



DIOCESE OF OXFORD
Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire

A Mission Action Plan for the **Oxford Archdeaconry**



The vision: the transformation of all human life under God.

The purpose: to join with God in creating a caring, sustainable and growing Christian presence in every part of the Archdeaconry of Oxford, enabling every Christian and every Christian community to live and share the love of God, seen in the life of Jesus Christ.

Overview

The Archdeaconry Mission Action Plan originates from a vision of the triune God, who reaches out in love to a broken world, purposes to restore all things through our saviour Jesus Christ, and has sent the Holy Spirit to fulfil those purposes. Our calling, as an Archdeaconry, is to **work together with God** in bringing His grace and love to the people and communities we serve, restoring relationship with their Creator and allowing the transforming and flourishing of humanity. We are also called **to work together with all of God's people**, wherever they are, in fulfilling this great commission.

We believe that God's mission has been well expressed in the Anglican Communion's 'Five Marks of Mission' because it is based on Jesus' own summary of his mission (Matthew 4:17, Mark 1:14-15, Luke 4:18, Luke 7:22; cf. John 3:14-17). This, for us, is the key statement about everything we do in mission.

The Five Marks of Mission are:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

The primary units of mission and ministry in our area are the parishes through their clergy, laity, buildings and programmes, along with the chaplaincies in schools, universities and health services. The aim of an archdeaconry MAP is to enable and resource them in the Five Marks of Mission outlined above.

Cowley Deanery are currently re-writing their MAP under a new Area Dean. They have already identified the following Mission Priorities:

1. Poverty
2. Schools
3. Environmental issues
4. Isolation, loneliness and mental health
5. Welcome to and engagement with migrants, including interfaith engagement.

Oxford Deanery have produced a revised MAP in 2014. They now employ a part time Deanery Mission Enabler who is working to take forward elements of their 2012 MAP and helping parishes to work together in areas such as Communications. She is also facilitating joint working with Cowley Deanery, particularly over Environmental issues.

Oxford City Statistics

Population has risen by over 12% over the last ten years, particularly in Cowley Deanery. *Population turnover is high* with 25% of the population moving every year, the highest proportion of any English local authority area.

The Archdeaconry contains five of the nine *most deprived* parishes in the whole diocese, with four of these in Cowley Deanery. In these parishes almost half of the children live below the national poverty line.

30,000 people in Oxford City are adult *full time students*, the highest proportion in any city in Britain. Oxford has the *youngest* median age, 29.9, of any city in the UK.

Oxford is an *ethnically diverse* city, with 22% of its population from a non-white ethnic group, and 14% being white but non-British. The child population is more ethnically diverse still. Nearly a third or 28% of the population were born outside of the UK.

The *religious makeup* of the city has changed markedly over the last ten years. Between 2001 and 2011, the number of people describing themselves as having no religion grew by 18,000. The number of people identifying themselves as Muslim grew by 5,000, whilst the number of Christians fell by 8,000.

Church Statistics

Oxford Deanery:

Pop. 68,000 ER 3081

USA 3759 (+450 at St Ebbe's Headington)

Stipendiary Clergy 14 + .25 Deanery Mission Enabler (+ 5 PCC employed)

HfD clergy 1 SSM 18 LLM 9

Ministry Load 1770 = 124 per stipendiary, or 92 inc. PCC employees

Cowley Deanery

Pop. 104,360 ER 1433

USA 1274

Stipendiary Clergy 12 + 1 archdeaconry post in Cowley Team

HfD 0 SSM 8 LLM 12

Ministry Load 1336 = 103 per stipendiary

The Ministry Load figures are calculated using a formula developed in St Albans Diocese, and now used in Lichfield and elsewhere. Lichfield uses the rough and ready measure of 100 as the equivalent of one clergy post when discussing future deployment patterns. This measure shows that Oxford and Cowley deaneries are *not* overstaffed with stipendiary clergy at present, and they have no plans to reduce numbers. The additional clergy paid for by PCCs at some large Oxford churches are there to enable them to minister effectively amongst the high numbers of students and transient church members that join their congregations. A high proportion of diocesan ordinands come from these parishes, particularly young ordinands, so their ongoing ministry health and strength is of strategic importance for the whole diocese.

Some Priorities

- *To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom*
 - *To teach, baptise and nurture new believers*
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- Each benefice will be encouraged to run an 'enquirers' course e.g. Alpha, Pilgrim every year, either alone or in partnership with others.
 - The Archdeacon will encourage the Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committee to facilitate church partnerships and new congregations, and whenever there is a vacancy explore possibilities for alternative ways of working with others. The aim is to enable every church to grow in numbers and commitment, and also to reach the parts of our communities that traditional ministry has not reached.
 - Mission initiatives will be encouraged and supported through the Mission Fund
 - Oxford Brookes University now has as many undergraduates as the older Oxford University. Oxford University has many full and part time Anglican chaplains. Oxford Brookes University has none. We would like to create a half time Development Post to enable an Anglican chaplain to join the chaplaincy team at Brookes in Headington.
 - With the aim of encouraging more ordinands vocations advisors will be appointed and additional vocations groups set up.

- *To respond to human need by loving service*
 - *To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation*
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- Many churches have their own social outreach programmes e.g. Ex-offenders programme at St Aldate's, Foodbanks in Rose Hill and Cowley, St Luke's church centre and outreach programme, CAP at St Clements, Gatehouse at St Giles, Credit Unions in Cowley and Blackbird Leys. Oxford and Cowley Deanery Synods have already held joint events highlighting church work to combat poverty and social isolation across the city, and plan to develop further joint working in this area.
 - Oxford churches are also well placed to make a difference in the wider world. Our congregations are rich in expertise, both intellectually and in terms of life experience, and there is great potential for developing existing links with Christians overseas.
 - We will encourage the development of the rich ministry of the cathedral in a specifically local context. We will encourage its development as a theological, liturgical and missionary resource in the city.
 - Many churches are open each day and we will encourage all to work towards this, offering safe spaces for people to come and pray, and to develop shared community use where appropriate.
 - With the help of the Committee for Interfaith Relations and the DBE a pilot project may be set up across a group of schools based on Redbridge 'Ambassadors for Faith and Belief.'
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- *To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth*
 - Oxford and Cowley will further develop their joint environmental programme begun under Andy Gosler Zoologist and Cowley Lay Chair

Our commitment

Oxford and Cowley Deaneries have worked hard to keep paying 100% of the parish share asked of them over recent years. Some parishes, including some large ones, have now spent up all their reserves so this is at some risk. Nevertheless we all work on an assumption that parish share will be met by working together.

- Churches within the archdeaconry will continue to develop their culture of trust and transparency. Cowley established this process as they shared financial information together and set their own levels of parish share in 2014. Oxford deanery have begun this process towards re-drawing their parish share for 2016. This is hard work for Treasurers and Incumbents together but it is steadily building trust and creating a culture of collaboration between churches as they share strengths and weaknesses, hopes and aspirations.

What is needed from the Diocese?

- A common commitment to meet parish share in full as Oxford and Cowley have done
- An understanding of Oxford's challenges and opportunities, particularly its young and transient population, and the pace of change in its religious and ethnic make up.
- To make the full Deprivation Allowance available as soon as possible. It will take almost ten years to 'arrive' at current rates.
- A Diocesan Development post (at least .5) for pioneering work at Oxford Brookes University. Currently the diocese funds 0.25 of a post in the Multi faith Chaplaincy but there is no Anglican Chaplain at Brookes. This would help us to further develop young vocations within the city.

29 March 2015