

ENDORSED Version 6: November 2015

St Albans Diocese

Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee: Mission Action Plan

The Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee is a statutory body constituted under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 with the duties and functions set out in Part 2 of the Measure and which are set out below.

This Plan is intended to guide the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee in carrying out its duties and functions. This Plan is based on a ten-year perspective and will be reviewed every five years or in the light of changes in diocesan policy.

The Plan is set in the context of the diocesan vision of ***Living God's Love*** and the three strands of *Going Deeper into God*, *Transforming Communities* and *Making New Disciples*. The Plan takes account of the priorities and steps identified in ***Living God's Love 2020***.

Priorities and recommendations of the Committee are in **bold** in this document.

LOOKING

Context and current information

- 1.01 The DMPC is a statutory body whose primary task is to make better provision for the cure of souls in the Diocese. It carries out this work in line with agreed diocesan policies, in furtherance of the aims of **Living God's Love**: Going deeper into God; Transforming Communities; and Making new Disciples, with the aim that this should lead to spiritual and numerical growth in the worshipping communities within the Diocese.
- 1.02 The Diocese of St Albans stretches from the northern half of the London Borough of Barnet through the Counties of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. For regional government purposes, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire are both in the Eastern Region. One third of the diocese is rural - with the attendant issues of small numbers and small resources, e.g. in Sharnbrook deanery (population 16,000) in north Bedfordshire, 24 of the 28 churches are Grade I listed. There are great contrasts between the more sparsely populated rural districts of east Hertfordshire and north Bedfordshire, and the modern industrial conurbations of Luton and Dunstable (population 258,000), Watford/Rickmansworth (population 162,000) and the north London suburbs. The Diocese includes the new town areas of Stevenage, Hemel Hempstead, Letchworth Garden City, Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield, the larger towns of Bedford, Hitchin, St Albans, Leighton Buzzard and a number of smaller market towns. There are many small and large villages, mostly now with commuter populations, and there is a large minority ethnic population, notably in Bedford, Luton and Watford. Many of these are of the second or third generation, and they are mainly Asian and African Caribbean families, although there are also considerable Italian communities in Bedford and Watford, and Irish and Polish communities in Luton.
- 1.03 The Church of England has an inherited structure based on the parish as a basic unit of geographical coverage and the benefice as the basic unit of ministry. The following table [table 1] sets out the current numbers of parishes, benefices and clergy in the Diocese of St Albans:

Population (Pop) (2012)	1,826,000
Area (sq. miles)	1,120
Parochial Stipendiary Clergy FT (31 Dec 2012)	222
Non-Parochial Stipendiary Clergy (31 Dec 2012)	7
Senior Clergy (31 Dec 2012)	10
Benefices (31 Dec 2012)	199
Parishes (31 Dec 2012)	338
Churches (31 Dec 2012)	404
Single parish cures	122
Multi parish cures	56
Of which, Teams (as defined in Measure)	17
Groups (as defined in Mission & Pastoral Measure)	5

Table 1

1.04 The annual returns of mission and financial statistics from all parishes are used within the diocese and for purposes of national research. Recent research by the Church Growth Unit (“*From Anecdote to Evidence*” summary report 2014) is relevant to the work of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee, as is the information about the context and local situations within this diocese contained in the deanery Stipendiary Staffing Reviews, deanery MAPs and other statistical information.

1.05 Nationally the number of people defining themselves as Anglican is still declining. The same is true in the Diocese of St Albans, as shown in the following table showing the trend in Usual Sunday Attendance:

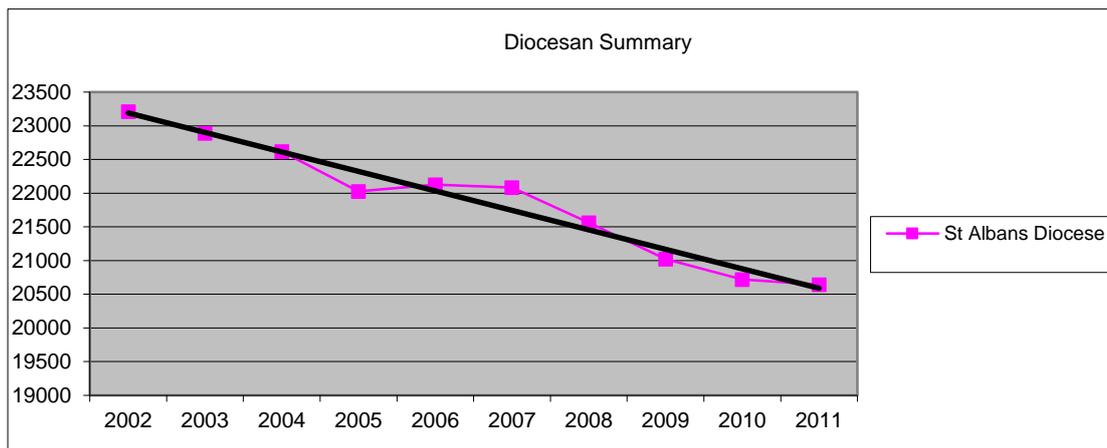


Table 2

1.06 However, an analysis of the spiritual and financial strength of parishes in the diocese suggests that more than half of parishes are financially strong (i.e. able to meet their ministry costs from their income, apart from support via the Parish Share scheme) and a significant minority of parishes are spiritually strong (i.e. growing). The Diocese has historically had a high level of receipts of Parish Share, but relatively low levels of individual giving in proportion to income.

1.07 The Diocese saw significant population growth in the 20th century, with the development of Garden Cities and the post-war New Towns of Stevenage, Hatfield and Hemel Hempstead. This growth continues with developments including Wixams, Great Denham and areas of Leighton-Linslade and new housing areas are expected in the coming years, including Houghton Regis North, Gilston Park and High Leigh Garden Village. Some of these increases in population will require additional ministry, housing and other resources, either in existing parishes and benefices or by the establishment of new worshipping communities. These resources may be found either by reallocating resources from the present parochial structure; or by providing new resources; or both.

1.08 Nationally the number of stipendiary clergy is expected to continue to decline [table 3].

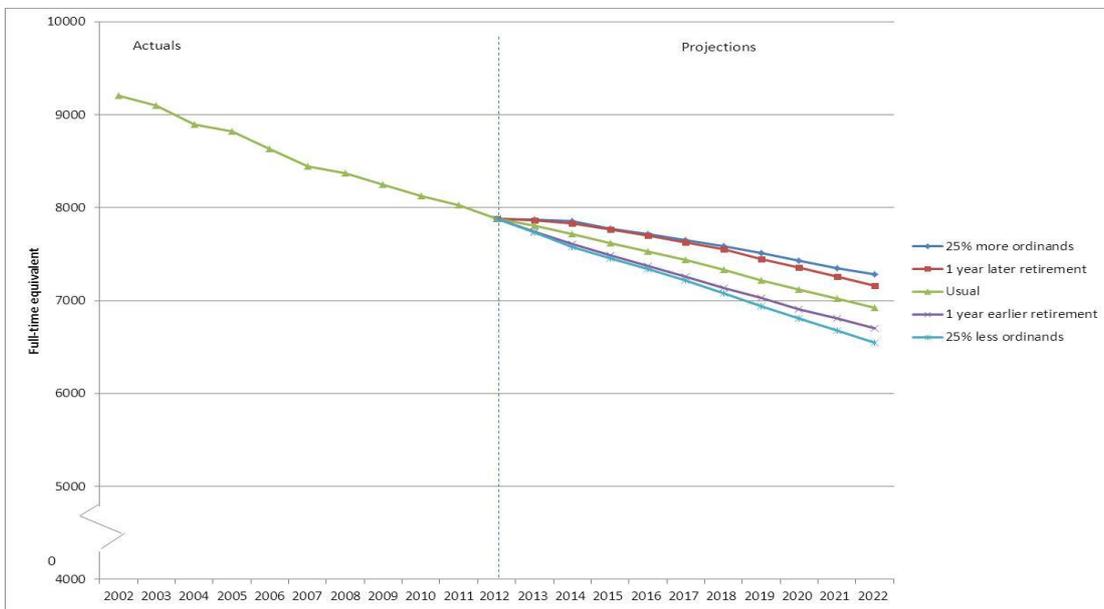


Table 3

1.09 The Diocese has agreed a Ministry Strategy (2012) based on the aspiration of keeping the number of stipendiary clergy deployed in the Diocese at its current level, whilst encouraging increased numbers of vocations to SSM and Reader ministry as well as to stipendiary ministry. From 2014 the Diocese has been developing a Lay Ministry strategy to further the aim of enabling worship to be held in Every Church Every Sunday, as a prerequisite for growth.

1.10 The number of clergy due to retire in the next decade makes it important to “grow” a larger number of Ordinands. The key measure used in the Diocese is ‘number of candidates recommended for training’ i.e. who will start training each year. This has now levelled off at 16 after a rise from around 11. The diocesan target is 20. Some train for 2 years, most for 3, so this means there are around 44 ordinands currently [2015].



Table 4

1.11 Over the past 10 years the pattern of pastoral re-organisation carried out under the auspices of the Committee has been as follows:

Completed Pastoral Schemes		34
Completed Pastoral Orders		27
<i>Including the following categories</i>		
Teams		
	Created	9
	(of which 6 created by 2005; all created by 2009)	
	Enlarged	3
	Reduced number of TVs	2
	Split into separate parishes	2
Union of Benefices		
(including unions involving teams)		
	Schemes	12
	Number of former benefices	26
Groups		
	Dissolved	2
	Created	3
Parishes		
	Created	5
	(1 from conventional district; 4 by dividing single parish)	
	Reduced	5
	(1 by straight union; 4 by church closure)	
Churchyard appropriation		
	Cases	3
Parish boundary alterations		
	Cases	15
Deanery changes		
	Cases	5

Table 5

What the Committee does:

Functions of Mission and Pastoral Committees

[Mission & Pastoral Measure 2011, Part 2]

- (1) *In carrying out any of its functions the mission and pastoral committee shall, without prejudice to section 1, have regard to worship, mission and community as central to the life and work of the Church of England.*
- (2) *In carrying out any of its functions the mission and pastoral committee shall also have regard to:*
 - (a) *the financial implications for the diocese and the Church of England as a whole;*
 - (b) *subject to subsection (5), the need to allocate appropriate spheres of work and to ensure that appropriate conditions of service are enjoyed by those employed or holding office in the diocese and, where relevant, that reasonable remuneration is provided for all those engaged in the cure of souls;*
 - (c) *the traditions, needs and characteristics of particular parishes; and*
 - (d) *any other aspects of the policies of the diocesan synod to which the synod has requested the committee to have regard in discharging its responsibilities.*
- (3) *It shall be the duty of the mission and pastoral committee:*
 - (a) *to make or assist in making better provision for the cure of souls in the diocese as a whole and, to the extent that the committee thinks appropriate, in particular parts of the diocese or in particular parishes;*
 - (b) *from time to time, as the bishop may direct, or as the committee thinks fit, to review arrangements for pastoral supervision and care in the diocese as a whole and, to the extent that the committee thinks appropriate, in particular parts of the diocese or in particular parishes (including sharing agreements in respect of a church or parsonage house and any proposals for sharing agreements);*
 - (c) *from time to time, as the bishop may direct, or as the committee thinks fit, to prepare strategies or proposals for carrying out the committee's functions under paragraphs (a) and (b) for submission to the bishop and the diocesan synod for their approval;*
 - (d) *to maintain an overview of matters relating to church buildings in the diocese and their use, other than matters which are within the jurisdiction of the consistory court or within the functions of the Diocesan Advisory Committee;*
 - (e) *in the case of listed buildings or buildings in a conservation area, to make, in accordance with section 55, every endeavour to find a suitable alternative use or suitable alternative uses for churches which are proposed to be closed and buildings which have been closed for regular public worship in the diocese under a pastoral church buildings scheme and, in the case of any other such building, to develop proposals for the suitable alternative use or uses of the building or for the demolition of the building and the disposal of its site;*
 - (f) *where it considers it desirable, to make recommendations to the bishop in accordance with section 6 or 21 for any of the matters for which provision may be made under this Measure (other than section 50) by a pastoral scheme or order; and*
 - (g) *to carry out any other functions conferred upon a mission and pastoral committee of a diocese by any enactment.*

1.12 The Committee has as its primary task the duty of making better provision for the cure of souls, having regard to worship, mission and community as central to the life and work of the Church of England. The three strands of **Living God's Love** closely match the three priorities of **worship** (going deeper into God), **mission** (making new disciples) and **community** (transforming communities).

1.13 The Committee works to a definition of mission that is God-centred and sees ministry as being about engaging in mission (ministers are therefore missional). Mission is activity to help those unfamiliar with God to become more familiar, in settings outside the church such as schools and workplaces and within the church (such as through providing a welcome, children's work, choir, fostering community and friendship), so pastoral care is an aspect of mission rather than a replacement for it. Component activities of successful mission might be:

- WORSHIP that resonates with the 21st century world, whether by joyously exploiting its variety and new understanding, or by providing a contrasting haven of tranquillity and reflection.
- LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES whether by formal teaching, informal opportunities to share understanding, storytelling, learning by doing, guided observation or any suitable method geared to the likely receptiveness of the learners.
- PRAYER AND REFLECTION to deepen awareness of faith in a personal context
- SOCIAL ACTIVITIES that foster and enhance the sense of community experienced by the faithful so that joining them is seen as attractive.
- COMMUNICATION that reaches people 'where they are at', i.e. through media they are familiar with and at times and places where they may be likely to be receptive.
- NURTURE OF RELATIONSHIPS established through the above.
- SERVICE in support of the community beyond the congregation, whether through personal action or financial giving.
- ALERTNESS to the changing environmental/social/economic/ community context, so that any of these things may be amended to respond to changes.

1.14 *The Committee recognises that the priority of engaging in God's mission is embedded in all its work of making better provision for the cure of souls, in developing policies and considering proposals for pastoral re-organisation.*

DISCERNING

2.01 Pastoral structures and arrangements should serve the needs of worshipping communities and the development of their ministries at particular times and in specific settings. The Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee seeks to support that vision in exercising its primary duty of *making better provision for the cure of souls* by:

Aim 1: Resourcing for mission - the effective **deployment** of stipendiary clergy and other ministry resources and

Aim 2: Identifying and supporting missional structures - by ensuring that the **pastoral organisation** of the places and communities in the diocese is appropriate to meet the three themes of Living God's Love; and

Aim 3: Sharing good practice.

- 2.02 The Committee has regard to the evidence emerging from national research into church growth (*From Anecdote to Evidence, Summary; quotation from Professor David Voas, Data Analysis and Church Profiling strand*) that the factors most associated with growth, both spiritual and numerical, are:
- **The road to growth depends on the context, and what works in one place may not work in another** – So structures appropriate to the local context are needed.
 - **What seems crucial is that congregations are constantly engaged in reflection; churches cannot soar on autopilot** – Intentionality is more important than the context and style of worship of a church
 - **Growth is a product of good leadership (lay and ordained) working with a willing set of churchgoers in a favourable environment** – Growth needs clergy and lay leaders with the appropriate outlook and skills, either in character or learnt.
- 2.03 ***The Committee works at three levels – In identifying the needs and priorities across the whole diocese; in identifying local circumstances and opportunities through the deanery MAP process; and in identifying the needs and priorities of individual parishes, particularly at a vacancy. The Committee’s priorities, setting out the diocesan rationale and policy, should both inform and support local proposals for re-organisation.***
- 2.04 The Committee seeks to work closely with deaneries in the development of proposals pastoral re-organisation and for deployment of ministerial resources. Each deanery is asked to develop a deanery MAP and presented it to the DMPC on a rolling programme. Deaneries are provided with statistical information to be made available and specific issues relevant to a particular deanery will be raised by the Archdeacon as part of the preparation of the MAP.
- 2.05 ***The Committee asks deaneries to pursue their MAP process with enough rigour to achieve a robust analysis and wishes to ensure that opportunities for mission are taken into account in Deanery MAPs, especially through consideration of housing developments, potential church schools (and appropriate clergy support), and future ministry structures.***
- 2.06 ***The Committee will take account of Deanery Mission Action Plans it has received and validated in developing proposals for the deployment of ministerial resources and pastoral re-organisation.***

Aim 1: Resourcing for Mission

- A1.01 The Committee has considered future clergy numbers and the challenge posed by the number of retirements outstripping the number of appointments. The diocesan policy is to maintain the current number of stipendiary clergy in post. Current figures indicate that to replace retiring clergy, 250 ordinands a year would be required nationally. Predictions based on Church of England aspirations would suggest 400 per year.
- A1.02 The Committee considers that it is important to identify the task set, the resources available and the provision required for mission and pastoral work, rather than focusing unduly on overall numbers. For example, ministry resources need to be appropriate to:

- A rural context
- New housing areas
- Enabling the whole people of God
- Engaging with those outside the Church.

A1.03 ***The Committee recognises the importance of encouraging vocations to all forms of lay and ordained ministry in all places and encourages every worshipping community to identify role models among its clergy and lay leaders.***

A1.04 In June 2012 the Diocesan Synod supported a Vision for Ordained and Authorised Ministry which led to the adoption of a Strategy by the Synod in March 2013. The DMPC takes account of the Ministry Strategy in its own work.

Training

A1.05 ***The Committee recognises that most curate training is in large single-parish urban benefices. However, the skills and experience required in rural, multi-parish benefices, new housing areas and fresh expressions demands that curate training is reimagined within different types of parishes and benefices, so that opportunities are created to train curates in mixed contexts.***

Releasing for Mission

A1.06 ***The Committee would encourage consideration to be given to ways of releasing clergy from the burden of administration, for example by the appointment of lay Administrators for benefices or wider groups of rural parishes.***

Resources in different contexts

A1.07 ***The Committee recommends that as part of the development of Living God's Love, consideration should be given to the relative resourcing of parochial ministry in urban, suburban and rural places; non-parochial ministry in chaplaincies and schools; and pioneer ministry in Fresh Expressions, new housing areas and other non-traditional contexts.***

A1.08 Within the framework that emerges from this re-balancing of resources, the Committee will develop and consider proposals for the deployment of ordained and lay ministerial resources taking into account the following principles:

A1.08.1 *A growing Christian presence in each community.*

This will be based on a realistic assessment of the missional health and financial viability of the parish and the benefice or team using the trend of the average weekly attendance in the benefice as a key indicator of the missional health of a parish. An increase over time in lay and ordained vocations should also be a mark of missionally healthy parishes. ***The Committee will make recommendations about proposals for pastoral reorganisation which make better provision for the cure of souls in a particular part of the diocese, or more widely, and which intentionally provide ministerial resources appropriate to the needs of each place.***

A1.08.2 *A preferential option for the poor.*

Whilst the parish share formula recognises, through the use of share factors, the varying abilities of parishes to meet the costs of ministry there will be situations where ability to pay will not reflect ministerial need. The deployment formula remains useful as a guide for determining the distribution of clergy and within this the size of the community, whether in

terms of population or church attendance, should remain as an indicator of ministerial need as well as financial wealth. (The Deployment formula was approved in March 1997, by the Diocesan Synod, after consultation with the Deaneries.) The formula assesses the “workload” of each parish and benefice. The total workloads are divided over the total number of stipendiary posts to produce an average Deployment Indicator for a benefice with one stipendiary post. This average DI is currently 123 and is expected to rise to 127 by 2021. ***The Committee will continue to use the formula as a guide to its assessment of the appropriate deployment of stipendiary posts.***

A1.08.3 *Resourcing and cascading church growth.*

This recognises the gospel principle of being accountable to one another, including offering our resources for the common good. Parishes need to be financially viable and will be expected to pay the agreed parish share in full by regular instalments. In addition it is expected that there will be a commitment to stewardship reflected in the trend of levels of giving within the parish. ***The Committee will take note of a parish’s ability and willingness to meet its parish share in full.***

Suspension of the patron’s right of presentation

A1.09 Under Common Tenure it is possible for a priest to be appointed to a post where there is a clear expectation of pastoral reorganisation, by providing for the priest

- To work co-operatively with other parishes in an informal cluster
- To participate in a formal Group ministry
- To be aware that proposals for pastoral reorganisation affecting the benefice are expected to be brought forward within the next 5 years; or
- To undertake a parish role in tandem with a sector or diocesan post.

Nevertheless, there are some circumstances in which, for legal reasons, it is appropriate for the Bishop to suspend the patron’s right of presentation to a particular benefice and to appoint a priest-in-charge. ***The Committee will only recommend suspension where necessary for legal or pastoral reasons; will keep suspensions of presentation under review; and will encourage the bringing forward of proposals for pastoral reorganisation in such cases as soon as circumstances allow.***

Case Study

In Buntingford Deanery, the rural context meant that there was a small number of clergy working across a wide area. This meant isolation and difficulties of mutual support and cover during holidays or illness, which led to two serious clergy breakdowns. Over a period, every benefice was suspended to enable the pastoral organisation of the deanery to be reviewed. Changes were made to the grouping of parishes into benefices to create benefices of a sustainable size. An informal trial was carried out of collaborative ministry in clusters in the western and eastern parts of the deanery. In 2013 the East Buntingford Group Ministry came into being, providing a framework for the clergy in the group to work collaboratively across the area and to meet regularly for mutual support. The introduction of the Group Ministry meant all the suspensions of presentation were lifted, giving clergy and parishioners a sense of confidence that the structure was now settled. The clergy and parishes of the East Buntingford area are now able to move forward together in ministry and mission.

A1.10 The DMPC notes that the diocesan policy is to maintain the number of clergy in stipendiary ministry with a modest increase in the long term and a more even age spread. It is expected

that by adopting the above policy on deployment, the consequential pastoral reorganisation may lead to the availability of 6-8 posts in the next 5 years. These additional resources of stipendiary ministry will be allocated according to the following five categories, with an emphasis on the first two:

- New housing areas
- New mission priorities
- Benefices where the DI indicates a case for further stipendiary ministry
- Part-time posts where church growth is happening and an increase in the provision of stipendiary ministry can be afforded
- Benefices that can afford further stipendiary provision that is not supported by DI calculations

New housing areas and new mission priorities

A1.11 The Committee notes that the population of the diocese is expected to increase by 6% by 2021 (1.8m to 1.91M). “New housing areas” are defined as areas where the County/Unitary Authority development plans show a planned increase in dwellings of 2,000 or more within a parish. A number of developments within the Diocese are expected to create entirely new villages and towns which will require additional ministerial resources. In other places, significant additional housing within the existing parochial structures requires the engagement of the existing clergy and lay leaders, who need to be equipped for work in building new communities. ***The Committee recognises the missional opportunities in new housing areas and recommends that consideration is given to shifting an appropriate proportion of ministerial resources from existing parishes to areas of population growth.***

A1.11.1 The Committee will work with the Development Plans Monitoring Group to:

- seize opportunities for mission in the early stages in the life of a new community
- identify the need for additional ministerial resources such as the appointment of pioneer ministers and/or the training and support of parochial clergy and lay leaders (including lay leaders involved in planting/seeding new worshipping communities), so that the DBF and Bishop’s Council can consider the financial resourcing and budgeting implications
- consider the need for buildings, including appropriate alternatives to the provision of new church buildings, e.g. use of school or community buildings, or shared provision with other churches

A1.11.2 Therefore discussions will begin at the earliest opportunity with:

- local authorities about the provision of church schools, parsonage houses and places of worship, where appropriate,
- other diocesan bodies including the Bishop’s Council, DBF and CfDM, to make provision for additional ministerial resources or training and support needs, and
- other churches regarding ecumenical provision.

A1.12 ***Similarly, there is a need to identify new mission priorities and to consider shifting an appropriate proportion of ministerial resources from existing parishes to places and initiatives that are a mission priority.*** These may be:

- An existing unit of mission (e.g. parish or benefice) designated as a mission priority or turn-around ministry with the appointment of a Mission Priest (2 such posts are currently designated [2015])
- A Mission Initiative or Fresh Expression

- A1.13 Pioneer Ministers are trained for a pioneer role in areas which are 'un-churched', e.g. new housing estates, or unchurched sections of the community. The Committee supports the deployment of Pioneer Ministers in appropriate contexts and will encourage this approach, seeking to identify places for the deployment of such ministers.

Lay Ministry

- A1.14 The Committee supports the Ministry Strategy aim of grow the total number of active SSMS, Readers and other Lay Ministers and lower the overall age distribution, but also encourages active consideration of voluntary deployment or regular secondment of Readers from their home parish to nearby places without this resource, perhaps for one Sunday in the month, while maintaining their natural links with their own church family. The Committee also notes the current policy of developing lay ministry including Local Ministry Teams, both mandated and informal, as well as lay discipleship.

Case Study

St Anne's with St Christopher's, Luton became the first of the new- form of Local Ministry Development Team in the Diocese when they renewed their mandate in 2013. They have set themselves some real challenges for the next four years: having oversight of the reviewing and renewing of the parish Action Plan, continuing to train and develop the Bereavement Befriender Team, researching a local church café for St Anne's, working on the parish website and involving members of the LMDT in leading worship at St Christopher's.

Discipleship

- A1.15 The Committee supports the work being done to encourage and support a variety of recognized forms of lay ministry, including leading worship, prayers, readings and music; baptism and marriage preparation; work with children and young people; pastoral ministry; and other areas of ministry. The Committee will take account of the available resources of other forms of ministry, including resources of retired clergy, in reviewing arrangements for pastoral supervision and care in particular parts of the diocese.

Ecumenical co-operation

- A1.16. Ecumenical co-operation in the context of mission initiatives and in response to new housing developments is encouraged by the DMPC, where appropriate, and the Committee also supports the continuing flourishing of existing formal Local Ecumenical Partnerships.

Aim 2: Identifying and supporting missional structures

- A2.01 The Committee has considered what evidence is there about the effectiveness of traditional structures (parishes/single- and multi-parish benefices/teams/groups etc) and fresh expressions of ministry in the Diocese and more widely. It has also looked at how its role in pastoral planning can be more effective, e.g. considering new housing developments.

- A2.02 The Ministry Strategy recognises the importance of the parish system and aims to maintain and grow a Christian presence in every community through parishes and benefices which are missionally healthy and financially viable. Nevertheless, the DMPC would encourage consideration to be given to the balance between the parish system (the inherited structures) and emerging, often non-geographical, units of mission. ***The Committee will work with the following formal and informal structures to provide the appropriate missional structure in each context:***

Benefices

- A2.03 The Bishop's Council has agreed that whilst the basic unit of administration is the parish, the preferred unit of ministry is the benefice - a group of one or more parishes which together will sustain the ministry of at least one stipendiary priest.

Co-operation within multi-parish benefices

- A2.04 The Committee will provide guidance on working in multi-parishes benefices, for example by co-ordinating separate PCC meetings or by establishing a Joint PCC.

Case Study

The three parishes of the benefice of Standon, The Mundens and Sacombe hold their PCC meetings at the same time in a local school. They break into separate meetings for formal business and then re-convene to discuss matters of common concern. This frees up time and energy which the priest and PCC members can use to focus on developing ministry and mission across the benefice.

Teams

- A2.05 Teams are seen as an enabler of collaborative working and may be considered, for example:
- where there is an identifiable community or where there is social and geographical cohesion with a particular focal point, e.g. a town, or
 - in a large but separately identifiable community, with more than one place of worship (e.g. Dunstable), or
 - based on a market town where the rural community looks naturally to the town for the focus of its community life (e.g. Tring), or
 - where there would be advantages in providing mutual support over a number of smaller parishes.
 - It is envisaged that in some circumstances there may be two clergy in a team, although the norm is likely to involve a minimum of three.

Groups

- A2.06 Groups provide a non-hierarchical framework for individual beneficed clergy to provide mutual support and to minister in each other's' benefices to make better provision for the cure of souls in each place. They may be considered for example:
- in an area of rural benefices with clearly defined parish and benefice boundaries, or
 - in part of a town where different benefices have varied and distinctive churchmanship, but collaborative working is desired for mutual benefit

Other models

A2.07 Alongside traditional parish life, the need to support new initiatives as set out in A1.11 and A1.12 above calls for alternative models in response to a rapidly changing culture. ***The Committee will support and encourage emerging mission initiatives and consider the appropriate framework for exploration, support and authorisation, taking into account particularly the issues of financial support and financial responsibility; staffing and associated housing; legal and administrative structures; and representation in the life of the Church of England.*** These may include:

A2.07.1 *Conventional Districts*

Conventional district agreements provide a light-touch approach to the development of a new Anglican worshipping community in a defined geographical area. They can provide the structures of a parish (PCC, electoral roll, authorisation of public worship, separate financial structure) for a period, after which the conventional district may either be reabsorbed into an existing parish or parishes or may become a new parish. They may be appropriate to consider for:

- an area of new housing development
- an existing worshipping community with a distinctively different style or churchmanship from that of the parish church

A2.07.2 *Bishop's Mission Orders*

Bishop's Mission Orders provide another light-touch approach to the development of a new worshipping community, which may not necessarily be geographically based or solely Anglican, for example:

- a worshipping community based around a sector of the community: young people; people sharing the same employment; a virtual church
- a worshipping community gathered from a wide geographical area, crossing a number of benefice, deanery or even diocesan boundaries
- A worshipping community with a different style or churchmanship from the "host" parish church

Case Study

Within the Ouzel Valley Team, Leighton Buzzard PCC wanted to engage with people moving into a large new housing area to the south of the town and promoted the appointment of a Team Vicar who is also a Pioneer Minister, living in an existing diocesan-owned house in the area. The minister began offering drop-in sessions and informal worship in his home and in a community house and developed a new congregation which has moved into the newly-built satellite primary school. The mission initiative has been designated a Conventional District and the new worshipping community has a PCC within the area of the Team. This provides a supportive structure for the emerging congregation, which now regularly numbers around 55-60 people, mostly not previously members of a local church.

A2.07.3 *Local Area Mission Partnerships*

A LAMP is a local grouping which may include a benefice or benefices; a parish or parishes; schools; chaplaincies, fresh expressions and/or informal ecumenical co-operation. The members of the partnership will be identified locally and may change over time. They will make a declaration – the Statement of Intent - to meet and pray for each other regularly and to work together as appropriate in their context. The Statement of Intent will set out

the purpose of the LAMP, its current members and the way the partnership will work. ***Deaneries are encouraged, as a priority in LGL2020, to consider what fruitful mission partnerships, whether formal or informal, may exist in their local area.***

Aim 3: Sharing good practice

A3.01 The Committee will actively seek ways to share good practice in parishes and deaneries (Living God's Love 2020 priority 3: Supporting each other to Live God's Love) and in particular will:

- Use the diocesan website for deaneries to learn of other good examples from deanery MAPs and initiatives
- Establish resources for parishes and deaneries, to be made available via the diocesan website, for example concerning the flexible use of existing legislation
- Develop ways of communicating better on issues of pastoral re-organisation, including the needs and priorities across the whole diocese; local circumstances and opportunities identified through the deanery MAP process; and the needs and priorities of individual parishes, particularly at a vacancy and as identified in parish MAPs.

Buildings as Resources for Mission

Churches

4.01 ***The Committee supports the principles that church buildings should be used regularly for worship, widely and creatively for other purposes and should be kept open as far as practicable.*** It notes the following initiatives which may contribute to fulfilling these aims.

Every Church Every Sunday

4.01.1 The Bishop of St Albans has declared the intention that every church building should have an act of worship every Sunday, preferably at the same time each week.

Keeping churches open

4.01.2 Parishes are encouraged to make provision for church buildings to be open at other times as far as practicable.

Maintaining church buildings

4.01.3 Parishes are encouraged to maintain their church buildings and to use them creatively as enablers of the church's worship and mission. This may include scope for buildings to become multi-purpose centres. Expenditure on building maintenance should be seen as only part of a parish's expenditure on worship and mission. Funds for such expenditure can often be raised from and by those in the local community with an interest in heritage.

4.02 In some cases, it may not be possible to continue to maintain a building. ***The Committee will work with the Diocesan Advisory Committee and other agencies to identify solutions that enable the church building or part of it to remain open as a centre of mission and worship. If no such solution is found and closure is necessary, the Committee and the Diocese will work***

- ***with the national Church, to find an appropriate and sustainable alternative use for the closed church, and***
- ***with the parish to ensure that worship, pastoral care and mission continue.***

Housing

- 4.03 The Committee recommends that the retention of houses following pastoral reorganisation should be considered, along with other factors, as a proportionate and strategic way to enable the deployment of curates.

Schools

- 4.04 The Committee recognises the importance of schools as a context for mission. All types of school and educational institution, whether or not with a church foundation or ethos, provide scope for building partnerships with parishes and for outreach to and support of young people. The Committee therefore recommends:

4.04.1 ***That the Committee's constitution should be reviewed to provide for a member of the DBE be appointed to serve on the DMPC.***

4.04.2 ***That deaneries should be asked to consider the missional opportunities of work with schools and other educational institutions as part of the deanery MAP and to consider if the ministry resources for this are already in place.***

PLANNING

Matters for further research

- 5.01 *Impact of pastoral re-organisation:*
To research Mission Statistics for parishes affected by schemes for team and group ministries and/or union of benefices over the past 10 years
- 5.02 *Numbers and spread of youth workers* in parishes, deaneries, schools and other contexts

Summary of recommendations

Recommendations to other diocesan bodies

- 6.01 The Committee recommends that, consideration should be given to the relative resourcing of parochial ministry in urban, suburban and rural places; non-parochial ministry in chaplaincies and schools; and pioneer ministry in Fresh Expressions, new housing areas and other non-traditional contexts and to identifying the necessary financial resources, where there is no income for these new contexts via Parish Shares.
- The Committee recognises the missional opportunities in new housing areas and recommends that consideration is given to shifting an appropriate proportion of ministerial resources from existing parishes to areas of population growth
 - Similarly, there is a need to identify new mission priorities and to consider shifting an appropriate proportion of ministerial resources from existing parishes to places and initiatives that are a mission priority.
- 6.02 The Committee recommends that its constitution should provide for a member of the DBE be appointed to serve on the DMPC.

Recommendations to deaneries and parishes

- 6.03 Deaneries are encouraged, as a priority in Living God's Love 2020, to consider what fruitful mission partnerships, whether formal or informal, may exist in their local area.
- 6.04 **Living God's Love 2020** includes as one of four priority areas "*Renewing the life of deaneries as communities of mission partnerships*" and the deanery MAP is a vital tool for this. The Committee asks deaneries to pursue their MAP process with enough rigour to achieve a robust analysis and wishes to ensure that opportunities for mission are taken into account in Deanery MAPs, especially through consideration of Fresh Expressions, housing developments, the missional opportunities of work with schools; potential church schools (and appropriate clergy support), and future ministry structures.

Priorities for the Committee's work

- 7.01 The Committee recognises that the priority of engaging in God's mission is embedded in all its work of making better provision for the cure of souls, in developing policies and considering proposals for pastoral re-organisation.
- 7.02 The Committee recognises the importance of encouraging vocations to all forms of lay and ordained ministry in all places and encourages every worshipping community to identify role models among its clergy and lay leaders.
- 7.03 The Committee will make recommendations about proposals for pastoral reorganisation which make better provision for the cure of souls in a particular part of the diocese, or more widely, and which intentionally provide ministerial resources appropriate to the needs of each place.
- 7.04 The Committee will work with a range of formal and informal structures to provide the appropriate missional structure in each context.
- 7.05 The Committee will support and encourage emerging mission initiatives and consider the appropriate framework for exploration, support and authorisation, taking into account particularly the issues of financial support and financial responsibility; staffing and associated housing; legal and administrative structures; and representation in the life of the Church of England.
- 7.06 The Committee will actively seek ways to share good practice in parishes and deaneries.

November 2015

Emma Critchley, DMPC Secretary