

# Guidance Pack for Pioneer Appointments

## Thinking about appointing a pioneer?

This pack is written for groups in the Diocese of Bath and Wells who are thinking about appointing a pioneer. It may be a brand new post or you may be thinking of re-shaping an existing lay or clergy post to be entirely or largely outward-facing or innovative.

The information below aims to help you think through some of the questions you may have, avoid some of the common pitfalls in pioneer appointments and find the most appropriate person for the work you want them to do.

## Do we have pioneers in the Diocese already?

Yes, we do... not many, but we are hoping to build on these early foundations. You may know the Diocese is making a bid to the Church Commissioners to establish nine new pioneer posts as part of our aim to move Diocesan resources from ministry towards mission and engage with communities we have little connection with at present. We want to find new ways of encountering and serving the people around us, giving them the opportunity to understand more of Jesus and the gospel and inviting them to be part of God's kingdom. We intend to grow a broader base of pioneers who will be lay and ordained, paid and voluntary, full-time and part-time.

## What are our current pioneers up to?

Just as with people of every kind of vocation, pioneers come in different shapes and sizes and with different calls and characters. The work of pioneers in the Diocese is diverse:

- One ordained pioneer has planted a church in a new building in Locking Castle, and from this church is working ecumenically with lay pioneers to reach out to build community and grow contextual churches in new housing estates locally
- A lay pioneer is working as a chaplain at Bath City College finding ways such as pop-up prayer stations to engage with students on the campus
- A pioneer ordinand is exploring sustainable food and food poverty themes running a Café Church, weekly Food Share event with Tesco, and Parable Garden (community allotment) in Ilminster
- A pioneer team vicar is developing a campfire network in rural churches around Wellington to combat rural isolation, grow faith through the creative arts and provide contextual church for families

- Lay pioneers in a number of places are working in the community to build relationships and partnerships with people where they are, and gather people into contextual forms of church and social enterprises working for the common good

## **Don't pioneers do what good priests and Christians generally are called to do?**

In a way, yes! Certainly in terms of being out in the community and making themselves available to people of all faiths and none, living and telling the story of Jesus and being involved in wider parish or community life. The distinctive call on pioneers is to spend the bulk of their time deliberately dedicated to mission, and their distinctive gift is in being able to start new ventures, which often lead to new worshipping communities.

## **So what is a pioneer?**

The official definition for the Church of England is:

*'Pioneers are people called by God who are the first to see and creatively respond to the Holy Spirit's initiatives with those outside the church; gathering others around them as they seek to establish new contextual Christian community.'*

The key things are:

- Pioneers are generally initiators of new things
- They have spiritual insight to see what God is 'up to' in the world
- They are creative and find culturally appropriate ways of connecting with people outside church
- They are good at building new relationships, gathering and connecting people
- They can read the culture and context and adapt the Christian message and ways to their audience
- Usually they have the desire, potential and call to lead a new Christian community

Sometimes it's easier to explain what pioneers are not:

- They are not primarily mission enablers – they may enable others but they will spearhead activity and be 'hands-on'
- They are not primarily evangelists – they may be good at sharing the gospel with others but they will be hoping to act as midwives at the birth of a new Christian community
- They are not primarily church planters – they may gather and grow a worshipping community but it will be adapted to the local context or the culture of a specific people group, rather than replicating a given model

## **Are there different kinds of pioneers?**

There are lots of different ways of characterising pioneers. For a detailed picture of the kinds of pioneers that exist and the forms of contextual Christian community they may see form around them in time, see Appendix 1.

In the Church of England pioneer appointments are usually either 'parish-based' or 'fresh start'. A parish-based pioneer will spend some of their time taking Sunday services, occasional offices, giving pastoral care and enabling the existing congregation to engage in new forms of mission and community engagement. For example, in Portishead one of the team vicar posts was divided so the pioneer vicar was required to spend 30% of her time on traditional ministry in the parish, and 70% of her time in the community.

A 'fresh start' pioneer will be assigned a particular context beyond the usual reach of the church and expected to focus all his time there. An ideal context for this kind of post is a brand new housing estate; one pioneer in a different Diocese started their role in a caravan in the middle of a building site and watching the new housing estate grow up around her. In Bracknell a pioneer post has been set up for a large complex of flats above a new shopping complex in the town centre.

## **Why appoint a pioneer?**

The reasons you might have for appointing a pioneer are many and various. Some of the main ones might be:

- A large area of new housing is being built in your parish, benefice or deanery and your church doesn't have the capacity or missional expertise (lay and ordained) to engage with the new population
- You recognise that your church culture is very different from the culture of the people you live among (eg. an area of social housing, a wealthy gated community, a student population, young professionals, a community of pagan or New Agers) and you don't know how to bridge that gap, but you want to share the Christian faith with the local population in a way that will make sense to them
- You want to grow your church or deanery's engagement with a particular issue of social justice (eg homelessness, vulnerable families, social isolation, refugees, mental health, the list goes on...) and want to find new ways of addressing them
- Your deanery is offering high-quality ministry and engaging mission but wants to invest in exploring and generating new approaches to both – your pioneer will do research and development work and feed their learning back in to the existing structures
- Your church has a strong lay team who can run the church well and are willing to do so with only a small amount of input from clergy; you may choose to advertise for a

Pioneer Priest who will be intentionally missional outside the church walls for most of their working hours

- You may have a leadership team of clergy and lay people and decide you want to ring-fence the role of one of them to be intentionally focused outside the church looking for what the Holy Spirit is doing and encouraging fresh thinking in mission

### **If we appoint a pioneer will they put ‘bums on seats’?**

Probably not in the way you are thinking. It may sound obvious, but many of our churches work for the people who attend them, and don't work for the people who don't. For a lot of people church as we know it is a very strange experience, and one they can't easily adapt to. It's a bit like living in another country...strange language, strange customs!

The role of a pioneer is often to work with the Holy Spirit to give rise to new congregations with their own distinctive worshipping style and community shape, so if you are appointing someone with the hope that in a year or two your Sunday congregations will have doubled, you will almost certainly be disappointed.

On the other hand, through the work of the pioneer your church may give birth to a baby congregation (if that's what you commissioned them to do). Think spider plants.... You would be the original plant, and you may throw out a shoot that produces a potential new plant.

This kind of contextual work to grow a new church is very slow, however. It may take up to ten years (if it happens at all) for a new community to grow and become self-sustaining. It is very important **not** to imagine this is a kind of breeding ground for new members of the traditional congregation. It is common for pioneers to be asked the question, 'So when are they (your new congregation) coming to church (meaning 'proper church on Sunday morning' with all that signifies)?'

It is possible there will be some additional growth to your existing congregations through the work of the pioneer as they may be able to raise the profile of the church and help it adapt its culture and build bridges out into the community, but this is a side benefit, and will not usually be their focus of activity.

You may wonder 'What's the point?' if the congregation we are part of and the kind of worship we love doesn't grow and thrive. It is painful and hard to accept, but it may be that just as older generations grow old and have to give way to the young and their unfamiliar ways, so it is with the life of the church. In the end we have to trust God for the church's future, so the whole process must be one entered into with prayerful discernment and openness to the Holy Spirit.

## **What do we need to do if we've decided we want to appoint a pioneer?**

If you haven't already, consider doing the following:

- Contact Tina Hodgett, Evangelism Team Leader, to discuss the kind of post you are thinking of advertising
- Read some stories of pioneer work – there is a short list of websites, blogs and books in Appendix 2
- Look at adverts for pioneers in the Church Times and on Diocesan websites (Leicester, Chelmsford, Oxford are all active in recruiting pioneers), and read job descriptions and role specifications (there is a small selection in Appendix 3)
- Invite a pioneer to come and speak to you and your group about their work and answer questions
- These actions will help you clarify what kind of pioneer you are looking for and help ensure everyone involved in the process understands what the advantages and limits of pioneers are over other kinds of ministers.

### **Partnership working**

If you hope the pioneer will be a midwife at the birth of a baby worshipping community (some would say, a church plant), or set up a social enterprise, it's important to liaise with other churches in your area – Church of England and also other denominations. Take time to find out if any of them are thinking of developing similar work, and what their plans are. As far as possible devise a strategy and job description that makes or leaves room for partnership working and avoids competition and the unnecessary division of scarce resources. There are some excellent examples of new contextual communities and co-operatives engaged in advocacy or activism set up by a small number of volunteers (often lay) from a range of different churches with a similar call and complementary gifts and skills.

### **What particular issues are there in devising pioneer role descriptions?**

The following questions are important to settle before you write your advert and role description:

- Do you want a 'parish-based' or 'fresh start' pioneer (see above)?
- If you want a parish-based pioneer, what proportion of their work will be in inherited mode (ie Sunday services, occasional offices, pastoral care) and how much will be pioneer work (ie outside the church, community work, starting new initiatives)? How will this division be monitored and by whom?
- Where will the pioneer exercise their ministry? Will they choose their areas of ministry for themselves on arrival (start with a blank sheet), or will they be expected to work among a specific people group or in a distinct geographical area, village or building?

- If they are ‘fresh start’ pioneer how will they be supported by the wider church, and how will they connect and communicate with their church base?
- Where will they be based? It may be helpful for a pioneer to be based outside the church in a community centre, school or café
- Will the kind of work they are called to do determine their working hours? For example, if they are working among commuters, young families, or in residential care homes, their work will have a different pattern – what might this be?
- Who will supervise them? It is helpful if they have a supervisor who has experience as a pioneer or has a good understanding of pioneer work from reading or training or involvement in pioneer circles. It may be desirable for the supervisor to be outside the usual supervisory structure – for example, a parish-based pioneer curate may be supervised by the Rural Dean or the vicar of another parish for the pioneer element of their curacy
- Is there a team of people who will co-mission with the pioneer, or will the pioneer be expected to build their own team over time? Will they need training?
- How much freedom will they have to determine the direction of their ministry? Who will have the final say when it comes to significant decisions?
- To whom will they be accountable and how will this accountability work to ensure the right balance is achieved to give the pioneer a sense of connection with the local and wider church and scope to be imaginative and explore uncharted theological territory?
- What support is available for your pioneer locally, in the parish, deanery or Diocese?

When you have a draft job description and role specification, try it out on someone in the pioneering world and get their feedback.

### **How can we help our pioneer give their best on arrival?**

That’s a great question. Even though pioneers are often resourceful and self-motivated, they are not superheroes and are as human, fallible and vulnerable as the rest of us. Pioneer work often looks fun and exciting but it can be desperately lonely, confusing and pressurised and make huge demands on an individual’s inner resources.

We often assume pioneers are loners and enjoy being alone; on the contrary, most pioneers (whether you’re thinking about the Wild West frontier or people who make breakthroughs in science) work in teams. So consider how you can make the pioneer feel included in your church life, even if it looks as if they are rejecting you by rarely being seen. They are paid and sent to be elsewhere. Alternatively, prayerfully consider if God is calling you to be part of their team and talk to them about what they need that you might be able to offer.

In the early days pioneers will need to spend a significant amount of time observing, listening to God and the community, embedding themselves as part of the community,

learning to read it and thinking about how to connect the gospel with the culture and context around them. This work may last for up to a year and needs to be built in to expectations. Congregations will need to be patient and refrain from asking for evidence of achievement.

It may be that congregation members can arrange introductions for the pioneer to influential people or social groups, although they may prefer to do this themselves... Ask your pioneer what he/she needs from you, and do your best to respond.

### **What support is available locally for our pioneer?**

All pioneers are automatically included in the Diocesan Mission Enabling Group which meets three times a year as a whole (25-30 people). There is a Bath and Wells Pioneer Facebook group and some small local network groups. Our training offer for pioneers, lay and ordained, is growing, with Mission-shaped Ministry courses being delivered to local church teams involved in Fresh Expressions, and a Diocesan-wide two-year certificate-level course offered through the Church Mission Society. We are moving towards a system of pioneer coaches under the terms of our Strategic Development Funding bid.

### **Find out more about pioneers and pioneering**

You can find out more about pioneers and pioneering at: [www.cofepioneer.org](http://www.cofepioneer.org). There are video clips here: <https://www.cofepioneer.org/stories/> and biopics of people currently studying on the Pioneer Leadership Training Course at the Church Mission Society here: <http://pioneer.churchmissionsociety.org/pioneer-mission-leadership-training-course/people/2016-student-intake/> If you're going to read one book about pioneers, try: 'How to Pioneer (even if you haven't a clue)' by Dave Male, National Adviser for Pioneer Development. It's a quick read that will outline some of the attitudes, tasks and principles of pioneering and help you distinguish the differences between more well known ways of doing mission and a pioneer approach.

## Appendix 1: The Pioneer Spectrum

### What is a pioneer?

*“Pioneers are people called by God who are the first to see and creatively respond to the Holy Spirit’s initiatives with those outside the church; gathering those around them as they seek to establish new contextual Christian community”*

(Church of England working definition)

This is a helpful definition of a pioneer minister. It defines pioneers as visionary, entrepreneurial church planters amongst those outside of church, whose approach to church planting will be collaborative and involve a process shaped by context. So whilst the word can pioneer can be used to refer to any innovator within the church, here it is used with particular reference to those starting fresh expressions of church. That is, a church established for the benefit of people who are not members of any church.

In reality, the term pioneer continues to be used as a label for other forms of church planting and other entrepreneurial ministries. At its broadest it is a term that includes originators of fresh entities of various kinds. Some pioneers may have no deliberate intention of establishing a new contextual Christian community. Many are articulating a call to pioneering and are receiving pioneer training but do not fit all of the definition above. Others have trained in a more traditional ministerial pathway and yet are involved in church planting of one form or another.

The church is experiencing the rapid emergence of a missional movement in which there is a range of people called and motivated to venture out from traditional expressions of church and engage with others. To help the church describe and explain the various expressions of ministry involved the word ‘pioneer’ has undoubtedly gained traction, and the pioneer spectrum diagram below aims to show how the word can be used effectively in conjunction with the kinds of fresh expressions that are emerging. For a more detailed description of the types go to the Pioneer pages on the Bath and Wells Diocesan website.

### Pioneer Spectrum Diagram

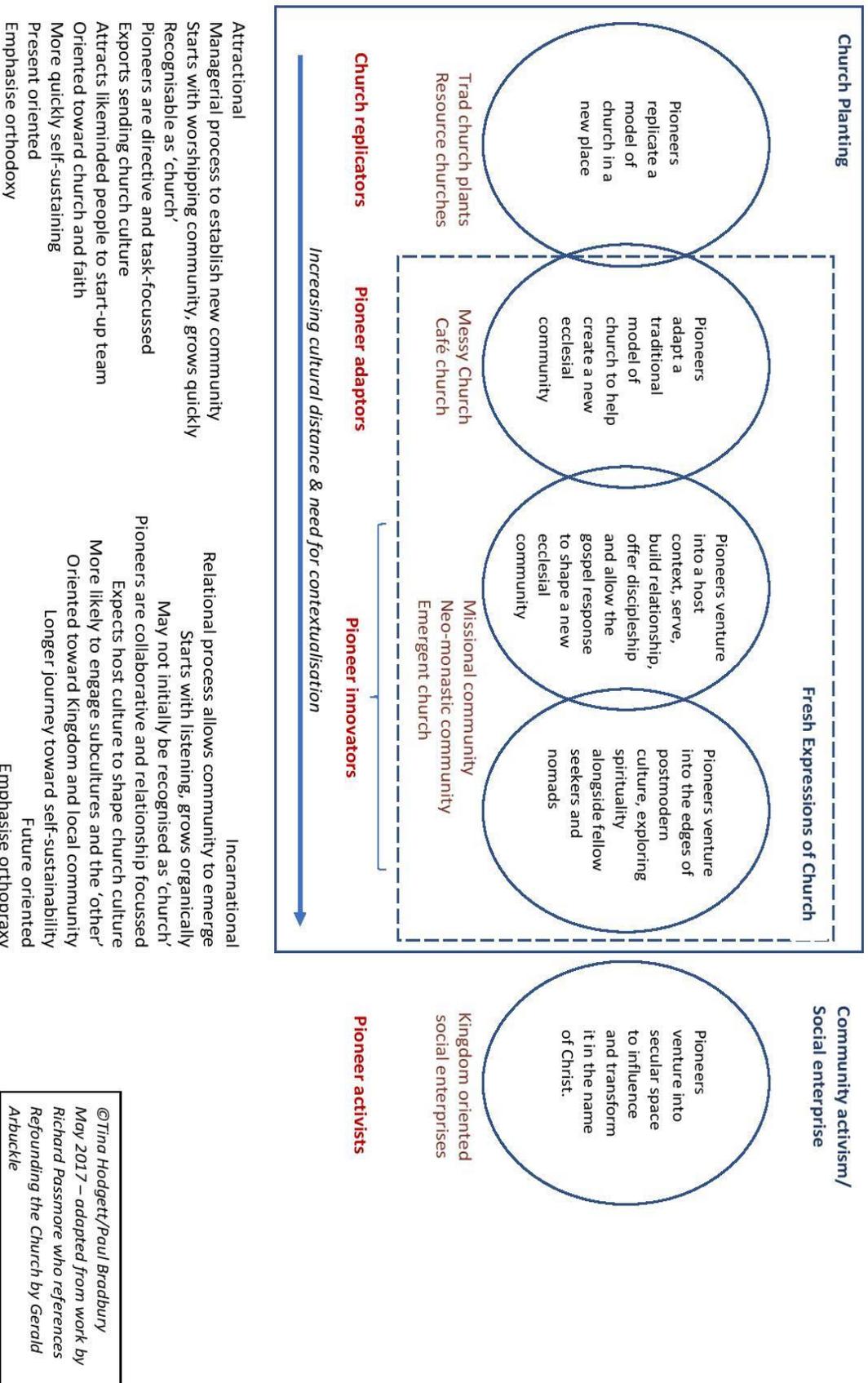
The diagram overleaf seeks to describe the various types of pioneers:

**Church Replicator** – these are missional leaders who plant churches by replicating models of church used in other contexts.

**Pioneer Adaptor** - leaders who pioneer churches by adapting common modes of congregational life to engage more effectively with an underrepresented demographic or sub-culture.

**Pioneer Innovators** – these are leaders who understand the need to lay down some traditional church practice in favour of a relational journey that may lead to a new and authentic expression of ecclesial life from amidst those they are seeking to reach.

**Pioneer Activists** – these are leaders whose call is to model the Kingdom of God in the midst of secular culture.



## Appendix 2: Books, blogs and websites on pioneering

### Key websites

[www.cofepioneer.org](http://www.cofepioneer.org)

[www.freshexpressions.org.uk](http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk)

[www.pioneer.churchmissionsociety.org](http://www.pioneer.churchmissionsociety.org)

### Books on pioneering

*How to pioneer (even if you haven't a clue)* Dave Male

*The DNA of Pioneer Ministry* Andy Milne and Michael Moynagh

*The Pioneer Gift* Jonny Baker and Cathy Ross (eds)

*Pioneer Spirituality* Jonny Baker and Cathy Ross (eds)

*Pioneers 4 Life* Dave Male

### Books on pioneer work among young people

*Meet them where they're at* Richard Passmore

*Here be dragons: Youth work and mission off the map* Richard and Lorimer Passmore

### Blogs

<http://jonnybaker.blogs.com/>

<https://theshinyheadedprophet.wordpress.com/tales-of-a-pioneer/>

<https://jamesballantyneyouthworker.wordpress.com/>

<https://nickbaines.wordpress.com/tag/fresh-expressions/>

## Appendix 3: Exemplars of good adverts for pioneer posts



**The Diocese of Carlisle**  
**Has a House for Vision post in a most beautiful part of the South Lakes, In the Parish of Coniston and Torver**

The Parish is looking to welcome a Priest who has vision for bringing the Kingdom into our community through fresh expressions of the Gospel.

**Who can:**

- Lead and encourage discipleship and missional vision for the local community and its many visitors.
- Develop prayer ministry, worship and outreach to children and young people.
- Work with, train and lead an enthusiastic team of Lay Ministers/Workers.

**The post can be flexible in its format and could be:**

A House-for-Vision post, which provides a comfortable Vicarage in pleasant surroundings, including Council tax, water rates and building insurance. Full expenses of office will be paid – 20 hours per week including Sundays – flexible at other times.

OR

A part-time post, 20 hours per week including Sundays, paid one third stipend (£8,540), with clergy housed in their own property and paid an allowance to reflect the provision of the property for the fulfilment of duties.

This appointment is subject to enhanced DBS checks.

Closing Date: 9th June 2017  
 Interviews: 5th July 2017

Application pack available from:  
**The Archdeacon of Westmorland and Furness**  
**Email: [archdeacon.south@carlisedioocese.org.uk](mailto:archdeacon.south@carlisedioocese.org.uk)**  
**Tel: 015395 34717** or downloaded at:  
**<http://www.carlisedioocese.org.uk/jobs/vacancies>**




**PIONEER MINISTER**  
 (Ordained or Licensed)

**Kingsbrook**  
**In the parish of Broughton, Aylesbury**

We are looking for a creative, outgoing and visionary pioneer to grow missional community on this brand new and exciting housing development.

- Full Time
- Funding secured for 5-10 years
- In partnership with and fully supported by Broughton Church
- Four bedroom house on Kingsbrook

Full details of the post together with an application form are available from: [www.oxford.anglican.org/vacancies](http://www.oxford.anglican.org/vacancies)

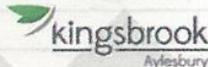
**For an informal discussion please contact:**  
**The Revd Phil White**  
**Tel: 07725 339236 Email: [phil@broughtonchurch.org](mailto:phil@broughtonchurch.org)**

*Informal visits are encouraged. DBS enhanced disclosure required*

more+, 36 Parton Road, Aylesbury HP20 1NG

[www.broughtonchurch.org](http://www.broughtonchurch.org)  
[www.morebroughton.org](http://www.morebroughton.org)





**DIOCESE OF EXETER**  
 THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN DEVON

**Priest-in-charge/  
 Team Rector Designate**

For the parishes of Heanton Punchardon, Marwood, West Down and Georgeham with Croyde in North Devon

**WHAT DOES 'FUTURE CHURCH' LOOK LIKE ??**

We need a forward thinking Evangelical with relevant skills and experience to help us struggle with this question!

- to get alongside us to discover our part in the Church of tomorrow
- to turn the challenge of declining clergy numbers into an opportunity for us all
- to stir up in all of us a passion for mission
- to collaborate with church family, and with existing clergy and teams to pursue the future together
- to empower people to discover and use their God given gifts

For further details of this post and for an application pack please contact:  
**The Archdeacon of Barnstaple, Stage Cross, Sanders Lane,  
 Bishops Tawton, Barnstaple EX32 0BE**  
**Telephone: 01271 375475**  
**Email: [archdeacon.of.barnstaple@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:archdeacon.of.barnstaple@exeter.anglican.org)**

Closing date: 24th July 2017  
 Interviews: 7th & 8th September 2017

This post is subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure



**DIOCESE OF OXFORD**  
Serving Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire

21st century urban mission

## PIONEER

**BRACKNELL**

(6 year full time stipendiary appointment)

Bracknell Team Ministry seeks an ordained colleague, passionate about mission and evangelism, to pioneer and support the development of church communities for the post-modern age in the new Bracknell town centre.

There is a lot of excitement and curiosity about the new centre. Living in apartment accommodation, you will relish being part of this exploration of new life.

You will be

- at ease striking up conversations with people in foyers and cafes and on street corners
- resilient and optimistic in exploring new ground
- able to meet people where they are rather than expect them to come to you
- comfortable working alongside inherited models of church and with a genuine desire to see all the different expressions of Christ's Body flourishing.

Full details and application form available from

**The Archdeacon of Berkshire**

Tel: 01635 552820

Email: [archdber@oxford.anglican.org](mailto:archdber@oxford.anglican.org)

or [www.oxford.anglican.org/category/vacancies/](http://www.oxford.anglican.org/category/vacancies/)

Informal conversations welcome:

Contact the Rev'd Jim Barlow

Mission Priest & Interim Team Leader

Tel: 07775 356652

Closing date: 9am Wednesday 17th May 2017

Interviews: Friday 9th June 2017

Enhanced DBS disclosure is required



Called to make Christ known



# PIONEER YOUTH WORKER

Full time: £19,500-£21,000pa



AN ECUMENICAL GROUP IS LOOKING FOR A PIONEER YOUTH WORKER TO DEVELOP NEW WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF THE CHURCH, AND TO ASSIST IN BUILDING UPON EXISTING YOUTH WORK.

- Are you passionate about youthwork and engaging those outside of the church?
- Do you have a pioneering heart and a desire to encourage new, creative approaches to spirituality and church?

*If so, this job could be for you!*

## THIS POST OFFERS:

- lots of scope to pioneer new initiatives, as well as supporting some existing youth work.
- support from a committed volunteer team
- the opportunity to be part of an ecumenical pioneer community with others engaged in similar work

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND AN APPLICATION PACK, PLEASE CONTACT:  
**REV. CHRIS STONE TEL: 01633 378354 / EMAIL: [VICCHRIS78@SKY.COM](mailto:VICCHRIS78@SKY.COM)**

**Location:** Bassaleg, Newport (near Cardiff and Bristol)

**Interviews:** Weds 21st June 2017

**Closing Date:** Fri 2nd June 2017

**Start Date:** 1st Sept 2017 (negotiable)

There is an occupational requirement that the role holder is a committed Christian in accordance with Part 7 of Schedule 9 to the Equality Act 2010.



The Church of England  
**Diocese of Ely**

**ely2025**

## Pioneer Minister for New Housing

Major new housing area in the Huntingdon area

Building New Christian Community

A fantastic opportunity to come and help grow a Christian community that shapes and serves the growing new town of Alconbury Weald. (5000+ new homes)

**We are looking for someone who is big hearted and ...**

**Connects with culture**  
Making the most of networks, resources & opportunities.

**Enjoys Schools**  
Children, Education & partnership

**Builds team**  
Identifying & releasing gifts, experimental, energetic & prayerful

Closing Date for applications: **Thurs. 14th September 2017**  
Interviews on **Tues. 3rd October** in Ermine Street Primary School

Application Form & Information Pack can be downloaded from the Diocesan website  
<http://www.elydiocese.org/about/vacancies>

The Diocese is committed to safer recruitment practices with people working or volunteering with children and therefore this position is subject to an enhanced disclosure from the DBS.

**We pray to be generous and visible people of Jesus Christ**