

PART 1 – THE LIFE OF OUR CHURCH

We believe that a good place to start any reflective process is with your parish profile, particularly if you have worked on this for the appointment of a new incumbent in the last two or three years. This document contains a lot of information not just about your community, but also about your vision, strengths, weaknesses and priorities.

Some facts about ourselves *

** Most of this information above is collected each year by the Diocese as Statistics for Mission and Finance. Please contact Ruth Wilson in STEM (01865 208252) who can provide you with a print out of this information*

What is the population of your benefice / parish?					
What other denominations are there in your locality?					
	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
What is your usual Sunday attendance?					
What is your usual weekday attendance?					
What are your Electoral Roll figures?					
How many adults/children were baptised?					
How many people were confirmed?					
How many couples were married?					
How many funerals, cremations or internments took place?					

Parish Share

	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
What has been your parish share allocation for each of the past five years?					
How much of this have you been able to pay?					

Sustaining the sacred centre

What is your pattern of Sunday and weekday worship on an average month?

How would you describe the quality and vitality of your worship?

In what ways does your church enable children and/or young people to worship in a way that is relevant to them, whether in their own groups or in all-age services?

How does your church enable or support people in the growth and discipline of their prayer life?

How do you engage with the Bible, both within worship and across the rest of the week?

How would you describe the outward facing, living out of people's faith in your church?

Are you considering any new or revised worship in the next 12 months? If so, what?

Creating vibrant Christian communities

How does your church congregation or church community have fun together?

How would you describe the quality and depth of relationships within your church community?

How does your church community express concern and service to those in need within your church?

How would you describe the attitude to giving in your church? Do you have a strategy for stewardship? How would you describe its effectiveness?

How would you describe your church's attitude to change or accepting new or different ways of doing things?

In what ways is your church working alongside other Christian denominations in your locality and other churches in your deanery?

Making disciples

What opportunities are there to help people of all ages in your church to grow in their faith?

What, in particular, is your ministry / ministries to children, young people and / or families?

How would you describe your ministry of welcome? How easy do newcomers find it to become part of your Christian community?

How would you describe the balance between the time people are spending 'running the church' and the time spent in the community or social networks making and building relationships (*think of a pair of old-fashioned weighing scales*)?

Do you have a strategy for growing new disciples / new members of your church? What is it and how would you describe its effectiveness?

What do you do to help people explore the basics of the Christian faith (groups like Alpha, Emmaus for instance)?

What other opportunities are there for people of all ages in your community to discover and explore faith?

Shaping confident, collaborative leadership

How would you describe your church's attitude to the terms lay ministry, collaborative ministry or shared leadership?

How are people's gifts and skills identified, encouraged, developed and released in your church?

How many people are involved in lay ministry and what do they do?

Looking at your lay ministry, how much of it is Sunday or worship focused?

Do you have a vision or plans for shared leadership and ministry teams? What are they?

How are the gifts of children or young people encouraged and used in the life of your church?

Making a difference in the world

How is the church known for its interest or involvement within the local community?

What are the outward expressions of the church's care and service in the wider community?

How does your church demonstrate an active and informed interest in the wider world (e.g. Fairtrade, environmental concerns, campaigning, civic occasions etc)?

What do you do to help equip lay people for their ministry in their daily lives (e.g. the world of work, parenting)?

What support financially do you give to people or organisations working to alleviate social needs such as poverty, injustice, disasters in the UK or across the world?

This is a confidential questionnaire for use as widely as you decide. You may find it produces interesting variations in response if you ask people of all ages to fill it in. A simplified version for use with children is also available: see www.oxford.anglican.org/children.

Please answer the questions below, circling the expression which most closely matches your view

1 Sustaining the sacred centre

Does the worship of your church inspire, encourage and deepen your faith?

hardly at all very occasionally sometimes quite often regularly all the time

Does the worship of your church enable you to relate the faith you celebrate on Sunday to the life you lead on Monday?

hardly at all very occasionally sometimes quite often regularly all the time

Does your church help you to grow and develop in your prayer life?

hardly at all very occasionally sometimes quite often regularly all the time

2 Creating vibrant Christian communities

I feel I use my gifts and skills in the life of the church

hardly at all very occasionally sometimes quite often regularly all the time

How often do you have the opportunity to build deeper relationships with other people in your church?

hardly at all very occasionally sometimes quite often regularly all the time

How often does your church engage with Christians in other parts of the world?

hardly at all very occasionally sometimes quite often regularly all the time

3 Making disciples

Does your church help you to grow in your faith?

hardly at all very occasionally sometimes quite often regularly all the time

I think our church’s ministry with children and young people enables them to grow in their faith

hardly at all very occasionally sometimes quite often regularly all the time

3 Making disciples (*cont*)

How often does your church seek ways to share the Christian faith in your local community?

hardly at all *very occasionally* *sometimes* *quite often* *regularly* *all the time*

How often does your church run any groups to help people explore the Christian faith (Alpha, Emmaus etc)?

hardly at all *very occasionally* *sometimes* *quite often* *regularly* *all the time*

4 Shaping confident, collaborative leadership

The leadership in our church offers a clear vision and direction for the future

hardly at all *very occasionally* *sometimes* *quite often* *regularly* *all the time*

The leadership in my church is shared:

hardly at all *very occasionally* *sometimes* *quite often* *regularly* *all the time*

I feel the leadership of my church encourages and develops everyone in their gifts and skills

hardly at all *very occasionally* *sometimes* *quite often* *regularly* *all the time*

When people in our church talk about lay ministry, they really mean helping with church services

hardly at all *very occasionally* *sometimes* *quite often* *regularly* *all the time*

5 Making a difference in the world

Does your church seek opportunities to serve the wider community?

hardly at all *very occasionally* *sometimes* *quite often* *regularly* *all the time*

When people in our community think about our church they feel it is a positive influence

hardly at all *very occasionally* *sometimes* *quite often* *regularly* *all the time*

I would describe our church as being generous when it comes to the needs of the poor or disadvantaged

hardly at all *very occasionally* *sometimes* *quite often* *regularly* *all the time*

This is a confidential questionnaire for use as widely as you decide

Please answer the questions below, circle the number which best matched your experience of your church. To help you with this,

- 1 = hardly at all
- 5 = sometimes
- 10 = all the time

1 Sustaining the sacred centre

Does the worship of your church inspire, encourage and deepen your faith?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Does the worship of your church enable you to relate the faith you celebrate on Sunday to the life you lead on Monday?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Does your church help you to grow and develop in your life of prayer?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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2 Creating vibrant Christian communities

I feel I use my gifts and skills in the life of the church

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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How often do you have the opportunity to build deeper relationships with other people in your church?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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How often does your church engage with Christians in other parts of the world?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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3 Making disciples

Does your church help you to grow in your faith?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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I think our church’s ministry with children and young people enables them to grow in their faith

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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3 Making disciples (cont)

How often does your church seek ways to share the Christian faith in your local community?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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How often does your church run any groups to help people explore the Christian faith (Alpha, Emmaus etc)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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4 Shaping confident, collaborative leadership

The leadership in our church offers a clear vision and direction for the future

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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The leadership in my church is shared

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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I feel the leadership of my church encourages and develops everyone in their gifts and skills

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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When people in our church talk about lay ministry, they really mean helping with church services

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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5 Making a difference in the world

Does your church seek opportunities to serve the wider community?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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When people in our community think about our church they feel it is a positive influence

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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I would describe our church as being generous when it comes to the needs of the poor or disadvantaged

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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PART 3 – WHAT NEXT?

If you have done Parts 1 and 2, you have now collected a great deal of important information about the life, mission and ministry of your church. The challenge now is to listen and carefully interpret what has been said. How might this happen?

We think that the PCC / DCC are probably best placed to work with the findings of these questionnaires, but probably a small group will initially need to go through all the information and present a report. If you are in a multi-parish benefice, there will be the additional perspective of what you have learnt about what you have in common (which may offer a shared response) and what is unique to each community.

Here are some questions you might find helpful:

- **What seem to be key themes which are emerging – both good and not so good**
- **What does this reveal about our strengths and weaknesses?**
- **What is affirming or reaffirming about the information and responses which we would want to celebrate?**
- **What is challenging about the information and responses which needs prayer for strength?**
- **What is disturbing about the information and responses which we might want to seek God's forgiveness for?**
- **What priorities emerge from this process and what can we realistically achieve in the next 12, 24 or 36 months?**

What help do you need to take this to the next step?

You might want to ask the Area Dean, Lay Chair or Parish Development Adviser to work with you on the responses to the process.

Having identified priorities, there may be a church in your deanery or a nearby deanery that has tackled this aspect of ministry or issue already and may be further ahead and able to assist you think about it.

You may need to access some resources or information from organisations that specialise in the area(s) identified. Most of these organisations can be found on the web, but if you are not sure where to start, your Parish Development Adviser may well be able to point you in the right direction.

Celebrating and agreeing priorities

It is important to maintain perspective in a reflective process like this. We suspect that there will be many more areas to celebrate and affirm than areas where you feel you are failing. It is important that we take time in the life of our church to stop and give thanks. You might like to think about holding a special act of worship in which the whole church could do this.

At the end of this resource, you will find a sample sheet which could be used at the end of the PCC meeting which records those areas to be affirmed and celebrated and the priorities for the coming months. This enables you to keep a record and look back in the future to see how you are doing. If you repeat the reflective process in years to come, you will be able to compare how your church has continued to grow and develop.

HEALTH CHECK FOR CHURCHES – CELEBRATIONS, PLANS and PRIORITIES

In the light of our health check, we want to celebrate and affirm the following aspects of our life, mission and ministry

The following key areas were identified for new or ongoing development over the next three years.

AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT	PROPOSED ACTION TO BE TAKEN		What support / resource / help do we need to achieve this?
	in next 18 months	over next 3 years	

Signed (on behalf of the PCC)

