not all be designated parish churches. That detail will all come out in work done by your local navigation team supported by the Bishop's Planning Officer and team.

126. What will happen to organisations that use church buildings in a larger parish e.g. amateur dramatics? (v02)

Absolutely no need to change unless the local church leadership team decides that there is a better community use or partnership opportunity (the same decision-making process as now). The local leadership team in a church will focus its attention on mission and ministry, the governance and administration being undertaken by the PCC and Support services respectively. See scoping document section 7 for more information on local leadership teams.

127. Are graveyards to be shared? (v03)

Where a new parish is created by a union of parishes, paragraph 13(1) of Schedule 3 to the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 provides that the persons residing within the limits of the new parish shall have the rights and privileges (if any) of parishioners in respect of burials except that any parishioner who previously had rights of burial in a churchyard within the area of the new parish shall, so long as that churchyard remains open, continue to have those rights and shall not become entitled by virtue of the union to rights of burial in any other churchyard.

128. In the larger parish how should logbook and terrier be managed for each building? Is there a way of simplifying the admin around these? Could the support services team deal with them in some way? (v02)

Terrier, inventory & logbook have to be kept for each church building, but are a parish responsibility and could be done centrally in a new parish. Churchwardens are responsible and are required to report to the PCC so the PCC can report to the annual meeting. The bishop (in practice the archdeacon) has power to inspect, and the Church Buildings Council are the regulating body.

They can all be kept electronically. Our general advice to parishes is to keep the terrier and inventory electronically but consider having the logbook in hard copy so that regular inspections of the building can be noted. Or it might be possible to have everything stored electronically in the church management software. Cohort 1 team will work out the best approach as they form their support services; they could also choose to do a piece of work to bring together the current parish records and get them into a consistent and easily updated (preferably electronic) state.

129. Why would it make sense to close buildings alongside conversations about planting new churches? (v04)

In some cases in the diocese there are church buildings which are no longer in the right location missionally (for example where the building is not near housing), and there are some buildings which require costly repairs. With these factors in mind it may be right in some places to close the church building but look for an alternative venue for services and missional activities such as a local school, café or community building. The Right Buildings process, together with local mission planning, facilitates good local decision-making about buildings.

130. Will each church retain its Quinquennial Inspector that has got to know the church and its needs, or will there be one for the larger Parish? (v04)

Again, this is a decision for the PCC, balancing the local knowledge each architect has built up for the individual church with a strategic approach which may achieve economies of scale and the best service.

Support Services and occasional offices

131. If funeral admin is centralised would a Church member be able to have the funeral taken by their own minister?

Yes, absolutely. The only issue is whether the minister is available, but that is no different to now.

132. How might FfM help to 'market' the church in a better/bigger way e.g. weddings, local support of charities? (v02)

One benefit of the larger parish is to bring best-practice consistency to the whole area. In general terms where something is done well in a current parish the larger parish has the ability to do that thing consistently well across the whole. The local Support Services team will use the most appropriate IT to ensure that publicity of services, justice initiatives and pastoral ministry (weddings, funerals, bereavement care etc) is consistent across the whole parish.

133. Will a centralised booking system for funerals mean people can't have the church they want for their service? (v04)

No, people will be able to have the church and minister they want if they have a preference. The intention is that the system would be similar to what is currently in operation in some larger churches, just on a larger scale. Funeral directors would continue to meet with their clients as they do now and if that client expressed a wish for a service at a particular church, the funeral directors would contact the central number for the new parish Support Services office who would have access to church calendars and will be able to book the funeral. This would be of particular benefit to churches who do not currently have administrative support. It will also give consistency of response to funeral directors, ensuring they always get an answer to their calls. It will also give clergy time back across the larger parish because they won't need to do the admin associated with funerals.

Communication

134. How will parishes be kept informed who don't have a vicar?

During the FfM consultation/early transition, current PCCs where the incumbent post is in vacancy will be kept informed by the Area Dean and Lay Chair and by being invited to deanery meetings.

After the larger parish is formed, every church will have its own leadership which will connect into the wider leadership of the parish. Every church will have a role and voice in the parish meeting. Plus, there will be plenty of people to ask.

But there is a wider cultural question for each of us. Getting communication right is really difficult. There is generally so much going on and not everything is relevant or interesting to everyone. Indeed, nobody can know absolutely everything going on. But people in any organisation – including churches – often complain about ‘communications’, that ‘nobody told me’. The FfM challenge will be to switch the culture from nobody told me to being clear about where we can each go to get information. We will all need to take a bit more responsibility for trying to find out and then sharing stories and information rather than waiting to be told.

135. How will the change be well communicated?

This will be vital. The FfM story will best be told locally by local people. It is not something that ‘the diocese’ can do on its own. So, there will be investment in communications capacity to support the local leadership to make sure the FfM story on the ground is well and honestly told.

136. How can we promote FfM to the whole of our deanery?

Through regular and on-going communication in print, on line and most importantly in person. We will need to keep telling the stories over and over and over again. FfM teams will be able to help with this.

Employment

137. I am an employee of one of the original parishes; what happens to me? (v02)

As the Charity Trustees of the new parish, the new PCC will automatically become your new employer. Any new employees taken on after the move to the larger Parish will also be employed by the new PCC.

This also includes vergers, gravediggers and organists who are not self-employed.

Your terms and conditions will be protected under the Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE).

138. Will my job stay the same? Who will I be answerable to? Where will I be required to work? (v02)

It depends on what your role is now. Some roles which are very specific to a church (e.g. a paid verger or a worship leader) may see no change to their role. While their employer would change, their work and line manager would likely stay the same. Their cost would be budgeted for within that church’s budget and covered fully by that church’s income.

For admin roles where the larger Parish is aiming to streamline work, there will need to be careful conversation and negotiation with each employee who transfers to the new structure. The details asked in this question will be at the heart of that conversation.

139. If our church raises money for a new employee how will we be sure that they will be deployed at our church?

The job description will determine where and how the employee works. And the basis on which the money is raised determines how it can be spent.

140. What happens about the fees paid to organists and vergers? Will they be handled centrally? (v02)

In order to comply with the law, the larger Parish will run a payroll and register with HMRC, and all employees and workers (including vergers, organists, gravediggers etc who are not self-employed) will be part of the payroll and paid by BACS: payments in cash will no longer be allowed under any circumstances. Where organists etc. can demonstrate that they are self-employed they will submit an invoice which will be paid by BACS.

Schools

141. What will happen about CofE schools? (v02)

Relationships between a school and a church will continue, with the minister in oversight of that church continuing the relationship with that school as the larger parish is formed. The situation may remain as that, or the clergy team may in time propose to develop ministry and mission in a consistent but different way across all schools in the larger parish. The larger parish gives the opportunity to develop best-practice across all school connections.

142. How will FfM larger parishes impact admissions policies? (v04)

If Admissions Policies currently name individual churches, then Governors are advised to read the current guidelines from the Church of England which are adopted by the Liverpool Diocese Board of Education.

143. Will any child from the larger parish have a right to go to any school in the larger parish? (v04)

This very much depends on who the Admissions Authority for the school is. If the school is a Voluntary Controlled (V.C.) school, then the Local Authority (L.A.) is the Admissions Authority and the over subscription criteria is determined by the L.A. If the school is a Voluntary Aided (V.A.) school or one in an Academy then the Governors are the Admission Authority and they review their policy frequently.

144. Will admissions policies need to be rewritten? (v04)

This will depend on whether the individual churches are named in the Admissions Policy, if the Admissions Policy has been reviewed in light of the Guidelines first produced in March 2021, and when the school last went out to Public Consultation.

145. How will FfM larger parishes impact Church Governors, both clergy and lay? (v04)

The only impact for Church Governors in light of FfM will be the appointment of Governors, in that schools and churches will need to look to see if their Instrument of Government (IOG) needs changing. An IOG is a document that states the make-up of the Governing Body and who appoints Foundation Governors. The advice from the Board of Education is that, the PCC is the nominating body (having consulted with the Leadership Teams in each church), with the Board of Education the appointing body.

146. With clergy roles changing, how will governance expectations change so that their roles are realistic? (What is the recommendation for new ways of working within a larger parish?) (v04)

No changes to clergy roles, in that the Board of Education has for some time been advising that clergy do not take on the role of Chair of Governors. If clergy are named on the IOG as Ex-officio but do not wish to take up the post, then included in the IOG is that the Archdeacon (with support from the Education Department) can appoint someone in place of the vicar.

147. How will relationships with schools be impacted because of FfM? (v04)

For some time, the Board of Education has been encouraging churches and schools to develop their relationship, i.e. have a named person on the Leadership Team who is also a Governor that can develop the relationship, have different people from church supporting the school in different ways and reporting to the Leadership Teams/PCC. Going forward it will be key that the relationship is between the people of the church and the people of the school and not only the vicar.

It will be key that local clergy spend time with headteachers to explain this shift, and to include in that conversation how this will work with the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS). The Board of Education has already started this work and is doing what it can to explain this both to headteachers and to SIAMS.

Transforming Wigan

148. What is the key learning from Transforming Wigan? (v01)

The Transforming Wigan project has provided significant amounts of learning and evidence that has supported the FfM proposal, including: clergy and other leaders work better in teams than when isolated (clergy in Wigan say that they would not go back to the previous ways of working); wherever possible change leadership needs to be local rather than imported; parish structures with lots of layers don't work (Wigan went from 29 parishes to 7, with a joint council – but they say it is still too complex and should have gone to a much smaller number); people need to be able to identify with their own place of worship/worshipping community and be confident that their giving is applied locally; clergy can't do everything but feel the burden that they should; difficult financial problems are not solved simply by changing structures – they are difficult for a reason and so

require tough and honest conversations and decisions; buildings are a blessing and a huge challenge that must be addressed head on and early on; culture change and moving into sustainable growth is really hard and needs to be resourced; the worshipping communities that work well together have found the transition easier; there are plenty of lay people ready to be excited by the possibilities God has for them; there are many opportunities to connect with people who aren't connected with church; people are still hungry for the good news of Jesus.

Fit for Mission has been designed taking the Wigan learning into account. The key differences between Fit for Mission and Wigan are:

- Wigan was led by an external leader and team; FfM in each deanery is led by local leadership from day one, supported by a FfM team. In cohort 1 this will mean a Change Leader (one of the clergy) will lead during the change period and then a Rector will be appointed at the point of pastoral reorganisation.
- Not a Guiding Coalition – a small group through which everything went. Instead, a Navigation team responsible for coordination and comms, with other change and ministry portfolio teams responsible for each aspect.
- Buildings addressed from day 1 – a locally led and externally resourced Right Buildings team and process.
- More information up front and PCCs then vote to be part of Fit for Mission or not.
- Comms: more information and more conversation up front with individual PCCs. A full-time comms officer, enabling good comms and supporting local teams.
- Much more resource to enable change than Wigan.
- Looking for one or maybe two parishes, no more than that to keep things simple and streamlined.
- Accountability structures for clergy and teams defined from day 1.

Good things from Wigan that are being replicated in Fit for Mission:

- Cultivate
- Support Services
- Emphasis on prayer
- Everyone working in teams
- Focus on mission

- Planting new and refreshing existing worshipping communities
- Take time during the engage and 'working as-if' phases for local finance leaders to understand the new finance arrangements and co-create the final detailed solutions.

149. What are the three key things we have learned from cohort 1, and are improving on for the future? (v04)

We need a longer engagement phase, changes to our team structures and better communications.

- **A longer engagement phase** – Each deanery in our first cohort had only 6 months to engage with Fit for Mission before they chose to proceed. The learning is that a longer period to explore FfM would be helpful, so that more parishes could become comfortable with the FfM journey. Cohort 2 has had a full 12 month engagement period including a more structured clergy engagement phase to understand how increased collaboration and unifying of best practice could look for them. Work is progressing to plan more time still for lay and clergy engagement for Cohort 3, nearly a two-year period. In addition a new person has been appointed to spend time with Cohort 3 parishes, to listen and speak with people.
- **Changes to team structure** - As we have journeyed through the process with Cohort 1, we have recognised the need to flex from the team structures that were first formed. Initially, we created 5 teams (Navigation, Clergy Leadership, Growth, Right Buildings and Structural) but we found that the Navigation and Structural teams can be combined. We have also focussed the work of the Growth team to be around mission planning for the larger parish. Learning on the journey, and applying the knowledge as we progress, is a key part of the Fit for Mission process.
- **Better Communication** – We recognise that Fit for Mission could have been communicated better, and we understand that this lack of communication has caused fear and anxiety within our congregations. As we move forward, we are focused on the pressing need to communicate well about why we are journeying this way and how this may look for each individual deanery and larger parish.

Answers - Finance

Finance General

150. Who will be responsible for [owns] all the money from the current parishes?

The Trustees of a charity are the ones who 'own' (are the custodians of) that charity's money with the legal responsibility to account for that money and to ensure it is used responsibly to further the charity's objects. For Church of England Parishes, the Parochial Church Council are the Charity Trustees. Thus, it is the new PCC who will be responsible for all the money and assets that were originally held by the previous PCC's.

151. Who pays the Parish/Deanery Share?

The Larger Parish. Parish/Deanery Share is principally your contribution towards the cost of our clergy (their stipends, pensions, housing, training, etc.), licensed lay ministers and work with schools. These costs are shared out proportionally amongst all the deaneries of our diocese based on criteria set by our Diocesan Synod.

152. So what financial responsibility will our congregation/worshipping community have?

Individual congregations/worshipping communities are responsible for the stewardship of their resources as parts of the wider body of Christ that is the larger parish. The leadership team of each church/worshipping community will oversee the day to day finances relating to that worshipping community against an agreed budget, monitor their income streams, grow their all-important giving base, and control local expenditure so that the church is financially sustainable and attending to biblical stewardship including generous giving. Larger areas of expenditure and expenditure relating to the whole parish will be managed by the PCC.

There will be a common accounts system for all congregations/worshipping communities. The system will enable the larger parish Treasurer to easily create regular reports and a year end accounts for the new PCC.

Management accounts for both individual churches/worshipping communities and the whole new Parish will be available from the system at any time and will be able to be accessed by the finance team. In order to give a true picture, items of expenditure managed at whole parish level (e.g. Parish Share, Insurance, Parish wide mission) will be allocated across the churches/worshipping communities. A finance team member will either be designated within or available to each worshipping community. Finance team members will be responsible for entering small amounts of information into the accounts system (MyFundAccounting.Online) through the internet.

Training and support will be available for everyone volunteering to help with entering financial information.

153. How will the PCC have funds for mission across the Larger Parish (the work of portfolios), if all the income of a worshipping community is allocated against that community?

This will be a matter for the PCC to negotiate carefully with individual worshipping communities as part of the budgeting process and as we all seek to grow current congregations and plant new ones. As with a current parish there will need to be clarity and integrity as to how finances are managed (for example, as mentioned above all monies given to a particular worshipping community will be assigned to that community) as well as the mutuality and generosity that comes with being part of the body of Christ. The

larger parish will be the same, looking to identify and create resources that support exciting mission developments but with the support of the people of God to enable such developments.

154. Will we lose all our reserves into the larger parish budget? (v02)

Some parishes in the diocese have significant reserves – most do not. There is therefore a fear that those with decent reserves will lose them as they now belong to the new parish; and these reserves will be spent or automatically re-distributed across the larger parish to support those with less. This is not how things will work for 3 reasons:

- i. Legal – if the monies were given for particular expressed purposes (a restricted fund) those purposes must be honoured. They cannot simply be overridden.
- ii. Principle – free or unrestricted reserves held by a parish will become designated funds by decision of the new PCC. They will be designated to the church which held them and that designation will be honoured unless it is agreed, through discussion with the church's leadership team, that the funds should be reallocated for something of greater priority (an emergency or other parish wide mission).
- iii. Practical – the aim of FfM is to invest in growth, not subsidise decline. Congregations/worshipping communities in a new parish are expected to work together for growth. So, all money should be used to resource growth (which ultimately will benefit the whole parish) not keep a church or an activity on its last legs for a little longer. St Paul puts it like this: "our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality". (2 Cor 8:13)

155. What will happen if a current PCC has debts? Will another church's money be used to cover those debts?

Not automatically, no. Again, it will be an issue for the new PCC to navigate a good way forward. Some of this may involve generosity (with the commitment to transparency and negotiation that is a feature of many of the answers to these questions); some may involve hard conversations about sustainable futures and/or the release of assets within the relevant part of the larger parish.

156. Should we quickly designate all our reserve funds so nobody else can get their hands on them?

No, for 3 reasons:

- i. Legal – designating funds is a decision that can be reversed, so it doesn't give the absolutely security that the question implies.
- ii. Principle – free or unrestricted reserves held by a parish will become designated funds by decision of the new PCC. They will be designated to the place(s) of worship which held them and that designation will be honoured.

- iii. Practical – the larger parish is about mature decisions in the body of Christ; it is not about asset stripping financially strong parishes.

157. Will there be any financial mutual support in the Larger Parish?

Yes. In fact, there already is – via Parish/Deanery Share. Different parishes pay different amounts of Parish Share according to their missional strength and socio-economic factors. It is likely that this mutual support will be amplified in the larger parish (voluntarily and through transparent discussion) as financial decisions are seen in the context of the whole larger parish rather than one particular part of it. But to repeat – this is not a recipe for asset stripping of the better resourced or propping up unviable worshipping communities or buildings.

158. What if another church in the parish hits major financial problems – will we be expected to bail it out?

Not automatically, no – and certainly not if it is just unviable. But if there is a clear growth plan then the new PCC may ask individual worshipping communities in the Larger Parish to help resource this plan through providing money and/or people. Achieving sustained growth in numbers, giving and income across the whole Larger Parish will be one of the most effective ways of relieving the financial pressure on any individual part of the Larger Parish.

159. What happens to the cash reserves (in current and deposit accounts) and investment funds held by each of the previous PCCs? (v02)

In short, they all come under the ownership of the new PCC. That said, it is possible and might make sense for there to be local agreements to designate portions of a previous PCC's reserves to particular uses in the future. So, if a church had funds saved that it had designated for a particular future expenditure (perhaps for a building repair, or a mission activity), then the new PCC should continue with that designation.

It should also be noted that funds which are Restricted must continue to be held and used in line with their existing Restriction.

160. Can the new PCC be legally prevented from spending money that originally came from one specific church?

No. All monies in all bank accounts and cash boxes belongs to the new PCC as the Charity Trustees for the new charity. As the Trustees, the new PCC has full control of all parish finances. However, the new PCC is bound by any donor restrictions applied when the original donation was received. And we have consistently flagged up in these answers the importance of the culture of the parish and the need for the PCC to work sensitively and collaboratively.

161. Will people still give money? (v02)

We believe that they will because they will want to see their own church flourish, ministry continue and develop, their building be fit for purpose and to see mission increase.

162. Is the PCC Treasurer a voluntary or paid position? (v02)

The constitution of the PCC allows members of the PCC to be paid (this is different from most Charities where the Trustees cannot receive remuneration), so it would be possible to have a paid PCC Treasurer.

However, the position of Treasurer is normally held by a volunteer, and in larger parishes there can be a paid bookkeeper/accountant to provide support and manage the day-to-day finances. The Support Service team being set up as part of Fit for Mission assumes this model, but the Finance Change Team can agree to flex the proposed model to meet local needs. The Treasurer will not be working alone, but with a team of finance coordinators (one from each church).

163. What are the thresholds for independent reviews/examiners? (v02)

All PCC accounts must be independently examined. Provided the PCC does not have assets of more than £3.26M and the turnover is less than £1M the annual accounts can have an Independent Examination rather than a full audit. If the turnover is over £250K the Independent Examiner must be an accountant registered with an approved accountancy body (if it is below £250K, the independent examiner must be a "suitable person").

164. Transparency – will all churches be honest about their assets? (v02)

The answer has to be "yes" as failure to be honest would be a criminal offence!

In practice, provided there is good communication about how funds will be managed, there is no reason not to declare them and there will be benefits to having them "on the books" and well-managed. The Finance Change Team will have a role both in identifying where funds are currently held "off book" (e.g. as cash in a tin in the church safe or investments that have never been shown in the church accounts) and in deciding how they should be treated in future. Should there be any concerns, the Archdeacon would be consulted in the first instance.

165. What are the 4 types of PCC funds? (v04)

Charities can hold the following funds:

Endowment Funds: assets which were given to the PCC either for a specific purpose (e.g. a hall to be used to further the mission of the church) or to generate an income (e.g. a legacy to be invested to provide income to fund the mission of the church). The assets are held in perpetuity and unless Restricted by the deed of endowment income can be used for any purpose. There are unlikely to be many endowment assets and these will be identified as part of setting up the new accounts.

Restricted Funds: funds which the donor gave for a specific purpose and which can only be used for that purpose. Most Restricted funds tend to be building or fabric related (e.g. organ fund, church reordering funds) and will be restricted to a particular church building. The PCC cannot restrict funds, only the donor can.

Unrestricted Funds: These are available to use for any purpose related to the PCC's operation and can be used across the whole parish. Unless a donation or gift has a specific restriction it will be classed as Unrestricted income. The PCC can designate funds for a particular purpose and can also remove the designation.

Designated Funds: Designated funds are unrestricted but have been set aside (earmarked) by the Trustees for a particular purpose or project.

166. If people give money specifically to a church, either via legacies or general giving to, for example, fund a youth worker, how is this money ring-fenced in the single pot? And the flip side of this is how do we stop people giving just to their church? (v04)

Modern organisations' finances are not managed through multiple bank accounts, instead they are managed using a single financial management system that allow for multiple cost centres or funds. Within such systems (for us it will be MyFundAccounting.Online) each church will have its own fund (its own pot if you like). That fund will detail all its income and expenditure.

In terms of income you will be able to see, broken down into different lines, the income from all your church's different forms of giving (PGS, plate, standing orders, ad hoc etc) as well as from funerals and rentals etc. In terms of expenditure, you will be able to see everything that has been spent against its line budget. Some of those expenditure lines will relate to employees. The cost of a Youth Worker would be shown in one of those expenditure lines. And the general principle will be that each worshipping community should fund itself.

So the answer to the ring-fenced question is: your church will budget for a Youth Worker, both in terms of income (how you will bring in the money to pay for them) and expenditure. And what is budgeted for and agreed by the PCC finance sub-committee (each church will have a rep on that) will then be put in to practice.

St Helens Shadow PCC have agreed a protocol document, which is an agreement between PCC and the people of the churches as to how they will operate. The exact wording of this will be up to you to work out in your Shadow PCC when the time comes, but it details principles that they will follow in terms of fiscal rules and management of finance. Such a document helps everyone feel confident about finance as you move forward together. What cohort 1 experience tells us is that when the Shadow PCC starts meeting people realise that it is not a distant body that will be 'doing something to us'. Instead, it is 'us' making sensible decisions about the larger 'we', valuing what we already have but looking to grow and make that sustainable.

With regards to how do we stop people just giving just to their church, generosity is a gift of the Spirit. It will come as people engage in a wider context and feel that they want to freely give to the work of His church. There may need to be on-going teaching about how the mutuality of the body of Christ is expressed in the new structures. But we should be clear that no one wants a flourishing church to be robbed to prop up a non-flourishing one

where no change is taking place. However, the opportunity before us is to galvanise good leadership and best practice across a wider geography so that together we can grow. Currently our parish boundaries prevent such collaboration.

167. What assurances are there that the historic debt of the deanery won't start accruing again year after year? (v05)

The protocol document contains fiscal rules relating to breaking even over a 3-year cycle. What we will be enabling is best practice financial management across the larger geography, with the ability to deal with the big issues of the CofE. At best we will grow by doing best practice mission everywhere (and that is a real possibility); at worst we will be able to make good strategic decisions to live within our means. This is why the Right Buildings Process is key, to address our buildings issue in a transparent and systematic way, so that you can decide which buildings you need in your deanery for the future. This is why working together to, for example, plant a worshipping community in every CofE primary school is a fantastic growth opportunity. This is why more flexibility in deployment of clergy and greater accountability and support will help focus activity on many areas of missional opportunity.

As we move into being a larger parish two things will happen, one in the Diocese's gift and the other in the gift of the larger parish. The Diocese will work with those parishes looking to join together to do all that is possible to eliminate historic debt at the point of becoming a larger parish– historic being defined as accumulated debts pre 2022. The Larger Parish PCC and Clergy Leadership Team will then be able to look across the whole and make decisions regarding mission opportunity, ministry and finance with greater levers to pull than it had before. These two things, and the fiscal rules detailed in the protocol, should prevent debts from accruing.

Also, the new structures will give a much greater ability to remedy problems than currently exist. If a particular part of the parish is under-performing then there will be the ability to change the way things are done, including adjusting the leadership and/or reducing the costs.

168. Do you have a spreadsheet for our deanery with the finances of all the churches on it, with the expected and actual parish share amounts and a plan of how this will work as one? (v04)

The plan of what finances will look like across the larger parish will be worked on by a finance team formed at the start of the 'acting as if' 2 year period (this will basically be the treasurers from each parish working together). Getting absolute current data today is hard because everyone uses different systems or paper – one of the first activities is to get everyone on to MyFundAccounting.Online. In the larger parish everyone will use the same finance system and up to date reports across the whole will be available to the PCC finance sub-committee (one member from each church). This will be a significant move forward in terms of transparency, ability to make good strategic decisions and best practice financial management. It is also one of the key reasons for having this period of acting as if; to build confidence in each others' financial realities and potential.

As mentioned in the previous question, historic deficits will not be brought into the larger single parish. And as the larger parish matures if we find that there are parts of the parish that are failing to meet their budget then from a Diocesan point of view we will take a medium term approach. If there are areas of financial non viability within the parish, or where parts of the parish are no longer pulling their financial weight, we will work with the parish to identify options to remedy the situation and work to a solution. These options may include cutting the cost of ministry in that part of the parish, or bringing in a turnaround team to revitalise ministry. Whatever the approach it would be done in conjunction with the PCC and to ensure a stronger medium term financial position for the parish as a whole. But we won't simply look to saddle the larger parish with an emerging debt or deficit.

169. Will income remain with our church, or could it be taken for other uses? (v04)

The PCC will not 'take' the funds from any individual church. It will only be through consent and the budget process that money could be used to support mission or support services beyond the individual church.

The mechanics of merging

170. When is the best time to merge parishes and commence the new parish?

As the financial year for all Church of England parishes is 1 January to 31 December, the best time to commence a new parish's existence is 1 January. However, should it not be possible to start the new arrangement on 1 January, it is possible (although from a financial perspective a bit more complicated) to make the change on any date.

171. One or more of our original parishes were registered directly with the Charity Commission, which charity registration number should we use?

Once the Charity Commission have been notified of the charity merger, it is their choice whether to assign a new number to the new PCC or instruct the new PCC to use one of the existing registration numbers.

Running the Finances

172. Will Food Bank Funds be accounted for separately? Will our current team of churches be separate worshipping communities or one team unit? Will church halls be managed individually and will they have a separate trading account? (v02)

These will all be decisions to be taken locally. The finance system will be set up with each current parish as a separate accounting unit prior to the larger Parish being created; this will mean that accounts can be produced in the new way as current PCCs, enabling a smooth transition. Separate funds will be set up within each accounting unit for individual worshipping communities, which may include food banks and church halls. Where the

income and expenditure is significant it may be more appropriate to treat food banks, church halls or churches as separate accounting units.

173. Will the contribution of each worshipping community towards the central bookkeeper come out of the collection plate? (v02)

How Support Services in each larger parish is funded is a local decision. However, it is expected that a proportion of the costs of the Support Services will be included in each worshipping community’s budget and met from the Unrestricted income – this includes the collection plate but also could include other Unrestricted income such as rental income. In order to produce financial management reports for each of the churches, costs shared across the whole parish (e.g. the cost of Support Services and Parish Share) will be allocated to the churches/worshipping communities. The Finance Change Team will help develop an allocation methodology.

174. How will each church reconcile its accounts? (v04)

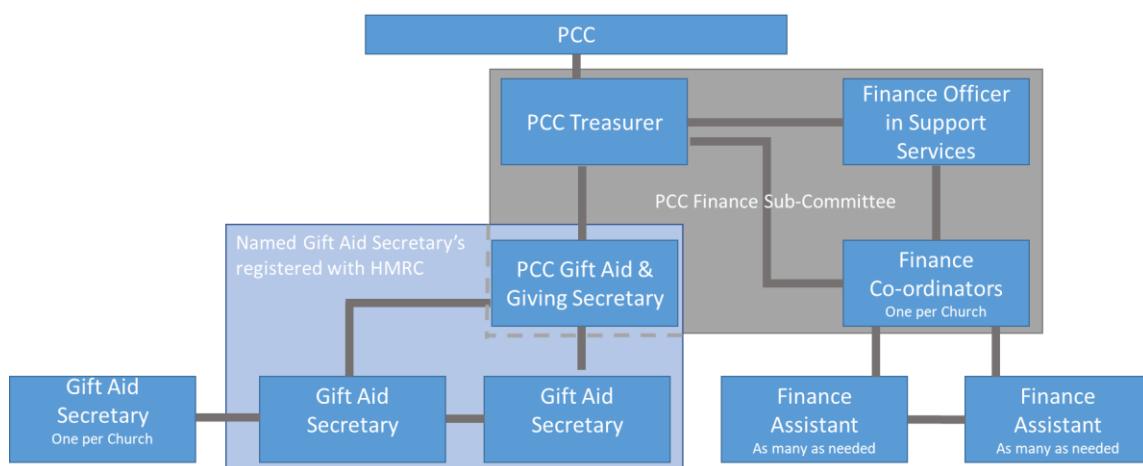
A local church finance coordinator will be able to see and sense check reports for their worshipping community at any time, but accountability for reconciling the accounts will sit with the PCC Treasurer supported by the bookkeeper in the Support Services Team.

175. What tasks will treasurers lose? (v04)

The key difference will be the creation of the bookkeeping role in the Support Services Team which will take much of the day-to-day work of managing finance from the existing PCC Treasurers. Reports will be available from the finance system when needed by the new PCC Treasurer and members of the PCC Finance sub-committee (who will be able to share reports with church/worshipping community leadership teams).

The new arrangement will only have one PCC Treasurer (rather than one for each of the current PCCs), and there will only be one set of accounts produced from the MyFundAccounting.online software, but a finance coordinator (and assistants as needed) in each church will still need to count and record cash collections and manage non-cash giving.

The Finance Team Structure is shown below:



176. Is there support available for those churches who are currently not managing their accounts very well? (v02)

During the transition we will be able to provide support through the Fit for Mission team to help parishes get their accounts in order. By the end of the transition process everything will be in order and transparent.

177. The post of Church treasurer is a responsible position. How will the Mega treasurer position be safeguarded and indemnified? (v04)

The role of treasurer is key to any church. The treasurer of the parish will need to be appointed prayerfully and with due process. The treasurer will be well supported by the Rector and also work with a team. That team is the PCC finance sub-committee (one person from each church) who will make good budgeting decisions and to oversee the finances of the parish together. Please note that the treasurer role will not be a sum of all the roles that current treasurers do – that would be impossible. A bookkeeper, in the Support Services team, will do all the payments, payroll and reporting work. Therefore the treasurer of the larger parish has more of a leadership role than a doing role.

The parish insurance will need to continue to include indemnity cover for all key officers, as it does now.

Giving and Gift Aid

178. I am a member of church A, when we merge with churches B, C, D etc where does my money go?

To the worshipping community/congregation that you are part of. Your donations and gifts will be paid into a bank account owned by the new PCC and can then be allocated as income against the worshipping community/congregation that you are part of. If you give via PGS your money will automatically be transferred when the parishes merge. If you give in another way those responsible in your worshipping community will ensure the monies are allocated to your church's fund in the accounting system.

179. Should we give via the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS)?

Yes, and we advise people to set up their giving with PGS sooner rather than later to ensure the transition to a larger parish is smoother. Another key concern for many people is whether my giving and any applicable Gift Aid continues to go to my worshipping community, as bank accounts are changing and the larger parish has to be registered for Gift Aid with HMRC. It is proven that by giving using the Parish Giving Scheme regular gifts and any applicable Gift Aid continue to be received into the bank account every month without any interruption for both people giving and churches receiving the gifts.

180. Who owns the loose cash on the offertory plate?

All monies are the sole property of the new Parochial Church Council to be used as best

they can to further the mission of God within your parish. However, they will be allocated as income to the worshipping community where they were given and shown as such in the financial management system.

181. Which church will be named on my offertory envelopes?

As the parish as a whole is the charity under English law, then the name on your giving envelopes will be that of the new parish. This will allow the Larger Parish to claim any Gift Aid, if applicable, and allocate it back to the relevant congregation/worshipping community. The worshipping community can also be named if required (e.g. "A gift to Church St Helens made at St Mark"), although even if it is not all giving will be allocated to the correct place in the financial management system by the finance team representative. For good reasons many churches have now moved away from envelopes and to the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS). This trend is strongly encouraged as it provides a more resilient giving base for local ministry.

182. What will happen to my Gift Aid, who will be claiming it?

The new PCC is the charity and therefore the responsibility for claiming Gift Aid lays with the new PCC. The new PCC Treasurer will ensure that Gift Aid is claimed on all monies where applicable. Any Gift Aid claimed on giving via the Parish Giving Scheme will continue to be claimed uninterrupted by the PGS team on behalf of the new PCC.

HMRC will pay any gift aid due from before the creation of the new Parish and that will be credited to the individual churches.

183. Because each original parish was able to separately claim under GASDS (Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme) won't we lose out when we become just one parish? While as a single place of worship in a single parish GASDS claims are made on a single charity basis, as a parish with multiple places of worship the new PCC will claim GASDS on a 'community buildings' basis. This means the PCC can claim the maximum GASDS allocation for donations relating to each specific building. Also, because donations made outside of the buildings, but still within the local authority area of the building, can be included, it is possible that the new PCC may be able to claim more from GASDS than was possible as the single place of worship parishes.

184. I give my regular gift directly via the bank, either by Standing Order or by the Parish Giving Scheme (Direct Debit), where does my donation go?

In the first instance your direct bank giving will continue to be received in to the same bank account as before. As the new PCC works through the process of merging the finances of the original PCCs you may be asked to change your Standing Order to transfer to a different bank account number. This is perfectly normal, all the gifts are still owned by the PCC.

If you are giving through the preferred way of giving, the Parish Giving Scheme, then you will not need to change anything. Your donations will automatically be routed to the correct PCC bank account.

Either way, the money will be credited to your congregation/worshipping community within the new PCC accounts.

185. Am I right in thinking all the money goes into one pot? (v01)

It might be helpful to think of each church/worshipping community having their own designated jar or pot in the financial management system where restricted, designated, income and outgoings are detailed and clearly visible. These pots are called funds. There will be one or two bank accounts for the new PCC, but money will be managed using funds for each church/worshipping community and it will be clear in which funds the money sits. This is the modern way of managing finances that most organisations use.

186. Going forward, will it be a case of PGS or nothing? (v02)

No! We will encourage people to sign up for PGS for the reasons given above. Current Standing Orders would need to be changed anyway in favour of the new PCC, so signing up to PGS means a smooth and automatic transition when we move to the larger Parish. The donor retains full control over their giving with PGS so we would expect that most, if not all, givers by Standing Order would adopt PGS. However, where givers wish to continue to make their offering in cash we will still have options for receiving cash donations, although it does mean more work for local volunteers.

Bank Accounts

187. Do we have to open a new bank account and close all the old ones?

It depends. There is no legal requirement to close existing bank accounts, as long as they are under the full and direct control of the new PCC. A simple renaming of any and all the existing bank accounts to match the name of the new parish is acceptable. However, depending on the bank in question, it is sometimes simpler to open a new account in the name of the new parish, than to rename an existing account to the new parish's name. Full transition guidance will be given. There are costs to holding a bank account, both in terms of bank charges as well as the complexity of managing authorised signatories and reconciling the bank accounts with the accounting system.

188. Why do we need a bank account in the name of the new PCC? (v02)

Banks will only operate accounts that are clearly linked to the organisation to which they apply. In addition, certain government and grant making bodies will only transfer money into a bank account that is in the name of the legal charity [the new PCC].

Banks cannot open or repurpose accounts (i.e. change the account name, update the charity details and create a new bank mandate) until the new charity exists, and often will require a resolution from the new PCC before starting the process. Therefore, in practice an application to open/alter an account cannot be made until the PCC has been formed and has met. Because of this, banks will continue to allow existing accounts to be used while the transition to new accounts takes place.

189. Can the PCC have more than one bank account?

Yes, a PCC can have as many bank accounts as it considers prudent to have. However, the aim is for the new PCC to have one main current account and use the financial management system to control funds associated with each worshipping community.

190. Does the new parish have to have all its bank accounts held with the same bank or at the same branch?

No. A PCC can hold more than one bank account with different banks and at different branches.

191. Where there are multiple places of worship within the parish, can a worshipping community from one building open their own bank account to keep money they receive separate from the new PCC's bank accounts?

No, this would be illegal. Our regulator, the Charity Commission, requires all bank accounts to be under the direct control of the charity's Trustees (the new PCC).

Budgets and Making Payments**192. How will budgeting work? (v02)**

There will be a single budget for the larger parish. This will cover income and expenditure in each of its main activity areas. Some of these may be geographical (e.g. the costs of each place of worship and its worshipping and outreach activities); some may be thematic (e.g. food pantries across the parish). Either way the budget will show the income and expenditure associated with each activity or centre. The budget will be prepared centrally and in conversation with local leadership teams to ensure the budget reflects the proper projections for each activity area. In order to ensure that the initial budgets are realistic and include all aspects of running the larger parish, they will be informed by the accounts produced in prior years by the churches and worshipping communities that make up the larger parish, and by Treasurer/leadership team conversations.

193. Would a worshipping community have direct access to funds to pay bills and for mission and ministry? (v04)

Regular payments (like utility bills) will be processed by Support Services via direct debit where possible. Any other sizeable expenditure (e.g. invoiced) that has been agreed in the budget will be authorised by the worshipping community (e.g. their member on the finance team, or a warden) and then BACS payments made by Support Services. The purchasing of ad-hoc items that are within the budget will be made through pre-loaded cards or expenses by authorised purchasers in each community. Out-of-budget purchases will need prior authorisation to change the budget.

The exact details on purchasing will be worked out by your local finance team in the two year 'acting as if' period, but with the process and documents already worked out in cohort 1 to build on.

194. Would a worshipping community have a cheque book or would invoices be sent to a central person for payment? (v04)

Please see the previous question. Cheque books will become less and less necessary.

195. How would utility contracts be handled and exit fees paid for?

Central purchasing would be decided on locally in terms of what makes sense to buy together and when. It might be sensible to bring all churches into a single bulk energy purchasing contract at the same time, or to stagger the joining of a joint contract, depending on the exit fees and other aspects.

196. Would a worshipping community have a budget to spend or would it have to ask the PCC to spend money?

It would have an agreed budget to spend and could spend that budget without further approval from the new PCC. However, it may be necessary to clear larger items of expenditure with the PCC Treasurer to ensure that there is sufficient cash in the bank to cover the expenditure. Any expenditure not in the budget would need to be approved by the PCC.

197. What if something big happens (e.g. the roof falls in) – how would that get rectified quickly?

Probably in exactly the same way as it would now. Funds would be sought from local giving, grants or reserves to deal with the specific issue. Local people finding a local solution. There may be greater flexibility for dealing with emergencies quickly by virtue of being part of a larger group and having a property officer in Support Services.

198. How would unforeseen spending be agreed, if it was beyond the budget for the year of a particular worshipping community?

This would be taken to the new PCC or new PCC Standing Committee depending on the urgency.

199. What happens if a budget can't be agreed/negotiated? (v04)

In broad terms if a church can put together a balanced budget according to the fiscal rules (break even over 3 years), then it will be agreed. The only problem will come if a church is insistent on making an unrealistic unbalanced budget where, for example, undefined 'others' are expected to fund a deficit. There will be a finance person from each church on the PCC Finance sub-committee, so each church will have someone in the room making sure there is really good communication between the church leadership team and the PCC.

200. A budget will be agreed with each church, with various income and expenditure 'lines'. Are we able to transfer between lines as long as we stay within the total budget? (v04)

Yes. There will be freedom within the local budget to respond to emerging needs, challenges and opportunities as long as each church remains within its overall budget.

201. How are the central support services going to be funded post the 12-month start-up grant? (v04)

During the 2 year 'acting as if' period a local team will be formed to work on what Support Services should look like in the larger parish and how it will be funded (volunteers can also be incorporated into Support Services if that makes sense in your area). You should not view Support Services as just increased cost – the aim is to get admin done at admin rates, instead of clergy doing it at £70k per annum. By doing this we will do admin more cheaply and better, while giving clergy extra time to devote to mission and ministry, what they were trained for. So the deanery will get back clergy time (it will be like having more clergy).

Using St Helens as an example, they intend to fund their Support Services from: insurance savings, other potential purchasing savings, DMGF, a payment from each parish, admin fee on funerals, spreading the FfM allocation across first couple of years. How other deaneries will finance Support Services will be different of course, but there is time to work that out in the 2 year period.

Signatories

202. Who will be the signatories of all bank accounts?

These would normally be the principal officers of the new PCC: for example, Rector, Churchwardens and Treasurer. However, depending on the local procedures put in place by the Treasurer, the new PCC may ask some of the finance team to also be signatories, as appropriate for the new parish's situation.

203. What can we do if a previous signatory is unavailable to release control of an older bank account?

The necessary steps will differ slightly from bank to bank. In all situations the first step will be for the new PCC's officers to contact the branch: it would also be helpful if one of the other previous signatories for the account in question was able to take part in this initial contact. If such a conversation does not bring about a sensible method of resolution, then the Resources Team at St James' House can offer further advice and guidance.

Restricted Funds/Legacies

204. What if we receive a legacy – will it be spent across the whole Larger Parish?

Again, there is a legal and a practical response:

- i. Legal – it depends on the wording of the legacy. If the legacy is clearly tied to a particular place of worship or a particular geographical area and/or a particular use, then it has to be spent accordingly.

- ii. Practical – once again this is about honouring the spirit of any gift in the context of the mission of the Larger Parish. Any decision needs to be made prayerfully and, in that context, ensuring that money is spent appropriately in the intended areas or activities as a matter of priority and integrity.

205. Church A has already raised £50,000 towards essential repairs and improvements; these are held in a restricted fund. Can church B now use this money to make improvements to their building?

No. When the parishes are merged together the existing restrictions on any donations received still applies after the merger. Donations specifically given for building improvements or repairs at church A can still only be used for that purpose even after merging with another parish.

206. Can a gift be given so that it can only be used for a particular building or worshipping community?

Yes, by making the purpose clear at the time that the gift is made.

207. The new PCC is offered a large donation, but the donor wants to tightly restrict its use to only one small section of the new parish. Does the PCC have to accept this donation?

No. Every charity has a choice whether to accept a donation or not, there is no requirement for them to take every gift offered; especially if the strings attached to that gift would work contrary to the aims and objectives of the charity.

208. What happens to existing and future legacies/bequests that name one of the original parishes?

These will be held and received by the new PCC. The Charity Commission maintain a list of charity mergers so that legacies can always be directed to the correct new charity.

209. Will a legacy that has been left to Church X be absorbed by the new parish i.e. so it would not be available for Church X?

The legacy will be applied as closely as possible to where the person leaving the legacy intended. So, if it was clearly intended to be used by Church X then it will be allocated accordingly.

210. Are there circumstances where a current PCC's assets will automatically be restricted to that location after a Larger Parish is formed e.g. if a house was bought with money from a restricted fund?

There will be various sets of circumstances where assets will need to be allocated to specific locations after the new parish is formed. One such case is if an asset is held as a restricted fund in the current parish's accounts – the new PCC must use the funds for that original purpose. The Trustees of any charity cannot 'restrict' general funds that they already own, but they can choose to designate them for a particular use.

211. Are there circumstances when asset use would be wholly determined by the new PCC?

Yes, if the asset lies outside any particular restriction. However, once again this is a matter of theory and practice. In reality the PCC will manage such decisions very carefully in the context of the sensitives of the particular worshipping community and its financial needs.

Grants

212. Would a grant application from a bigger parish be less likely to succeed, because the turnover would be greater? (v02)

The larger parish is large by Church of England standards, but not compared to many voluntary organisations.

Indeed, there is an argument that a larger parish might help the application because it is likely that the parish will be able to demonstrate greater management capacity, resource flexibility and resilience and so the work is more likely to succeed. That would give the potential funder more confidence.

For larger applications for grants (and grants covering the whole parish or several worshipping communities) or that require charity details it will be more effective to work at new parish level.

In practice fundraising for small projects relating to a particular church/worshipping community would normally continue to take place at local level as now, and funders may be happy to continue funding local initiatives at church/worshipping community level provided they are reassured that their money will be used as intended. However, some smaller grant giving bodies may not be accessible even if a statement is given regarding the change that has taken place to move to a larger Parish. There will be options about how to still apply for such funding successfully though e.g. through a separate community charity.

Where funds are raised for a particular purpose, they become Restricted so, whether application is made locally or at PCC level, the money raised will only be used for the specified purpose.

Tithe and end use of funds

213. Would the new PCC commit to 10% of all its income being tithed, as encouraged by the Church of England?

That is entirely a matter for the new PCC, guided by the Annual Meeting. As the question states 10% should be encouraged and is the practice of many PCCs.

214. Will our individual church still be able to support and give to causes that they have supported in the past? (v01)

Yes, the giving will be agreed as part of the church/worshipping community budget.

Buildings and graveyards

215. How will the upkeep of buildings, including houses, be paid for going forward?

By the PCC, on the basis of the right buildings plan and with appropriate budgets being set for each congregation/worshipping community. These budgets will need to include appropriate provision for the immediate costs of that congregation/worshipping community's commitments, assets and facilities.

216. What if we want to raise money to repair our church roof?

One of the key tasks for the larger parish will be to generate a right buildings plan so that everyone is clear which buildings will be needed for the future and what investment each will need to become fit for purpose. Like any parish now, the larger parish is able to set up fundraising schemes for repairs and to act accordingly. Assuming that the roof repair in question has been agreed by the larger parish's new PCC as part of the right buildings plan then you are free to raise as much money as the roof can take. Hopefully, under the right buildings plan it will also be seen as a wider Larger Parish priority as well.

217. How will graveyards be paid for going forwards?

As they are today. Each church will have a budget for managing their graveyard, funded from the church's income as it is currently.

218. Will the new parish own any property that is currently held? Would title deeds need to be changed? Will the rent be paid to the new parish PCC? (v03)

From a legal perspective PCCs are not allowed to own any land or property: land/property is held in Trust for PCCs by the Diocesan Authority, the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) which acts as Custodian Trustee. This includes curates housing and halls (but not church buildings, clergy housing or glebe land) and applies to all current PCCs. The legal management and administration responsibility for buildings/land will rest with the new PCC and any costs/rent will be paid by/to the new PCC. That is the legal position. However, rent or hire from a property might today make up the income of a church or worshipping community that supports their mission and ministry. That income would continue to be credited to their fund as agreed in their budget.

The Title Deeds will not need to be changed but the Land Registry will need to be informed of a change of beneficial interest: the DBF will lead on this.

The fact that the DBF is Custodian Trustee of a hall, or curate house etc does not mean that if such an asset is sold that the funds would go to the diocese; the DBF will return funds if an such an asset is sold.

219. If buildings are sold within an FFM parish what happens to the proceeds? (v05)

As with lots of things within the Church of England simple questions don't necessarily have straightforward answers. That said, the clear principle that we are working to within Fit for Mission is that local assets are used for local mission and that wherever possible assets under the control of the PCC can be recycled back into that parish to support mission and growth.

To get into the complications there are basically 6 kinds of building/land asset within a parish:

- i. Consecrated church buildings (c80% of our churches)
- ii. Unconsecrated church buildings (c20% of our churches, usually the newer ones)
- iii. Clergy houses which are managed by the diocesan clergy housing committee
- iv. Church halls
- v. Other buildings/land which have been bought by PCCs or given to PCCs (some curates houses are in this category)
- vi. Glebe land – these are rather random parcels of land and buildings that are owned by the DBF (there's not a lot of them in the Diocese of Liverpool).

For completeness, there are also assets directly owned by the Church Commissioners. These are independent of the Diocese of Liverpool and are irrelevant to any discussion about assets within Fit for Mission.

To take each of the above in turn.

i. Consecrated Church buildings

If a consecrated church building is closed for worship and then sold the proceeds are distributed according to a national policy in which we have no discretion. This includes:

- o The repayment of any DBF costs related to the building between the date of closure and the date of sale, including insurance, security, legal and staff costs. These can be a significant part of the sale price.
- o One third of the net proceeds go to the Churches Conservation Trust.

Normally any surplus then comes to the DBF. Under Fit for Mission all the net proceeds would be made available to the FFM parish to be reinvested in other assets in the parish (for example in improving the remaining places of worship or acquiring a new more fit for purpose place of worship). The DBF will agree as policy that net proceeds of the sale of consecrated churches will benefit the PCC of the new FFM parish.

There are a couple of things to note, however:

- o It can be difficult to make a significant surplus on the sale of some church buildings. The DBF will need, therefore, to look at the Right Buildings Strategy of each FFM parish to look and see where there might be buildings which will struggle to cover their sale costs.

The DBF may need to hold some funds back from the sale of 'profitable' churches to cover the potential losses on the sale of more problematic churches. It isn't fair to other parishes that any particular parish (FFM or otherwise) gets the profits from positive sales but passes on the losses of problematic sales for everyone else to deal with.

- Timescales for closure and disposal of consecrated buildings are slow, sometimes measured in years.
- Where possible it is best if closure of a church building and its appropriation for a new use can be achieved together, as this normally reduces both costs and deterioration of a building which is no longer regularly used. With this in mind the Diocese would expect the FfM parish to exercise a degree of ongoing care for its 'closing' consecrated church buildings (occasional inspections, maintaining insurance cover) whilst a new use and purchaser is secured. Formal closure would take place at the same time that the legal disposal for the proposed future use could be completed.

ii. Unconsecrated church buildings

In most cases the DBF is the registered owner of unconsecrated buildings and will receive the proceeds of any sale. Where this is the case we would treat the proceeds in the same way as for consecrated church buildings, i.e. after the costs of closure and disposal are deducted, the net proceeds would benefit the new parish PCC. The DBF will agree this as policy.

iii. Clergy houses

These are DBF assets and any proceeds will continue to go directly to the DBF and will not be re-distributed to the parish. This is to enable the DBF to continue to provide housing wherever it is most needed, including potentially providing more housing in an FFM parish into the future.

iv. Church halls

These are PCC assets, even though in most cases they are vested in the DBF and therefore disposal requires DBF agreement. The PCC will be responsible for the costs of sale, and the proceeds of sale will go to the PCC to be used in whatever way the PCC deems appropriate.

v. Other PCC land/buildings

Like church halls, these are PCC assets even where they are vested in the DBF. The PCC will be responsible for the costs of sale, and the proceeds of sale will go to the PCC to be used in whatever way the PCC deems appropriate.

vi. Glebe land

These are DBF assets and any proceeds will go directly to the DBF and will not be re-distributed to the parish.

And finally ... mixed assets

There are occasions where there is a mixture of assets on a single site – eg church, church hall and vicarage – and it makes financial sense to sell them as a single package. In such cases we would work out the different proportions owned by the different parties (usually on the basis of footprint) and then split the net proceeds accordingly.