Live|Pray|Serve

# Diocesan Synod Update March 2021 – presentation supporting notes

Our context

Over the past 30 years our population in the Diocese of Portsmouth has grown 14% but our church attendees have dropped by 45%. The number of clergy in the diocese has dropped 38% and yet the number of parishes and church buildings has remained broadly static.

Our diminishing number of clergy and laity, worship leaders and officers have been continually stretched further and further to maintain and fund historic ministry structures.

Sustainability has eluded us as the rate of cutting clergy posts has been outpaced by the decline in the number of givers. This is what happens when finance becomes the driver for change and so mission is now the central driver for our vision.

Our vision

Our vision is to Live|Pray|Serve:

* **Live** the Good News of God in Jesus Christ;
* **Pray** on our own and in community to know God’s will, and to;
* **Serve** the people among whom we live and work.

Our purpose

Is to grow in **depth**, **impact** and **number**, so that more people love the Lord their God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength; more people love their neighbours as themselves; and more people join us in going out to make new disciples and to make disciples of all nations.

Our values

Our values determine how we go about fulfilling our vision. We seek to be **courageous, collaborative, generous, resourceful and pioneering**.

Vision transformation journey

We are all on a journey of transformation in the diocese. Visioning exercises that enabled key groups and stakeholders to reflect and pray on what a thriving diocese would look like in five years time were undertaken last November. The Bishop’s senior staff, Bishop’s Council, Area Deans, Lay Chairs and Heads of Department all imagined what this thriving diocese could be.

Following this our deaneries worked with their parishes to develop deanery plans that would look at what sort of structures and ministry deployment would be needed in their areas to enable the vision to be fulfilled. These were subsequently presented by the deanery teams to the Bishop’s senior leadership team at the end of February.

In tandem, members of the senior leadership team have been working with task and finish groups on the four key elements that we need in place to deliver the vision. Alongside this, work has been undertaken with Cappfinity to look at a strengths based approach to how we can empower people to follow their vocations and use their gifts.

Deanery feedback – high level overview

It is clear from all of the deanery proposals that there is much common ground. There is an acceptance of the need for significant change to the way that we have approached our structures and deployment, common themes included:

* Clear shared leadership
* Focal leadership at a congregational and/or church level
* Clear and purposeful local identity
* Mix of lay and ordained, stipendiary and self-supporting ministry
* Shared simplified growth enabling governance
* Need further consultation in each deanery and with local parishes to determine exact make up of groups

Equally we recognise the fear and concerns around:

* loss of local identity and focus
* perceptions around inequality and takeovers
* watering down of theology and churchmanship to the lowest common denominator

Our benefices currently look like

An average benefice currently has one benefice with one to three PCCs and has:

* 1 incumbent
* a ministry team of 1 – 2 people
* 1 – 3 churches
* between 5,000 and 25,000 people living in the area of the benefice
* 4 – 10 schools

The incumbent is all things to all people in the benefice and so is multiskilled and multitasking. The ministry team may include PtOs and lay readers. There are usually multiple traditional services and possibly a fresh expression. Community engagement sometimes take the form of toddler groups, lunch clubs, food backs etc. Engagement with schools is through assemblies and foundation governor support. The structure requires multiple PCCs to manage buildings, finance, safeguarding and other statutory and administrative issues.

Our benefices could look like

The model for ministry going forward could be shaped so that it would have:

* 1 Team Rector
* Ministry teams of 6 to 12 people
* 4 – 8 churches
* 15,000 – 45,000 people living in the area of the benefice
* 4 – 10 schools
* simplified governance structure

The Team Rector role would provide focussed leadership that would enable and develop their team. The ministry team would consist of a range of posts undertaken by ordained, lay, paid and unpaid people. The mixed ecology of congregations will ensure clear local identity and purpose and also enable a breadth of traditional services and newer worshipping communities to thrive such as Eco-churches, Café Church, Messy Churches. This will support increased community engagement and impact that could include:

foodbanks, debt support, job clubs, preschools & toddler groups, creative artistic expressions/groups, Eco and gardening/allotments, sports & wellbeing groups, as well as greater engagement with schools through chaplaincy service, assemblies, lesson support

schools pastors, free school lunch support – during holidays, foundation governor support. The life of the new benefice could be supported by shared governance and administration that would enable joined up leadership to shape vision and give focus, simplified governance to release clergy and lay to focus mission,focussed subcommittees with delegated authority to work in local contexts to keep local identity and autonomy and shared CMS/admin/finance systems.

**Key Elements Summary**

As part of the visioning exercise undertaken by the diocese last year, we talked about the necessary things that we would need to put in place to achieve the vision. The four key elements that were decided upon were Visionary Leadership, Teams on a Mission, Communities of Kingdom Building Disciples and Growth Enabling Structures. Over the past few months, the senior leadership team have led four discussion groups to ascertain what each of these elements look like and what kind of things we might need to do to achieve them.

**Visionary Leadership**

A visionary leader is someone who can share a narrative well, someone who can tell the story, move people, and take them on a journey. It is worth noting the importance in the ministry of Jesus Christ of telling stories in order to both explain and lead people on a journey to a new and better place.

* **Vision & Journey**

A visionary leader is prepared to ask the big questions and have the conversations which help them and others to see the destination and can then describe it to others.

* **Culture & Values**

A visionary leader has a level of self-awareness which gives them confidence in themselves and their communities. This comes from knowing what their values are and keeping an unrelenting focus on these, constantly referring to them in all decisions and actions.

* **People**

Visionary leaders know that the vision, journey, culture, and values are made real and tangible through the people in an organisation. Visionary leaders are able to work with people to identify their gifts and skills and then to free them to develop and use these to make the journey towards the vision.

**Teams on a Mission**

Within the church we use teams in many different ways forms and some of which are more formally recognised than others. As well as ministry teams, we have a number of governance-focussed teams, administrative and buildings teams. These teams are based in parishes, deaneries and across the whole diocese.

The things that are needed to have good teams include:

* Good leadership with a clear vision and purpose
* Has a shared vision and values
* Each member of the teams has a clear role and responsibility
* Makes use of specialism and recognises excellence in others, allowing people to focus on their strengths and preferences
* Team members have high self-awareness and emotional intelligence
* Foster a culture of mutual support
* Feel responsible for shared output or product
* Need to be equipped, enabled and empowered to fulfil their purpose
* Have a culture of celebration and encouragement of each other
* Play together as well as work together

**Communities of Kingdom Building Disciples**

Communities of kingdom building disciples, therefore, need to focus both on growth in the ‘inward’ depth of their discipleship, and the ‘outward’ impact of that discipleship in building the kingdom of God. These ‘inward’ and ‘outward’ dimensions are connected and complementary. Such communities, therefore, need to be organised so that they are:

* **Open** to Christ’s love and to the experience of his Spirit in all that they say, think and do.
* **Understand and practice** the ways that God strengthens Christian discipleship as part of the learning community that is the Church.
* **Confident** in applying faith in daily life, and as good citizens sharing their values with others for the common good.
* **Share** in Christ’s mission of radical inclusion to the wider world by acting and speaking in ways that support the oppressed and build the Kingdom of God.

**Growth Enabling Structures**

A growth enabling structure: -

* is based around a clearly defined purpose & goal aligned to the overall vision which drives the work and dictates the staffing, the use of resources and finances.
* should exist to serve and resource the ‘front line’ with an ethos of seeking to say ‘yes’ and be enabling of those it serves.
* is transparent, easily understood by those within it and those it serves.
* is logical- departments and sections have the same operational and governance structure (with adaptions only if necessary, for the specific nature of their work) and at every level there is an understanding that decisions and activity can impact the life of the diocese in the short, medium and long term.
* reflects the ethos and character of the mission and purpose it serves.
* is effective and measures its effectiveness against the goals.
* has processes and outcomes which are clearly communicated and add value

Ministry Focus

We may believe that our incumbents spend their time relatively evenly focussed across ministries in discipleship (depth), outreach in the community (impact) and evangelisation (number) with a small bit of administration. However, our clergy can find themselves spending a lot of time having to undertake governance and administrative tasks, alongside preparations for services with not as much time as they would like spent on areas of ministry focused on impact or bringing people the good news. Our current model of ministry forces this to happen by requiring our clergy to be all things to all people coupled with increasing administrative, operational, financial and governance burdens being placed on our churches and clergy.

Our benefices could be modelled with an oversight minister doing focussed leadership and team enabling and development, and a ministry team of lay and ordained, stipendiary and self-supporting ministers and workers with shared governance and administration. Team ministries in single parish benefices are the expected structure to enable this.

This would:

* enable people, both lay and ordained, to fully use their gifts and natural strengths
* build leadership capacity through empowering others in teams
* enable teams to grow mission focussed congregations / worshipping communities who will reach out to people in our communities and not just maintain buildings, or existing structures
* enable the thriving of mixed ecologies of worship and church
* enable the use of a shared services model for administration, operations and governance
* be flexible enough to take into account local context, clarify and build on identity and meet needs of the community

We are working with Cappfinity to help us discern what strengths are best for different types of roles. This will enable our clergy and laity to identify what they specifically are called to do and find the right post for them to use their gifts to help build the Kingdom.

Ministry Team Transitions

[note people in red are stipendiary and those in blue are self-supporting]

Moving on from our current model of one incumbent with one parish or multiple parishes in plurality to this new benefice model across the diocese will take a number of years.

Bringing teams together enables speciality/focussed ministries to promote growth in depth, impact and number. That growth then enables further diversity of team with a reduction of dependence on stipendiary ministry in the short to medium term. In the longer term successful growth of the parish may require additional stipendiary posts which by then will be able to be self-funded by the parish itself.

Each parish/parish church has its own context and so will have its own focus. However, each parish could include some of these broad outline roles:

* Oversight minister
* Minister for existing congregations
* Minister for new congregations/worshipping communities
* Minister for children & families
* Minister with responsibility for occasional offices
* Pastoral care lead
* Lay Reader
* Chaplain/focal minister
* Lay worship leader
* Lay pastoral assistant
* Occasional Preacher
* Operations Manager

In order for this to be achievable we need to increase the number of self-supporting leaders, lay and ordained, in the diocese.

Next steps

* Archdeacons have fed back high level thoughts on deanery plans
* Discuss in-depth consultation approach with Area Deans and Lay Chairs to agree best way forward
* Present high-level model principles and deanery plans with Bishop’s Council for discussion and agreement, including timeline for consultation with parishes
* Begin the implementation journey

Prayer

Lord our God, You make all things new.

Inspire our lives with your spirit

Renew our prayer with your grace

Transform our service with your love.

In the renewal of our life may your kingdom flourish

and your church thrive

so that all may come to know and love you

in your Son Jesus Christ.

Amen