

Live|Pray|Serve – Diocesan Vision Next Steps

Since the launch of our original Live|Pray|Serve vision in 2016 we have been on a significant journey. This has not been an easy one and there may have been times when we may have felt like we were making little or slow progress. The current predicament, caused by the impact of COVID-19, has already affected this journey and will no doubt continue to change the course that we are on. What hasn't changed though, is the vision that we started with and the destination that we are heading for; it is just the route that we might want and need to take to get there which may change.

Our vision to be a thriving diocese is formed around three key commitments: to live, to pray, and to serve.

Believing in Jesus Christ as the source of our hope and salvation, we are:

- called to **live** our lives in ways that are formed by his life, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming again. Emboldened by the gift of the Holy Spirit at our baptism, we are sent out into the world to tell and to live the Good News of God in Jesus Christ.
- called to **pray**, on our own and together in community, following the practices of daily life and worship that have shaped Christians through the ages. We are to seek God's will in prayer and to hold each other's needs and the needs of our world on our hearts before God.
- called to love and **serve** the people among whom we live and work, caring for young and old, strong and weak, rich and poor. Speaking prophetically, we are also to seek the kingdom of God among us, and to act as its servants in upholding truth and justice.

We want others to join us in growing 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.

Over recent weeks we have continued to better understand that journey and we have undertaken a number of Live|Pray|Serve events and strands of work, all in connection with our need to ensure that we use our resources effectively to be a thriving diocese. This included the work already being carried out in our deaneries, the recent archdeaconry consultations and the Bishop's Senior Leadership Team continuing a process of reflecting on what it means to be a thriving diocese. This is a journey that we are in the course of sharing and consulting with you on over the coming weeks. We have also been reflecting on how as a diocese we can more effectively consult and engage with deaneries and parishes. This led to a number of recommendations to Bishop's Council which were approved at the last meeting in September 2020. The summary of the agreed proposals is at the end of this document and a copy of the full report can be found on the diocesan website.

Outline Timescale

Given both the current pressures, we are experiencing as a diocese and, more importantly, our continued desire to grow in depth, impact and number we are suggesting the following timescales for the planning process as agreed in those proposals:

1. Deaneries are already looking at how we can make the most effective use of our resources that we have been given. The planning objective being:

The Diocese of Portsmouth under our Live|Pray|Serve strategy aims to be a thriving diocese. We will do that by structuring ourselves and deploying our resources effectively for growth in depth, impact and number. This will mean a new joined up approach as to how we ensure mission and ministry is offered with the resources we have available.

2. Meetings with the Lay Chairs and Area Deans to discuss the new roles descriptions and approach for appointing people to these posts going forward.
3. During November separate sessions will be held with the Area Deans and Lay Chairs across the diocese exploring what it might mean to be a thriving diocese and what are the key elements that we need in place to achieve this?
4. Area Deans and Lay Chairs will then be in a position to lead their Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committees in further developing their plans in the light of the November sessions.
5. In early February 2021 Deanery teams will present their proposed plans to the members of the Bishop's Senior Leadership team, supported by the strategy team from the DBF. This plan will need to include their contextualised vision, their approach and methodology to achieving it, and the resourcing needed to fulfil the priorities under Live|Pray|Serve. A template will be provided to deaneries by the beginning of the first week of November to aid them in developing this and ensure consistency between deaneries.
6. Conversation and refinement of the plans will then take place before we move to formal approval by the DMPC.
7. We are working towards beginning implementation of the new structures and their resourcing and deployment during Spring/Summer 2021

Summary of the Governance and Engagement Working Group proposals

The proposals, which were accepted by Bishop's Council were as follows

1. The **deanery** should be developed by the diocese as the **key level of planning** and the intermediary with the parishes in questions of overall strategy, organisation and financial allocations.
2. **Deanery plans** should be the means by which the diocese and deanery agree the way forward in allocating resources and agreeing how to grow in depth, impact and numbers in each area. These plans must be dynamic, working documents which are under constant review and adaptable according to changing circumstances.
3. **Area deans** should be recruited to the role against a job description, rather than rotating every five years. The resources available to the area dean and the time commitment should be agreed as part of the appointment. A revised job description has been produced and is available on the diocesan website. This change will begin to take place as the new deanery plans are implemented in 2021.
4. The **Lay Chair** of the deanery should be recognised as the key partner of the Area Dean in planning the future of the deanery and supporting the mission of the parishes. There will be a clear job description (also available on the diocesan website), recruitment process for the role and appropriate training.
5. There should be an **agreed and public diocesan framework** to guide future discussions between the diocese, deaneries and parishes about future plans for restructuring churches and parishes. This should be applied to the drawing up of deanery plans in normal times and be adaptable to any significant proposals for restructuring or reorganising churches and parishes. The deaneries are already working on revised deanery plans in light of conversations between Archdeacons and Area Deans and necessary changes in light of the Covid19 pandemic. This framework includes:
 - a clear statement at the outset of the diocese's aims and objectives, the issue to be addressed and the kind of factors which need to be considered by parishes.
 - an agreed and public timescale for the deanery to produce a response, allowing enough time for discussion and consultation.
 - a period of consultation in the parishes, led by the deanery but with representatives of the diocese being willing to attend to answer questions and explain.
 - a deanery plan setting out how it proposes to meet the challenges set by the diocese.
 - a final period of discussion between the deanery and diocese about the plan. The Bishop and Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee retain the right of final decision.