



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of Leeds

Loving. Living. Learning.

OUR DIOCESE



From Richmond to Barnsley, Huddersfield to Wakefield and Bradford to the Dales, our clergy reach out into the hearts of the diverse communities served by the Church of England in every parish.

Our unique diocese has three cathedrals, three minsters and 440 parishes supported by lay leaders and worshippers working together across the region from inner cities to remote rural villages.

Children and young people are supported by the diocese in 236 schools and our churches hold thousands of services and events each year.

Our five Episcopal Areas of Bradford, Huddersfield, Leeds, Ripon and Wakefield each have their own area Bishop and cover nearly all West Yorkshire, the west of North Yorkshire, some of South Yorkshire and parts of County Durham, Cumbria and Lancashire.

A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP NICK



In the 10th anniversary year of our unique diocese we celebrated in parishes, churches and cathedrals across our region, reflecting on the journey so far and facing with confidence all that lies ahead.

During an uncertain time for the world in general, the year ended with specific challenges for the Church of England. But, in this diocese we are convicted that our vocation has not changed. Challenge and failure do not change it. We learn from how past processes and behaviours, regarding Safeguarding in particular, need further revision and improvement. That journey will never end.

In the Diocese of Leeds our already robust Safeguarding structures and capacity were enhanced during 2024. Always open to external challenge, we continue to demand diligence in all aspects of Safeguarding, shaping a culture of security for all.

This report does not focus on the complex work of individual diocesan teams, but aims to give an informing overview of how dedicated people in Church House and beyond do their best to support clergy, lay leaders, parish worshippers and schools in every setting. As you know, we occupy a lot of different settings in the cities, towns and villages and which offer many missional challenges and rewards.

Last summer the Bishop of Wakefield, the Rt Revd Tony Robinson, retired. He could not have been a better episcopal colleague throughout the formation and development of this diocese. I am indebted personally to him for his constant support and encouragement. We wished him and Sue a long and happy retirement, with our love, gratitude, prayers and blessing.

Change is an essential element of life. As I look towards my own retirement later in 2025, we are also looking forward to the arrival of a new Bishop of Wakefield, the Ven Malcolm Chamberlain who will be consecrated in June 2025.

Change is also central to Barnabas: Encouraging Confidence, the strategy that underpins the daily work of our diocese and is explained in this report.

Confidence in our mission and ministry means that changes of people, roles and responsibilities are seen as opportunities, not threats – because we are confident in what we have done, what we do now and what we will do in the future.

And above all and forever, we are confident because Christ has risen; the Spirit has come; and together we are his Body.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 't N Baines'.

Rt Revd Nick Baines

BISHOP OF LEEDS

OUR STRATEGY

The Diocese of Leeds has a vision for confident Christians, who are part of growing churches and transforming communities.

As Christians living and worshipping in the Diocese of Leeds, we want to be faithful to our calling to be good news, share the Gospel and serve with steadfast purpose the communities in which we live.



Over the next 10 years our strategic aim is to be a diocese:

- Confident in our mission - supporting churches to become confident in their purpose, and able to use their building, financial and time resources to achieve this.
- Confident in our future - ensuring the diocese becomes sustainable, building on the work of the last few years to be efficient as well as effective.
- Confident in our leadership - giving support around leadership for everyone involved in serving in our churches.
- Confident in our witness - encouraging support for all to be confident in living and telling the good news of Jesus in a rapidly changing world, particularly reaching children and young people.

These four strategic pillars provide a structure and a focus for our vision. The pillars ensure we can align efforts through effective communication and implementation of our priorities. In delivering the diocesan vision, teams are focusing on **Encouraging Confidence** as a simple way of defining our purpose and offer. It is a shorthand way of saying we are here to help parishes. Our collective purpose in every team is to encourage confidence in our parishes and schools in our mission, our future, our leadership and our witness.

Over time that will mean we adjust, start and also stop activities and areas of work. Taking advantage of future opportunities, whether through the provision of funding or through a reallocation of resources, we will ensure that it fits within this wider strategic framework. We recognise that further intentional action is also required that goes beyond established work to make this strategy a reality. This is where **the Barnabas: Encouraging Confidence programme** gives new, funded resources to help churches move forward in mission.

The Barnabas programme is a specific programme of work. It has set objectives which are nationally funded with a defined programme team in place to deliver. The Barnabas programme team oversee the roll out of new initiatives as well as supporting churches in identifying needs. They will work closely with other diocesan teams as to how needs can be met as part of the wider Encouraging Confidence strategic approach. A number of programme outcomes can only be delivered through cross working with teams across the diocese.

Going forward the strategic approach for the Diocese of Leeds may be referred to as Barnabas for short, but it contains four firm pillars rooted in encouraging confidence. It requires all of us. Scan the QR code to find out more.



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIOCESAN SECRETARY



2024 was an important year of delivery.

We invested time and effort into updating our IT and finance systems, enhancing efficiency and service quality. Our property servicing contracts have been retendered and improved to provide better service at a more consistent cost, and for the first time, we now have comprehensive information on the condition of all our properties. This will enable us to develop and budget for a five-year property maintenance plan.

Over 200 of our parishes have now engaged with the Barnabas programme, with churches accessing the support offered and groups attending the courses and training put on. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Additionally, we have seen an increase in church attendance and the number of worshipping communities continues to grow. There is much to be thankful for.

We deeply appreciate the continued dedication of our volunteers, who give so much of themselves to serve the church and their local communities. Their commitment is invaluable, and we are profoundly grateful for their efforts. Special thanks go to Trustees and committee members for their oversight and support, without whom we could not function effectively.

This report highlights just a small portion of the work undertaken by both those who work for the Diocesan Board of Finance and the wider diocese, whether in paid or voluntary roles. Across every DBF team, staff do their utmost to support the delivery of the diocesan vision and strategy.

It is a privilege to serve the diocese and I hope you will be inspired by the hope contained in this report.

JONATHAN WOOD

DIOCESAN SECRETARY



PROGRESS

Many diocesan initiatives took shape and strengthened in a year marked by new faces, new ideas and forward-looking action. Here are some achievements driven by Barnabas: Encouraging Confidence.

Barnabas: Encouraging Confidence

During 2024 around half of all parishes in the diocese had some form of meaningful engagement with Barnabas. A further 77 people from thirteen parishes took part in the Personal Growth and Leadership Course which encourages lay people and clergy to work together on their own development both as individuals and churches. 40 clergy have engaged with leadership development work- in coaching, through a second cohort of the Confident Leadership For Missional Churches course, a further course called Reconciling Mission and through various learning communities. A Rural Change Enabler joined the team, helping us to ensure that the Barnabas offering is suitable across all our contexts. In pursuit of the same aim, we developed Compass, a tool to help any church, parish or benefice determine their next steps in mission.

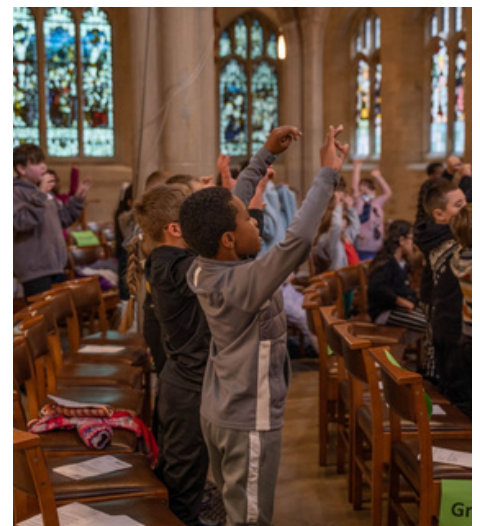


Safeguarding

Robust safeguarding practices already in place were enhanced by an increase in both capacity and expertise with the arrival of new team members, to the benefit of our parishes. For example, all training is now offered by a dedicated Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. Establishing stronger methods of data collection and analysis was a priority that was achieved in 2024. This was assisted by use and development of the MyConcern case management system that enables clear oversight of workload, capacity and trends.

Children, Young People and Families

The Children, Youth and Families Team had many exciting opportunities to meet and support children's and youth volunteers across the diocese through parish visits and TEND events. The team offered a variety of training including its 'Ministry with Children and Young People' course and Youthscape Essentials. Particular highlights of 2024 included the 'All Inclusive' session run by Mark Arnold from The Additional Needs Alliance and 'Intergenerational and Outdoor Worship' led by Engage Worship; both events equipping and inspiring churches to welcome and include all ages and abilities.



PROGRESS

Stewardship

June 2024 saw the launch of our Treasurer Forum initiative – quarterly online meetings with treasurers from across the diocese. These were co-planned and delivered by some of our nine Treasurer Ambassadors. Each Treasurer Forum meeting attracted more than 50 attendees. The diocese took part in the Give to Go Green pilot scheme in 2024, with 11 parishes taking part in each of two rounds. Most reached or surpassed their fundraising targets using digital giving.

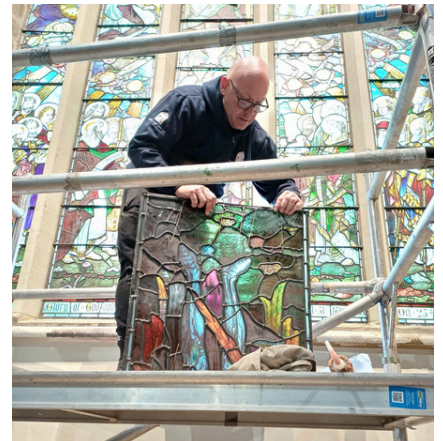


Environment

Saving Creation: A Net Zero Carbon Action Plan continued to be implemented across the diocese. Key achievements included the first full vicarage retrofit and receiving Heat Decarbonisation Plans for 47 of 49 Voluntary Aided schools. Work continued towards becoming a Silver Eco Diocese. Encouraging the confidence of our parishes, the diocese achieved an Eco Office Silver Award and we celebrated more individual Eco Church awards being achieved across the diocese, with Bolton Abbey securing a Gold Award.

Care of our buildings

The Church Buildings and Pastoral Reorganisation Team supported many parishes with developing plans for their buildings, including some forward-thinking solar panel and heating projects, as well as ensuring good governance structures for smooth day-to-day operation. The team's offer to parishes was particularly enhanced by the addition of a nationally-funded Church Buildings Support Officer, who gave bespoke support to 45 churches and secured funding of £121,500 for a maintenance collective initiative which will be piloted in 2025.



Formation

Growing confidence in lay ministry was evident in different ways. There were 14 new Licensed Lay Minister trainees this year, and seven people were recommended for training for ordination. Some 60 curates were involved in Initial Ministerial Education and 15 newly appointed clergy attended a year-long Post of First Responsibility course. Over 20 church services were delivered in British Sign Language. 46 people were commissioned in authorised lay ministry roles and two Lay Training Hybrid Hubs were established in the Ripon Episcopal Area at Leyburn and Gargrave, with a further hub planned for 2025.

PROGRESS

Education

Relationships with our 236 schools and 10 multi-academy trusts continue to be the foundation of the Education Team's work. In 2024, the team supported the many dedicated school leaders, which is always a key priority. This included the highly successful Pathway programmes. Through the team's broad offer of training, visits and advice, schools are not alone as they navigate the current challenges in education, and can be confident of diocesan support. The team continue to journey with pupils, staff and governors as they serve their communities with hope and love.



Property

An encouraging project was completed to undertake stock condition surveys across the whole property portfolio. This has resulted a much clearer indication of what property improvements need to be made and what budget is required. During 2025 the Property Team will start implementing a planned maintenance programme to deliver on the findings of the surveys. When properties are not required for clergy purposes, they are actively rented on the open market and during the year the diocese recorded its highest rental income at £1.2m. The team know the requirements to work towards Net Zero Carbon and the improvements needed. Interventions including insulation, solar PV and a heat pump have been piloted at a vicarage. Learning from this will inform future projects.

Communications

Helping the diocese mark its 10th anniversary was a key task for the Communications Team, notably the production of an 18 page commemorative booklet. 20,000 copies were shared between every church and cathedral for the anniversary on April 20 and at no expense to the diocese, thanks to an external donor. Communications supported all diocesan teams in delivering information to clergy, lay leaders and parishes and encouraged confidence amongst worshippers by sharing positive news stories from across the region that might inspire others to action.



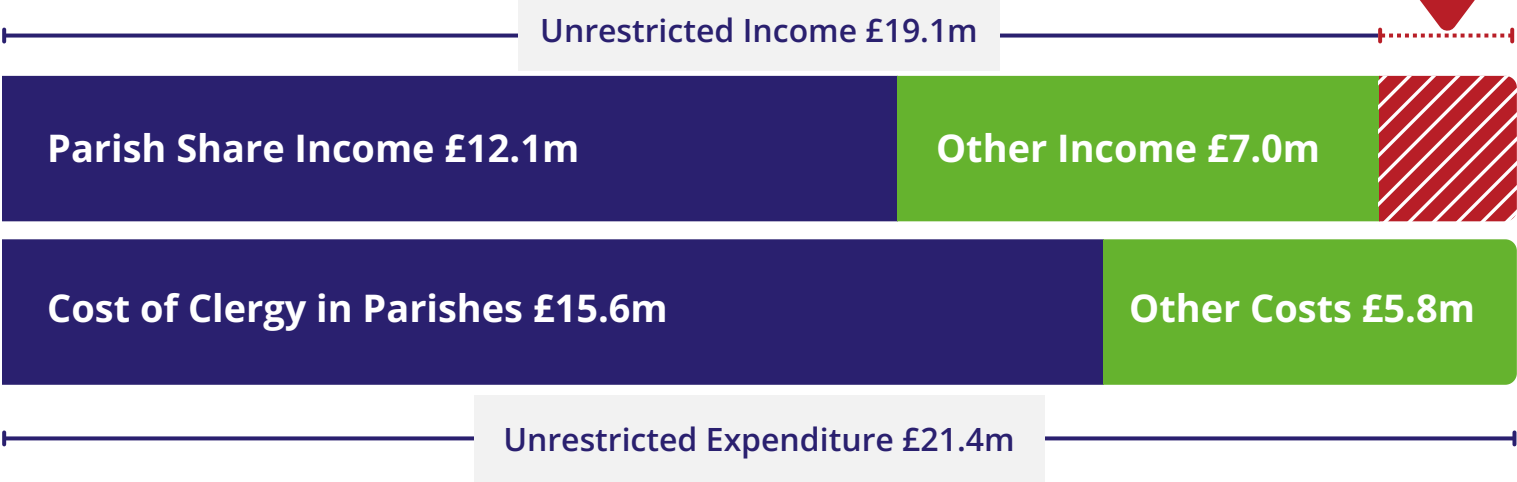
People

The People Team have continued to support parishes across the diocese and helped with both straightforward and complex cases. The support available has included refreshing and expanding the resources available to clergy and parishes on the HR section of the diocesan website. The team has delivered training to help support those managing staff and volunteers and plan to broaden this provision.

2024 DIOCESAN FINANCES

In 2024, unrestricted income of £19.1m was exceeded by expenditure of £21.4m, with the deficit funded by the use of diocesan reserves and property sales. In addition to Parish Share, our primary sources of income were National Church grants, rental income, dividends and interest on investments, and parochial fees.

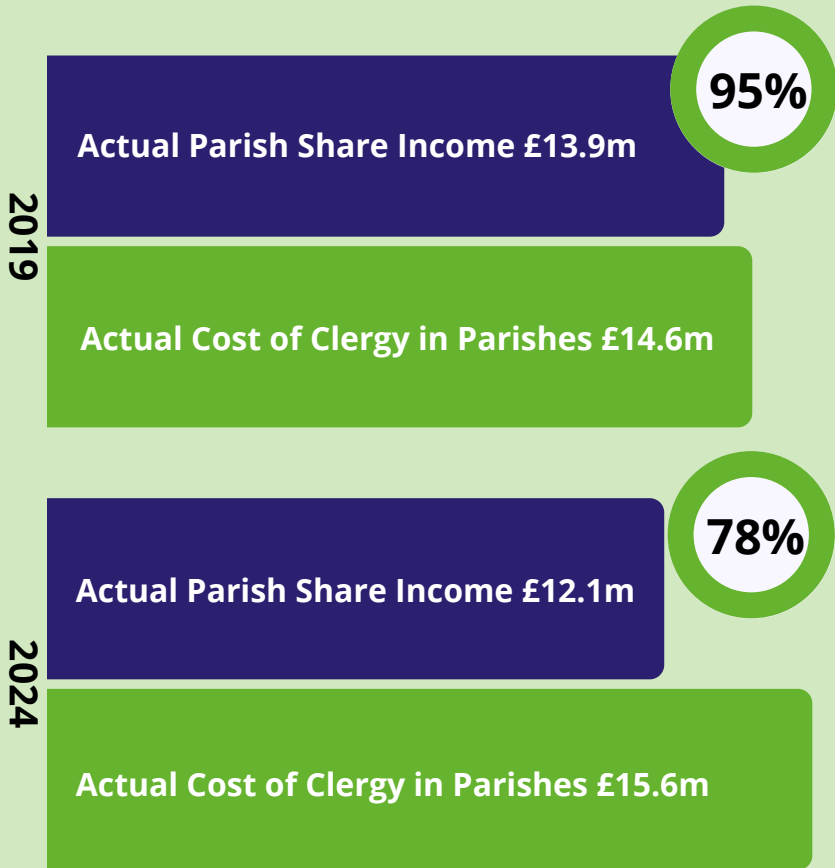
A £2.3m operating deficit was covered by utilising existing reserves and the proceeds from property sales.



A copy of our latest annual report and financial statement can be found [here](#).

In 2019 Parish Share contributions covered 95% of the cost of clergy in our parishes.

The lower level of Parish Share received post COVID-19 means that income alone, even with additional revenue from diocesan investments and property sales, is insufficient to cover clergy costs. Therefore, to deliver the level of ministry we desire, we are increasingly reliant on utilising our limited reserves and proceeds from property sales to bridge the gap each year.



EXPENDITURE

In every £100 spent...

£55

Ministry in parishes - Paying the stipendiary costs of 302 clergy and curates across the diocese.

£19

Clergy property - Maintenance and running costs of 440 clergy houses.

£9

Parish and schools support - Providing shared support services to parishes and supporting 236 schools.

£6

Ministry and mission - Sponsoring candidates for ordination, training curates and clergy and equipping people for lay ministry. This funding also supports youth and children's work, community engagement and providing resources to tackle environmental issues.

£5

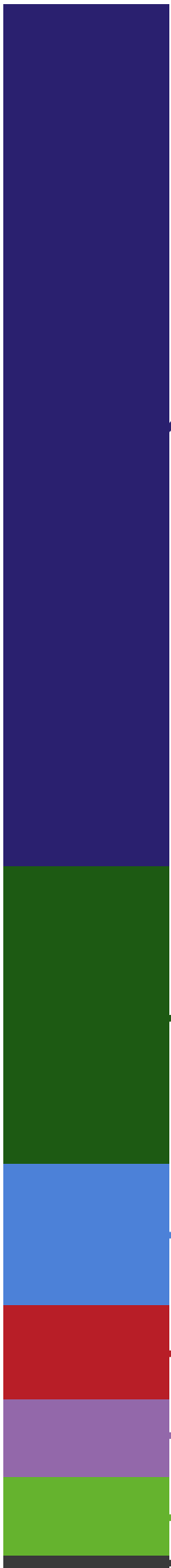
Shared central support and governance costs - Covering all the costs associated with running the diocese including finance, legal and registrar costs, as well as IT.

£5

National church and grants - Contribution to training for ministry (which is then received back through grants funding to ordinands) and a very small amount of other National Church costs.

£1

Retreat and outdoor centres - Supporting the work of our retreat centre, Parcevall Hall, whose costs are fully recovered as income, and Marrick Priory, where young people can engage with the gospel through outdoor pursuits.



STRUCTURE

The Church of England is the established church and HM The King is the Supreme Governor. It is organised into two provinces (Canterbury and York) and 42 dioceses. Each diocese is a separate legal entity with a clear responsibility for a specific geographical area. The Diocese of Leeds, under the spiritual leadership of the Rt Revd Nick Baines, is divided into 21 deaneries, each with its own Deanery Synod. Within each parish there is a Parochial Church Council, which shares with the parish priest responsibility for the mission of the church in that place, in a similar way to how the Diocesan Bishop shares responsibilities with the Diocesan Synod.

Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The PCC is the elected governing body of an individual parish which broadly is the smallest pastoral area in the Church of England. Typically, each parish has one parish church. The PCC is made up of the incumbent as chair, the churchwardens and a number of elected and ex officio members. Each PCC is a charity and, in compliance with the Charities Act 2011, the majority of PCCs are currently exempt from registration with the Charity Commission.



Parishes

A benefice is a parish or group of parishes served by an incumbent who typically receives a stipend and use of a parsonage house from the diocese for carrying out their duties. A deanery is a group of parishes over which an Area Dean has oversight and an archdeaconry is a group of deaneries for which an Archdeacon is responsible. The Diocese of Leeds has five Archdeacons.

GOVERNANCE

The Diocesan Synod, the statutory governing body of the diocese. The Synod has both ex-officio members and members elected from across the diocese. The Synod has with responsibility for setting the vision and strategy of the diocese, guided by the Leeds Diocesan Board of Finance (LDBF). The Diocesan Synod elected membership is elected every three years, the last general elections having been April – June 2024. The Synod elects six of the 21 Trustees of the LDBF, and ratifies the nomination of a further five members. The



Chair of the House of Clergy and the Chair of the House of Laity of the Diocesan Synod are ex-officio members of the Leeds DBF. The LDBF is a separate legal entity and has clear responsibilities under both company and charity law. Additionally, the LDBF is subject to the direction of the Synod in all its activities, unless such direction is not in accordance with the governing documents or statutory regulations.

Decision-making structure

The Board is the Standing Committee of the Synod and addresses the issues of strategies, policies and priorities (including all financial aspects) needed to implement the overall vision. It is accountable directly to the Synod and includes all the functions of the traditional statutory boards.

Each Episcopal Area Bishop is accountable to the Diocesan Bishop for the delivery of Mission and Ministry within the Area in line with delegated responsibilities laid down in Instruments and other formal measures.

The Diocesan Secretary is accountable for the functions of officers and employed staff in supporting parishes and Area Teams.



Support from the Stewardship Team



Jennifer Robinson

Parish Support Accountant

Beth Vickers-Smith

Stewardship Officer

Janet Edmond

Senior Stewardship Officer

We support parishes throughout the diocese by providing the tools to build and maintain a generous culture in response to God's generosity to us. This is essential for every church to develop sustainable ministry, and also to understand and meet their Parish Share.

Creating an environment of sustained generosity can be difficult. We're here to help you in your journey towards building a generous church and deepening Christian discipleship.

For enquiries relating to Parish Finance, Stewardship & Income Generation please email:

resourcingparishes@leeds.anglican.org

Please follow the links below to discover the types of support we can offer PCCs, Treasurers & Clergy.

[Treasurer Support](#)

[Stewardship and Income Generation](#)

[Parish Giving Scheme](#)



For more helpful resources please scan the QR code or visit linktr.ee/resourcingparishes