

A MISSION ACTION PLAN FOR THE DORCHESTER ARCHDEACONRY.

INTRODUCTION

This plan has been formed out of discussions held with Area Deans and Lay Chairs on several occasions, most recently at a residential in September 2014. It has grown out of the long process of deanery mission action planning since 2007 and seeks to reflect the needs included in deanery plans and, through them, Parish Mission Action Plans. The Dorchester Archdeaconry works on the basis that the parish and benefice is the key area of mission, and that the deanery, archdeaconry and diocese are there to provide focus, support and resources to help meet the needs of mission locally. In addition, we recognise and support the ministry of lay and ordained chaplains across a whole range of institutions, such as the NHS, Police, Schools, Prisons, Hospitals and Hospices.

At the heart of this plan, and underpinning all the goals and action that follow, is the Diocesan strategy *Living Faith*, with its vision for the transformation of all human life under God. The purpose is to join with God in creating a caring, sustainable and growing Christian presence in every part of the Diocese of Oxford, enabling every Christian and every Christian community to live and share the love of God, seen in the life of Jesus Christ. The five strands that make up *Living Faith* are, we believe, reflected in the goals below. Our deepest desire is to see all our churches –large, small, successful, struggling, rural, urban, single or multi-parish – to flourish and grow, and for all to know they are supported by Bishop, Archdeacon and Parish Development Adviser through prayer, appropriate resourcing, and encouragement. *Please see Appendix A for a table of statistical information by deanery.*

A key aspect of parish life is pastoral care, and meeting the needs of people who come for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals. Following the national church's recent initiative in the Weddings Project, and now through the Funerals and Baptisms Projects, we have become aware of the challenge to the church's ministry in these areas from other agencies. We believe it is important to develop and sustain these vital areas of the church's local ministry and mission. The inclusion of wedding and funeral ministry under 'sustainability' below is not to imply they are simply income opportunities. Rather, they are a mission and pastoral opportunity, through which the local church may grow. *Please see Appendix B for the numbers of Funerals and Marriages in our Archdeaconry in recent years.*

There are significant challenges and opportunities before us in the next five years: huge new communities and housing; the need to develop work with schools and young people; the challenge of rural multi-parish life; opportunities to engage ecumenically; and financial sustainability. In partnership with the other archdeaconries in the diocese, we offer this plan in support of deaneries and parishes as we seek to grasp the opportunities and meet the challenges, praying that God will bless us all in his service.

AIM

The aim of this plan is to provide focus for mission and evangelism across the deaneries, benefices and parishes of the Archdeaconry.

OUR ARCHDEACONRY'S GOALS.

IN THE FIVE YEARS TO 2019 WE SHALL BE

1. Engaging with new communities and new housing, in liaison with the Diocesan New Communities Group.
2. Building children's and youth work in our churches, and with secondary schools, in conjunction with the Oxford Archdeaconry and the County Council.
3. Involved in the development and implementation of the diocesan rural strategy.
4. Enabling the promotion of partnership working across the Archdeaconry.
5. Looking for opportunities for mission to and with the scientific communities, working alongside the Oxford Archdeaconry.
6. Enhancing the ecumenical potential of our county.
7. Addressing issues of financial sustainability.

WE SHALL BE WORKING TOWARDS THE REALISATION OF OUR GOALS THROUGH THESE PRIORITIES:

1. **Engaging with new communities and new housing that the church may be a vibrant presence there.**

We shall make this a reality by:

- Membership of the Diocesan New Communities Group by the Archdeacon or her representative.
- Annual review of the Property Portfolio.
- Purchasing houses on Great Western Park Didcot, and Kingsmere Bicester and making other strategic reallocations.
- Strategic appointments of workers to lead this, such as Church Army Evangelists, and bidding for a development post for Great Western Park at Didcot.
- Communication of good practice.

2. **Providing for youth work and secondary schools that those between 11 and 18 may gain an appreciation of Christian values and come to faith.**

We shall make this a reality by:

- The Bishop exploring with Area Deans and Lay Chairs their vision for models of engagement with secondary schools, and to facilitate discussion

with the Diocesan Board of Education regarding resourcing this. By 30/11/15.

- The PDA discussing the current thinking about, and provision of, Youth and Children's Work with the Diocesan Youth and Children's Advisers and, with the Archdeacon, to arrange a discussion at the Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committee by the end of 2015.
- Encouraging engagement with the Diocesan initiative *Child and Youth Friendly Church Awards*.
- Encouraging the further development of *Open the Book* and other initiatives to engage with children in schools.
- Encouraging engagement with the internet and social media from a Christian context.

3. Involvement in the Diocesan Rural Strategy to enhance the rural church across the Archdeaconry. See Appendix C for the Rural Strategy.

We shall make this a reality by:

- The PDA leading the Diocesan Rural Strategy Steering Group.
- Strengthening finance – the PDA working with the Finance Department and Stewardship Adviser in reviewing the current level of giving/head/week and agreeing with Area Deans and Lay Chairs a realistic percentage rise to aim for. By 01/11/15.
- Supporting schools – the PDA to have initial discussions with the Education Department to work on a paper together.
- Widening the use of church buildings – The Archdeacon to include questions on church usage beyond worship in her Articles of Enquiry in 2016.
- Raising vocations: in discussion with the DDOs, and the devising of a 'Vocations' Strategy for all God's people, lay and ordained, to explore the possibility of having a 'Vocations Encourager' for each deanery and to trial in two deaneries. By 01/03/17.
- Addressing issues of governance specific to rural multi-parish benefices. Promotion of the Rural Consultation day on governance issues in February 2015. Two or three pilots of different models for Multi-Parish Benefices to be in place by 01/05/16.
- Addressing issues relating to Clergy Wellbeing: The PDA to assess the results of the 2014 survey and its successor in 2017. The PDA to consider provision for this in CMD.
- Training for people in leadership roles, including Church Wardens, Treasurers, PCC Secretaries, Pastoral Visitors, and Worship Leaders. A review of training provision to be undertaken during 2018 by the PDA.

4. Engage with Bishop Colin in leading the promotion of partnership working with a range of agencies across the Archdeaconry.

We shall make this a reality by:

- Shaping the Bishop's diary for each year to enable him to spend time with Age UK, Oxfordshire Play Association, Health Watch Oxfordshire, CAB on fuel poverty, SSAFA, the Royal British Legion, Experience Oxfordshire, and LEADER funding from DEFRA, and similar bodies to increase the church's presence, partnership working and positive impact with other county-wide bodies.
- Continued twice-yearly hosting of meals and discussions with specialist groups including Team Rectors, Parishes in Transition, Church Planters and Catholic clergy for the sharing of stories, ideas, good practice relating to mission and ministry.
- The Bishop focussing a Partnership Breakfast meeting during 2016 with some of the large churches in Oxford to talk through the issues involved in their playing a role in developing ministry and mission in the wider county and to agree an approach.

5. Looking to develop opportunities for mission to and with the scientific communities.

We shall make this a reality by:

- Monitoring by the Area Dean and the Bishop of the pilot scientific chaplaincy of Jenny Brown in the Churn Benefice, begun in September 2014, every four months, to ascertain how this pilot post is evolving.
- A presentation on this work, and its potential future development, to both the Oxford and Dorchester Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committees to take place by autumn 2015.

6. Supporting the ecumenical aspects of our county.

We shall make this a reality by:

- Beginning in 2016 by inviting Area Deans and Lay Chairs to further promote ministers' meetings, engagement with secondary schools chaplaincy and joint projects such as Food Banks, Street Pastors and Holiday Clubs.
- The Bishop and/or the Archdeacon meeting appropriate other denominational church leaders twice each year to explore sharing of resources and joint working.

7. Addressing issues of sustainability to optimise the generation of revenue.

We shall make this a reality by:

- The Archdeacon working with Area Deans and Lay Chairs in agreeing a consistent approach to the payment and duties of those who provide administrative support to Area Deans. By 31/12/15.

- Developing our wedding ministry: The PDA to ascertain current number of weddings and impact of the *Weddings Project*. Sharing of good practice regarding weddings by discussion with Area Deans with subsequent promotion via Clergy Chapters, during 2015.
- Developing our funeral ministry: The PDA to ascertain current number of funerals. The PDA to gain information on *The Funerals' Project* and organise a CMD day in autumn 2015 with a view to two deaneries agreeing to pilot some new approaches to funeral ministry. By 01/04/16.
- The PDA working with the Diocesan Giving Adviser and Finance Department to obtain the current level of giving/person/week in the Archdeaconry and to ascertain the current number of 'Friends of ...' schemes, with a view to cultivating a gift of generosity with specific reference to weekly giving, legacies and 'Friends of ...' schemes through the sharing of good practice. During 2016.

JOINT WORKING WITH THE OXFORD ARCHDEACONRY

We acknowledge that it is the two archdeaconries that comprise the County of Oxfordshire and that mission and ministry will be more effectively promoted by working together in these areas:

- Interfaith dialogue
- Youth work and secondary schools
- Mission with the scientific communities.
- Joint meetings of the Oxford and Dorchester Archdeaconry Pastoral Committees.
- Making the most of tourism opportunities, by promoting the concept of pilgrimage and working with *Experience Oxfordshire*.
- Engagement with theological colleges and training schemes.
- Ecumenical working.
- Potential involvement of numerically larger churches from places such as Oxford in disseminating their energy in supporting church growth – numerically and spiritually.

MONITORING AND REPORTING OF THIS PLAN

- The ongoing monitoring of the progress and evolution of this plan will be held by the Bishop, Archdeacon and PDA.
- Twice yearly reports on this plan will be submitted to the Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committee

Dorchester Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committee

April 2015.

APPENDIX A - DEANERY COMPARISONS

DEANERY	No. of Benefices	No. of parishes	No. of churches	Population (2011 Census)	Population change since 2001	ER 2013	ER change from 2012	Stipendiary ministers	HfD	SSM ministers
Abingdon	13	19	27	66,500	4,300	1922	(202)	11	2	7
Aston & Cuddesdon	12	45	51	55,000	1,100	2,198	(330)	13	4	6
Bicester & Islip	6	35	38	51,600	4,200	1,189	(181)	8	5	2
Chipping Norton	6	21	31	23,900	400	1,017	(78)	7	1	8
Deddington	12	29	34	66,800	6,000	1,280	(158)	11	2	6
Henley	8	21	24	36,900	2,100	1,320	(353)	8	4	2
Vale of White Horse	6	20	27	19,832	800	873	(53)	5	3	0
Wallingford	6	16	18	47,500	3,100	1,112	(90)	8	1	4
Wantage	4	12	17	24,800	800	744	(131)	5	0	1
Witney	10	28	38	64,100	9,200	1,552	(87)	9	4	2
Woodstock	7	20	24	25,500	1,200	1,073	(128)	7	1	4
TOTALS FOR ARCHDEACONRY	90	266	329	482,432	33,200	14,280	(1,791)	92	27	42

SOURCES

Benefice, parish and church listing from Diocesan Directory 2015

Population figures from Parish Spotlights

ER (Electoral Roll) figures from Finance Dept Parish Share Detailed Electoral Roll per Parish 2015.

A new Electoral Roll was prepared in 2013. The next will be 2019.

Minister numbers listing generated from Diocesan database

April 2015.

Appendix B

Funerals and Marriages in the Archdeaconry of Dorchester 2009-2013

Marriages

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
ABINGDON	86	65	65	67	91
ASTON & CUDDSDON	97	119	140	126	138
BICESTER & ISLIP	74	67	84	65	66
CHIPPING NORTON	49	66	60	63	52
DEDDINGTON	61	69	88	55	79
HENLEY	73	74	76	74	69
VALE OF WHITE HORSE	29	29	36	34	36
WALLINGFORD	43	57	54	61	48
WANTAGE	37	39	36	15	29
WITNEY	142	118	115	89	106
WOODSTOCK	59	65	48	50	53
Grand Total	750	768	801	699	767

Services of prayer and dedication after a civil marriage

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
ABINGDON	5	2	3	2	5
ASTON & CUDDSDON	5	6	13	5	5
BICESTER & ISLIP	3	7	9	2	3
CHIPPING NORTON	2	1	5	3	3
DEDDINGTON	5	4	6	3	3
HENLEY	4	3	1	1	6
VALE OF WHITE HORSE	-	8	2	-	-
WALLINGFORD	3	4	1	3	3
WANTAGE	5	4	1	2	2
WITNEY	8	4	7	4	2
WOODSTOCK	10	9	9	3	5
Grand Total	50	52	57	28	37

Funerals

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
ABINGDON	161	140	139	129	162
ASTON & CUDDSDON	184	169	181	173	171
BICESTER & ISLIP	112	113	104	104	123
CHIPPING NORTON	112	118	103	109	107
DEDDINGTON	136	123	123	115	147
HENLEY	138	105	107	97	118
VALE OF WHITE HORSE	79	49	75	59	52
WALLINGFORD	154	126	132	126	141
WANTAGE	87	79	89	59	86
WITNEY	137	172	193	203	201
WOODSTOCK	79	76	71	66	89
Grand Total	1,379	1,270	1,317	1,240	1,397

Services held in crematoria/cemeteries

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
ABINGDON	33	27	21	23	29
ASTON & CUDDSDON	85	74	85	66	82
BICESTER & ISLIP	63	51	46	44	66
CHIPPING NORTON	40	45	43	31	32
DEDDINGTON	132	132	115	91	80
HENLEY	47	36	65	58	52
VALE OF WHITE HORSE	23	30	30	18	13
WALLINGFORD	26	26	36	25	33
WANTAGE	19	21	25	21	12
WITNEY	42	43	30	27	51
WOODSTOCK	24	33	24	13	23
Grand Total	534	518	520	417	473

APPENDIX C

DIOCESAN RURAL STRATEGY

1. Overall aim

To enhance the rural church in the Diocese of Oxford.

2. The Purpose of the Group

The overarching purpose of the Rural Strategy Steering Group (RSSG) is to make a series of strategic recommendations to the DMPC for the development of mission and ministry in rural areas.

3. The Group will focus on

- Exploration and monitoring the development of strategies for rural mission and ministry, which currently include:
 - Widening the use of Church buildings.
 - Addressing the environment, context, pastoral care and well-being of those who serve in a rural context.
 - Strengthening finance.
 - Training people in leadership roles.
 - Devising different models of Governance in Multi-parish Benefices.
 - Raising vocations.
 - Supporting rural schools.

