

## A future vision for Christ Church

A reflection by the Bishop of Oxford

This reflection is offered to the Christ Church Governance Review, to the Diocese of Oxford as a contribution to developing a vision for a coherent, Foundation which is able to continue make a unique and valuable contribution to the academy, the church and our wider society and world.

There is no single shape or focus to an English Cathedral. Liverpool is distinct from Salisbury, and different again from Sheffield and Canterbury. Some are monastic foundations; others parish churches; others, like St. Paul's or York Minister, have national or regional significance. There are some identifiable common elements to Cathedral life but also many distinctives. Every Cathedral has been shaped by history, geography and the local needs of church and society: shaped in other words over many generations by and for the whole mission of God<sup>1</sup>.

The ministry of Oxford's Cathedral is distinctive among English Cathedrals because of its unique history, place and constitution as part of the Foundation of Christ Church. This brings many opportunities for service, some particular responsibilities for its life and a number of constraints on its activities. Each generation of ministers in Christ Church and the Diocese of Oxford needs to discern how best to balance these opportunities, responsibilities and constraints so as to best serve the charitable objects of the foundation and the vision of the Diocese for our Cathedral.

This paper should be read alongside recent theological work on the nature of Cathedrals and the helpful paper by Frances Ward, commissioned by the Sub Dean<sup>2</sup>. My own thinking has also been enriched by Seven Sacred Spaces, the work of the missiologist Dr. George Lings<sup>3</sup>.

This paper is structured around three images for the life of Christ Church as a single Foundation which I hope will resource this ongoing discernment and concludes with some provisional reflections and conclusions for the present governance review.

### The Crossroads

Thus says the Lord:

“Stand at the crossroads, and look

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Atkinson identifies six overlapping functions: (1) The cathedral as the bishop's church; (2) the cathedral as a monastery; (3) the cathedral as a college or foundation; (4) the cathedral as parish or quasi parish church; (5) the cathedral as a shrine or resort for visitors both pilgrims and tourists and (6) the cathedral as a virtual church addressing a global congregation (in *Holy Ground* p.135)

<sup>2</sup> See for example Stephen Platten (ed), *Holy Ground: Cathedrals in the twenty first century*, Sacristy Press, 2017 and

<sup>3</sup> George Lings, *Seven Sacred Spaces: Portals to deeper community life in Christ*. Lings builds seven dimensions of ecclesiology on the seven monastic spaces of cell, chapel, chapter, cloister, garden, refectory and scriptorium.

And ask for the ancient paths  
 Where the good way lies and walk in it  
 And find rest for your souls". Jeremiah 6.16

Jeremiah's metaphor is apt in terms of history and present context. The city of Oxford was founded at a river crossing where north-south and east-west ways intersect. Christ Church was built close to Carfax, the historic centre of the city, on the site occupied by the Priory of St. Frideswide, the oldest place of prayer in Oxford. Oxford is now one of the oldest and finest centres of learning in the world: one of the greatest cultural and intellectual crossroads of modern times.

Christ Church is itself a crossroads: a meeting place between history and contemporary life; between the Church and the secular culture; between theology and the whole range of academic disciplines; between the United Kingdom and the world.

There is no better place to have a Cathedral, a church of national significance, than at this great cultural crossroads. Through Christ Church, the Diocese of Oxford and the Church of England is able, potentially, to listen to and learn from current scholarship in the sciences, the arts and technology. Through Christ Church, the Church of England is able to offer contributions to the evolution of wisdom and knowledge in an outstanding place of tertiary education and learning which is of international significance.

The challenges of the present age call for the drawing together of different disciplines within common conversations around (for example) climate change and biodiversity, the right use of technology, the challenge of new diseases and the massive political and economic challenges facing the world. The Church has a great deal to offer these conversations and much to learn. Christ Church offers unique opportunities both to host and contribute to this vital dialogue.

The four Canon Professors made possible through the Foundation have a particular responsibility to lead and enable this dialogue between the Church and the wider academy. Their bridging roles are a vital part of the Foundation and the Foundation must enable them to focus here rather than on College administration or the detail of Cathedral life. However the whole of Christ Church and (to some degree) the whole of the Diocese has been shaped by this crossroads at the centre of our common life, drawing us all more deeply into dialogue for the common good.

The Church of England brings to Christ Church (and the wider University) a rich web of local, regional, national and global connections. These include deep relationships with every part of the city, county and Thames Valley region. The Diocese of Oxford is a network of more than a thousand churches, chaplaincies and schools across the three counties of Oxford, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. The Diocese (and therefore the Cathedral) are connected through this network to other churches, faith communities, the third sector and civil society. The Diocese forms part of the Church of England, the Established Church. The Church of England is part of a different global community, the Anglican Communion and the wider global church and offers clear perspective on the needs of the world informed by justice, peace, care for the environment (in the language of theology, a vision of the kingdom of

God). The Church brings a deep commitment to education and the formation of the whole person for the whole of life, especially in and through a residential community living in the Benedictine rhythms of prayer, rest and work.

The Church of England has played a key role in the formation and development of the University of Oxford historically. The majority of the Colleges were religious houses and foundations. Theology was one of three core disciplines of the University, together with Medicine and Law. The University and Christ Church have played a key role in many of the great global movements which have shaped Christianity over the past seven centuries including the English Reformation and the vision of Henry VIII for the Foundation; the ministries of John and Charles Wesley, who were ordained in Christ Church; the Oxford Movement; the ministry and writings of St. John Henry Newman and the ministry of Rowan Williams, one of the Canon Professors, who went on to be Archbishop of Wales and Archbishop of Canterbury.

The University of Oxford today retains and honours these deep roots in Christian faith through (for example) the motto of the University<sup>4</sup>; the retention of the regular University Sermons; the links between the University and the University Church of St. Mary the Virgin; and the presence of both Anglican chapels and chaplains across the more than thirty of the thirty six Colleges. There are five permanent private halls founded by different Christian denominations which retain their religious character.

Postgraduate students from across the world are drawn to Oxford in part because of Oxford's place in Christian history and theology. Tourists and pilgrims are drawn to this great crossroads because of their knowledge of C.S.Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkein, Lewis Carrol, Dorothy L. Sayers and many others down the centuries. Over the centuries the joint foundation of Christ Church with its Cathedral and College has become and remains one of the keystones in the bridge built here between faith and reason, between the Church and the world.

Building on this keystone, the Church continues to make a significant contribution to the life of the University through scholarship and teaching in the chaplaincies, churches and private halls, in facilitating community engagement; through connecting the University to every part of the region, the nation and the world and bringing the resources of the Christian tradition into the debates on the critical issues of the age: the climate and environmental crises; medical ethics; the search for the common good and the future use of technology.

### A House of Christ (Aedes Christi)

By this crossroads, long ago, there was established a house of prayer in a mixed monastic community: a House of Christ. The Colleges of Oxford owe much to their monastic roots and foundations in terms of the layout of their buildings, the pattern of community life learning and conversation founded upon a common rhythm, shared worship and shared meals and a commitment to stability in Church and society. This monastic house of prayer evolved and was extended into the joint foundation at the Reformation. The cell became the study. The

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<sup>4</sup> Dominus illuminatio mea (the Lord is my light) from Psalm 27.1

refectory became the Hall and the scriptorium the Library. The cloister was extended to the quadrangles. The oratory on the same foundations became both the chapel and the Cathedral of the new Diocese of Oxford. The name of the Foundation was settled as Christ Church, the House of Christ. On the one hand, it is the whole of the Foundation which is so designated, not simply the Cathedral Church. On the other, Christ Church as a Foundation embraces both a Cathedral and a College within a contemporary University with many members who may be of no faith or different world faiths. The Christian roots of the Foundation are reflected in the name of the House but Christian language cannot be used uncritically of the whole Foundation.

Christ Church is a physical place, a building fashioned in wood and stone and glass. The building, like the Foundation, offers opportunities, responsibilities and constraints which are not easily changed. In particular it is all but impossible to achieve a physical separation or even separate entrances for Cathedral and College. The parts of the Foundation are bound together in bricks and mortar creating the need for a perpetual and dynamic conversation about the practicalities of House life and work which has the capacity both to form Christian character. One outworking of this conversation is the current governance review. Both of the words used in the Latin title of the Foundation are worthy of reflection.

**Aedes** is the Latin word for a public building or set of buildings with a purpose. In the Mediaeval period the aedes is used for a church or chapel or a religious house and, after the creation of the universities, for an academic hall. This is not a domestic household (from the Latin *domus* meaning home) but a more complex collection of physical spaces which together are vested in a single charitable institution, with clear objects: the advancement of religion through the provision of a Cathedral and its School, the College, the promotion of research and the advancement of the arts, culture heritage and science. The buildings taken together are greater than the sum of their parts. There is a sense of humility to be seen in the title of the House. The governance of such a public set of buildings and those who live in them, visit and use them will always be complex. The domestic analogy which undergirds the governance of a monastery in the Rule of Benedict is helpful but of itself insufficient<sup>5</sup>.

This Foundation as the House of Christ has (and should have) **hospitality** as a primary value. Guests are welcomed in the name of Christ and, as in the Benedictine monastery, made welcome as if Christ himself is visiting. These guests include those who come to study as undergraduates and postgraduates; guests from the parishes, chaplaincies and schools of the Diocese of Oxford and the many visitors who come as tourists and pilgrims. The configuration of the buildings needs to serve the needs of guests and visitors (as is evidenced by the new Visitor Centre and the reconfigured Chapter House). The governance and ethos of the Foundation also needs to reflect this core aspect of its life. The continual flow of diverse guests is not a distraction from some “core work” of scholarship but a primary calling which needs to be balanced within the overall mission of the Foundation.

Because it bears the name of Christ, the House is also called to have as its value the ministry and work of healing and the promotion of well being for all its members, guests and visitors.

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<sup>5</sup> According to the Benedictine rule, the Abbot is like the father of a household with a responsibility to consult but also the power to determine the entire life of the monastery. The governance of a contemporary Cathedral is much more complex; the powers of the Dean are to be exercised collegially in consultation with the Chapter reflecting the diverse nature of the institution and its leadership and governance.

The English term hospitality is closely related to the term **hospital**: the part of the monastic foundation where both community members and guests came to receive care.

After these recent difficult years I want to invite and encourage Christ Church to place **shalom**, health and well being right in the centre of its aims and objectives: the well being of those who serve the College in its various leadership roles; the mental health and welfare of its Students and scholars; the well being of the clergy chapter and pupils and staff in the School; the special care of livings where Christ Church is patron, a concern for the well being and spiritual renewal for the clergy and lay ministers of the Diocese and the proper safeguarding of all. This priority of shalom extends to the proper care of creation not only in the gardens and grounds of Christ Church but in the environmental policies associated with the Foundations investments, land and other holdings. In my observation, this emphasis on *shalom* may involve a willingness to invest to a much greater (and more Benedictine) degree in support staff and resources. There has been too much of a sense in recent years of under-resourcing of those called to leadership and management.

The third English word closely linked to the Latin hospes (guest) is of course the word **host**. There is a sense that for a Christian and for the Church, Christ is both guest and host in his Church and therefore in Christ Church. This is in part about the priority and the provision of worship after the pattern of an English Cathedral as the beating heart of prayer somewhere near the centre of the Foundation and at the centre of the Diocese. The Chapter must be a living, praying community before they are a company of scholars. The worship must be well resourced to ensure the worship is of the highest quality as offered to Almighty God and as a centre of renewal for others. This excellence must include excellence in diversity of musical and liturgical styles: a contemporary Cathedral cannot simply excel in a single choral tradition. The capacity to encounter the living God in Jesus Christ must be present for all who venture into the Cathedral Church through the careful ordering of space, sensitive invitations to prayer, the provision of chaplaincy and good literature and, of course, in the quality of the worship, the celebration of the Sacraments and the proclamation of the Word of God. At the Eucharist, the central act of Christian worship, Christ is the host, the living bread of life, offered to sustain and renew all who come to make holy communion.

The character and person of Christ is central to the common vision of the Diocese of Oxford: to be a more Christ like Church for the sake of God's world. The three qualities at the heart of our common vision are drawn directly from the beatitudes in Matthew 5.1-12. They are the call to grow to be more contemplative, more compassionate and more courageous. We often fall short of these values but they represent qualities which are able to inspire the different traditions which make up the Diocese of Oxford and beyond the Church to our wider society.

Christ Church as a Cathedral has set a particular and helpful configuration of Christian virtues in stone in the floor of the Cathedral sanctuary. These four paving stones are clearly visible to me whenever I sit in the cathedra, the Bishop's seat. In the first row, on its own, is the quality of **humilitas**, humility as the gateway and foundation of the virtues. In the second row, nearer to the altar are the three theological virtues of *fides*, *caritas* and *spes* (faith, love and hope). These qualities are present in every generation. However, if I were to identify a single virtue to place at the heart of the foundation in this next period of its life it

would be humility, particularly in the light of recent painful events: humility before God, in prayer and before others and as a precursor to wisdom and learning. Oxford is a global centre of excellence, attracting the best minds. The University environment in which our Cathedral is set can on occasion be a proud and competitive place projecting a sense of superiority of class or intellect. Christ Church in contrast needs to adopt intentionally and communicate to the wider diocese an appropriate humility: a closeness and connection to the ground (humus) – to parishes and communities the Cathedral serves - in order to see its life and ministry renewed. Humility is the heart and pattern of Christ who became a servant and washed the feet of his disciples and gave his life for the sake of the world. Humility and mutual submission one to another with mutual collaboration needs to be the pattern and ethos of our governance<sup>6</sup>.

The Diocese of Oxford in turn needs to affirm and embrace its Cathedral. For too long a question has been voiced about whether the Diocese should begin again elsewhere (and well before the recent difficulties). This is impractical as will be demonstrated elsewhere. However It is also a view which is blind to the rich potential of the gift we have been given in the joint foundation: a Cathedral Church in the very centre of this great cultural crossroads; rich in history. It is impossible for me to sit in the Cathedral and imagine Christ Church reverting simply to a College Chapel or testament to history. This is the place which has witnessed generations of ordinations in the life of our Diocese (including many who have lived out their lives in demanding parish ministries and some who have gone on to change the world); which carries its history and traditions from the very beginning. Christ Church is our Cathedral and at this critical juncture it needs to be affirmed as such by the whole Diocese.

### The Body

The New Testament writers nowhere have a single definition of what it means to be the Church. The nature of the Church is a mystery which needs to be explored through a whole range of Old and New Testament images and references. The term *ekklesia*, those called out in assembly, is used in a whole range of ways from a congregation which meets in a house to the Church united in earth and heaven. The creeds articulate the four historic marks of the church as one, holy, catholic and apostolic. Each of these truths is reflected in different ways in the life of our Cathedral.

However the image of the body seems particularly significant and is deployed in secular literature as well as in the Bible. The imagery of the body of Christ is developed in particular by the New Testament epistles: in Romans and in 1 Corinthians and then, in an extended way in the Letters to the Ephesians and in Colossians:

“Christ is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first born from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything”

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<sup>6</sup> One of the key ways to break down this sense of being excluded which flows from a strong internal culture is through the provision of signposting, welcome, initiation and interpretation. This is as true for newly appointed senior clergy, for visiting congregation members from the Diocese as for tourists and visitors. Again this needs to be well resourced to be effective. Proper signposting of the Diocese to and in the Cathedral and its surrounding buildings is also vital.

(Colossians 1.18 continuing a few verses later with)

“And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him.....” (1.21).

This imagery of the body has powerful resonance in describing the different communities of Christ Church and also the patterns of leadership and ministry which are possible in a complex and diverse institution.

Christ Church is one community that embraces other distinctive and overlapping communities. Focussing now simply on the Cathedral there are

- the Dean and Chapter, in whom leadership of the Cathedral is vested
- the community of wider clergy and staff who share in prayer and ministry
- the different congregations in their common life
- the scholars and Students of the House for whom the Cathedral is their College Chapel
- the alumni of the College
- the diocesan senior staff and the wider chapter
- the Cathedral School, its choirs, pupils, staff and parents
- the churches and chaplaincies of the city of Oxford, the county of Oxfordshire and the wider diocese
- the schools of the Diocese each of which looks to the Cathedral in some sense
- the parishes of which Christ Church is patron
- the pilgrims and tourists who visit and pray in the Cathedral
- wider groups who are formally or less formally attached to the Cathedral (including guilds and the Cathedral Friends)
- the large and growing virtual congregations across the United Kingdom and the world

Each of these communities and more is in a different relationship to the Cathedral and to one another. It would be impossible to draw a neat and exhaustive diagram with a hierarchy of belonging. The image of the body of Christ helps us to understand the subtle web of relationships in which each is held and also the value and complexity of ministry and service offered by the Cathedral team. These relationships and communities are a reality of the life of Christ Church even though they never appear physically in the building at the same time (and some rarely or not at all).

In terms of the pattern of leadership and ministry, the image of the body of Christ is helpful. Implicitly in Romans and Corinthians and explicitly in Ephesians and Colossians there is no single pattern for the exercise of leadership in the body of Christ. Christ is the head of the body, the source of life and authority. This authority is then distributed and exercised according to both gift and office through a variety of roles. These roles are called to work together within the single body of Christ, each held in equal value and esteem and each in submission to Christ in humility and to one another. Nor is there a fixed number of roles

and offices: the Church has had many ways of understanding leadership in both norms and particular contexts, traditions and places.

One of the possibilities under consideration in the governance review is the division of the office of Dean into two parts, Head of the Cathedral and Head of House. This would require some significant adjustments in other areas as is set out elsewhere in the Diocesan submission to the review. However it should not and would not cause theological or ecclesiological difficulties in a Church which holds to a servant and distributed model of leadership after the pattern of Jesus Christ. Any model which emerged would need to be based on the clear delineation of distributed responsibilities and authority.

Some careful thought would need to be given to the title of any Head of House. My own preference and suggestion, if there is to be a separation, would be Warden or Steward in preference to Principal or Master, denoting an office and responsibility held in trust before God and before others. Christ is the head of the body.

One of the realities to be reckoned with in the staffing of the Cathedral is that a major part of the ministry of Cathedral is unseen by other parts of the Foundation (or even by the Diocese). A normative Cathedral staffing in another diocese of a Cathedral Dean, two Residentiary Canons and various associate clergy might seem generous if the only perspective one has is a Sunday morning Eucharist at 11 am. It might seem generous from the perspective of the list of weekday services and the numbers attending. But the life of the Cathedral is much richer and more extensive than these communities.

One of my concerns in the future staffing of the Cathedral is that we could be left with too small a team of senior clergy, particularly if the role of Dean is separated from the role of Head of House. In that event the new Dean would still have significant Christ Church responsibilities within the Foundation (as one of the bridging roles which hold the whole Community together). The new Dean would also have significant Diocesan responsibilities as a member of the Bishop's Staff, Bishop's Council and Synod and a key ambassador for Christ Church across the Diocese (duties more often honoured in the breach rather than the observance by previous Deans for understandable reasons). More complex governance is more, not less, demanding on those in senior roles particularly in the early years.

In that respect I would be very concerned if Christ Church were to lose the post of Sub Dean at the transition point in the leadership of the Dean. There is a risk that a new Dean might be left as the sole "full time" senior priest<sup>7</sup> with a number of part time colleagues which would be in my view the creation of an impossible role<sup>8</sup>. This level of staffing would not in my view be on a par with other English Cathedrals and would seriously compromise the ability of Christ Church to be a Cathedral Church.

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<sup>7</sup> Together with half a diocesan canon; a small proportion of the time of the Canon Professors; a notional quarter of the Archdeacon and the two key support roles of Precentor and College Chaplain.

<sup>8</sup> This is not to argue that the post needs to be designated formally as Sub Dean but it may be sensible to continue with the status quo for the next appointment.



## Opportunities, responsibilities and constraints

As indicated above Christ Church presents the Diocese of Oxford with a range of opportunities as the Cathedral of the Diocese, a series of responsibilities and a small number of constraints. In this final section I comment on each of these as we move forward.

### Opportunities

The charitable objects of the Foundation are summarised as:

- (a) *the advancement of religion, education and learning, in particular but not exclusively by:*
- (i) *the provision, support, conduct and maintenance of Christ Church Cathedral as the Cathedral of the Diocese of Oxford, together with its Choir;*
  - (ii) *the provision, support, conduct and maintenance of Christ Church as a college within the University of Oxford; and*
  - (iii) *the promotion of research in any branch of learning;*
- and, in so far as it is not incompatible with the objects set out in (a) above,*
- (b) *the advancement of the arts, culture, heritage and science, in particular but not exclusively by:*
- (i) *the preservation and conservation of collections of articles of historical, aesthetic or scientific interest;*
  - (ii) *the preservation and conservation of the Cathedral and its appurtenances including the Chapter House; and*
  - (iii) *the preservation and conservation of the other buildings of the House and its curtilage including the Meadow.*

The responsibility to provide, support, conduct and maintain a Cathedral demands a reasonable understanding of what a English Cathedral is and is called to be in this place at this time. My hope is that the three images of a crossroads, the House of Christ and the Body have something to offer here.

It is also important for all parties to understand how the Church of Jesus Christ seeks to fulfil God's mission and understands that calling. The Diocese of Oxford shares a common vision with five priority areas<sup>9</sup>. However the Diocese is part of the Church of England and of the wider Anglican Communion which has since 1998 shaped its life around five marks of mission:

The mission of the Church is the mission of Christ

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation

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<sup>9</sup> These are currently (1) the environment; (2) poverty and inequality; (3) the discipleship of the whole people of God; (4) ministry to children, young people, schools and families and (5) planting new congregations in areas of new housing and for a more diverse society.

5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth<sup>10</sup>

How may Christ Church fulfil these Five Marks of Mission as the Cathedral of the Diocese of Oxford?

**To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom**

Through prayer and worship, word and sacrament; through the welcome extended to visitors; through careful interpretation of the building and its story; through the formation of a living Christian community as a witness to the grace of God in human lives.

**To teach, baptise and nurture new believers**

Through contributing to Christian education and formation in and through the University and College, the Cathedral School and all the schools of the Diocese; through resourcing catechesis in an annual cycle of formation and the regular hosting of baptism and confirmation services.

**To respond to human need by loving service**

Through an alignment of resources to support particular charitable works so that the gifts of the members of the different communities which make up the Cathedral are offered in the service of those most in need.

**To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation**

Through enabling the contribution of Christian theology and ethics to the great challenges of the age through the work of the Canon Professors and other members of the College and the Diocese.

**To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth**

Through good stewardship of all the resources in the Foundation, including the policies of Christ Church in investment, management of land and resources and ecological education.

It is important to note that Christ Church will not be fulfilling its mission as a Cathedral Church according to current Anglican understanding unless it has the capacity to make a significant contribution to each of these five marks of mission. At present it is clear that the first and second marks are certainly present in the life of Christ Church (though continuous development is needed in both areas). It is less clear how the Cathedral and the Foundation are enabled to live the third, fourth and fifth marks given current resource constraints. However the question of governance is also critical here: the life and mission of the Cathedral will need to be shaped through continuous dialogue between the governing body, the chapter and the wider diocese the Cathedral serves. Both Christ Church and the Diocese of Oxford have very significant historic endowments. Both Christ Church and the Diocese need in my view to respond to the present crises in the world through generosity. Clearly due regard needs to be had for intergenerational equity but this needs to be balanced by the critical needs of the world around us and in

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<sup>10</sup> In 2021 these Five Marks were made more central to the Church of England's own understanding of its vision and strategy for the next decade

particular resourcing Cathedrals to themselves shape and influence society in these critical decades.

### **Responsibilities and Constraints**

There are many opportunities for Christ Church as our Cathedral to support the mission of the Diocese. However these opportunities need to be balanced by responsibilities exercised by the Diocese towards Christ Church and the constraints of finite resources.

The Diocese has responsibilities to be committed to and to cherish our unique Cathedral and pay due regard to its proper place in Diocesan life, recognising the value of the ministry we receive. The Diocese will need to recognise our responsibilities to work with and within the wider framework of the Foundation, College and University. The Diocese will need to ensure there are strong bonds of connection between the Bishop and the senior team and the Cathedral and that strong support continues to be given.

The Diocese will also need to recognise that there are constraints on finite resources of buildings and finance. It simply not possible in a multi-function building to have unlimited access to our Cathedral in the same way as in other dioceses. This in turn demands good structures of liaison, planning, consultation and decision making so that there is space for ongoing development as needs evolve. In any new governance structure, in which the roles of Head of House and Dean are separated, there will be a need for new structures of liaison between the joint foundation and the Diocese of Oxford.

### **Conclusion**

Christ Church remains a significant gift to the Diocese of Oxford. As a Diocese we should continue to develop, treasure and steward this gift to the glory of God and for the building of God's kingdom. We dare to believe that the Diocese of Oxford is also a significant gift to Christ Church making a distinctive contribution to the life and work of the joint foundation and the college. The vision of the joint foundation has evolved from century to century and has proven its value for almost 500 years. We hope and pray that the present governance review will enable its flourishing into the future.

+Steven Oxford

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