

### Background Paper for Diocesan Synod Nov 2018

As part of the Common Vision Programme, Working Group 3 was asked to come up with some highly ambitious goals and a plan to deliver them. Some members of Diocesan Synod have heard a lot about this. New members may have heard nothing at all. This paper provides a brief introduction to the Report, and the Outline Strategy being presented to Diocesan Synod for the first five years of its implementation 2019-23.

Bishop's Council described the strategic goal as, 'Planting New Churches and Congregations Wherever We Can'.

After an extensive programme of listening and consultation a detailed report was produced. It presented a plan to enable all parishes to develop new congregations and fresh expressions of church, large or small, in their own contexts, whether rural, suburban or urban. In addition the plan will facilitate the development of Resourcing Hubs to support new church partnerships, grafts and plants across the diocese. The group has generally been called, 'Growing New Churches and Congregations'. It is something that **everyone** and **every parish** can be part of.

In line with the Common Vision the aim was to develop more Christ like churches for the sake of God's world.

- We have reflected on the vision of a **Christ-like Church: Contemplative, Compassionate and Courageous** and how it might inform our understanding of the reasons for and the nature of growing new churches and congregations in the Diocese.
- **Christ-like churches** model themselves on their Master. They have a living relationship with the Risen Christ, meeting Him in Word and in Sacrament and in their relationships with one another. Their characteristic feature is Agape or self-giving love. Like a candle they give of themselves to bring light to others. Like Jesus they point people away from themselves and towards God. They are humbled to be part of the Body of Christ, and in that body each person and each church community has an honoured place. They know that Church is where human longing meets the self-offering of Christ. Above all else, they long to give themselves away.
- **They are Contemplative:** finding God in stillness and holding that space even in the busyness and urgency of everyday life. They know God as the still centre of this turning world and long to connect people with this saving power. If seeking to grow new congregations they will pray long and faithfully, and meet obstacles reflectively rather than reactively.

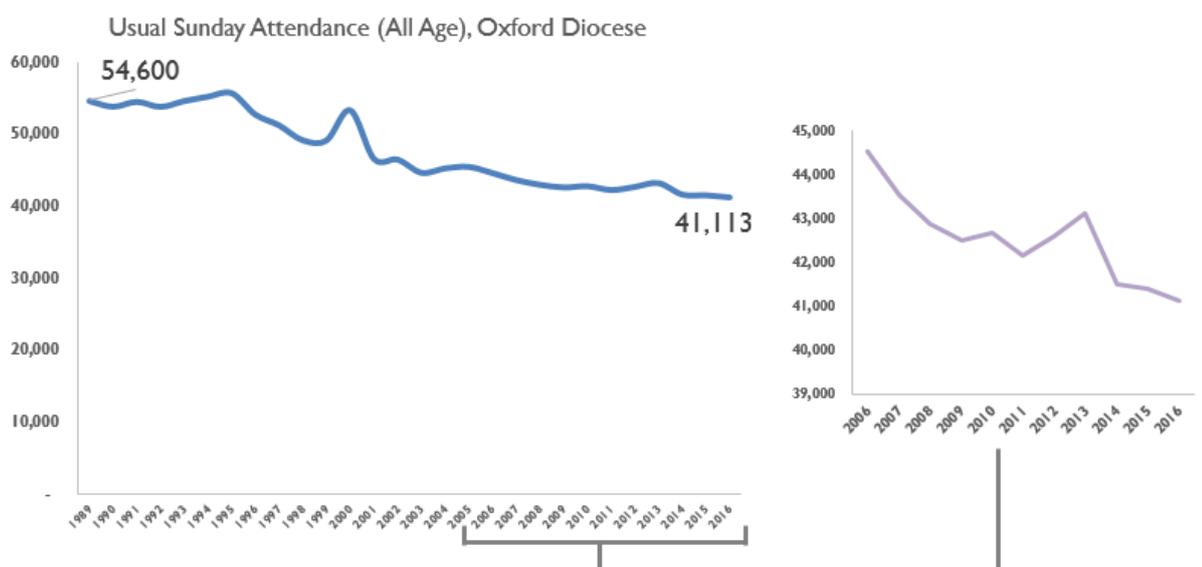
- **They are Compassionate:** alive to the needs of the world and wanting to make a difference in love. If seeking to plant or partner with another parish or deanery they will seek to come alongside the people already there, and to learn from their heritage and experience.
- **They are Courageous:** walking the way of the cross with eyes, hands and hearts open. They have counted the cost and still decide to follow Jesus. They will be willing to push the boundaries of what appears to be possible in the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ.

## Key themes and messages

### The need is urgent

The population of the diocese is set to rise by 255,000 between 2016 and 2040 (Source: Office for National Statistics May 2018), or as much as 550,000 based on detailed analysis of local authorities published housing need and current plans. That's more than the population of Edinburgh coming into the diocese over that time. The Oxford-Cambridge Arc developments will increase this number considerably. Although population is rising across the diocese there has been a significant fall in engagement with traditional church in many places, and a marked slowdown in baptisms and confirmations. There is a longing amongst some missionally strong churches to give themselves away, and a longing in others to have the means to respond to mission potential in their area.

## Diocesan attendance has significantly declined over the past 25 years



## Mixed Ecclesial Economy

We want to see a **Mixed Ecclesial Economy**: with flourishing traditional parishes alongside New Churches and Congregations, particularly in Mission Priority Areas.

We want to encourage and enable new centres of discipleship, service and growth. e.g. Messy Church, Café Church, Child-focussed Church, Youth Church, or other forms of church not yet dreamt of. All parishes can be part of this movement. Most will be lay led and relatively small, 12-20 in size. They should aim to be:

Missional - intending to work with non-churchgoers

Contextual – doing things differently in response to its context

Formational – with weekly or monthly gatherings, catechesis and discipleship

Ecclesial - people experience it as their church, not just as an extension activity.

We have also heard a strong desire for a positive environment for Church Planting/Grafting/Partnerships in the diocese, where the mission strength of one benefice, can be released to unlock the mission potential in another. We want to have guidelines and mechanisms that encourage church planting in a way that is intentional, strategic and sensitive. Church Plants/Grafts/Partnerships should be episcopally authorised and sustainably and realistically resourced.

A good example would be St Peter's Brighton which brought new life to a run-down church, and has now planted two others at the Bishop of Chichester's invitation. Proposals may come from Area Bishops and their Teams, from Deaneries or Parishes. We will produce Diocesan Guidelines for Growing New Churches and Congregations based on:

Church Planting and the Mission of the Church – A Statement by the House of Bishops.

[https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/CHURCH%20PLANTING%20AND%20THE%20MISSION%20OF%20THE%20CHURCH%20-%20June%202018\\_0.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/CHURCH%20PLANTING%20AND%20THE%20MISSION%20OF%20THE%20CHURCH%20-%20June%202018_0.pdf)

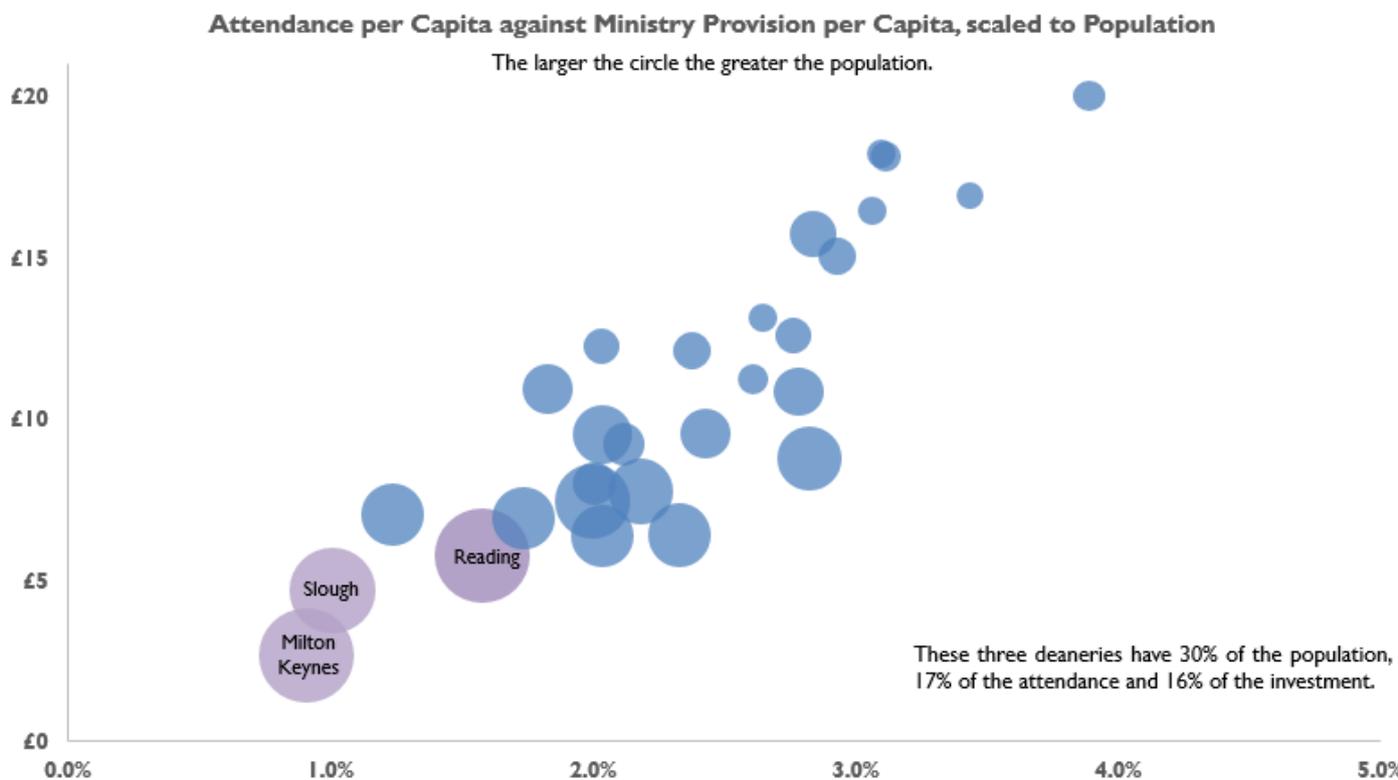
## Mission Priority Areas

We have been made aware of particular areas of need and mission priority. These include:

- **New Housing Areas**: which are extensive and well documented. It is important to note that some are in rural locations, others in and around existing conurbations. We already have several Pioneer Ministers working in major new housing areas, notably Bicester, Didcot, Milton Keynes and Aylesbury. They will need ongoing support and evaluation to inform mission and ministry in other new housing areas. In addition, many small scale,

often lay led mission initiatives as well as more traditional Church Plants. See recent examples in Burford, Denham and plans for Arborfield Green, Henley on Thames and Cogges amongst others.

- Key Urban Areas: where church attendance as a proportion of population is often lowest. For example, in Slough and Milton Keynes attendance in Church of England parishes is under 1%, and only slightly higher in Reading, Aylesbury and High Wycombe. 30% of the diocese live in the deaneries of Milton Keynes, Slough and Reading, but they only account for 17% of our churchgoers, and 16% of our ministry provision with less than £5 of ministerial investment per head, compared with over £20 per head of population in more rural deaneries.

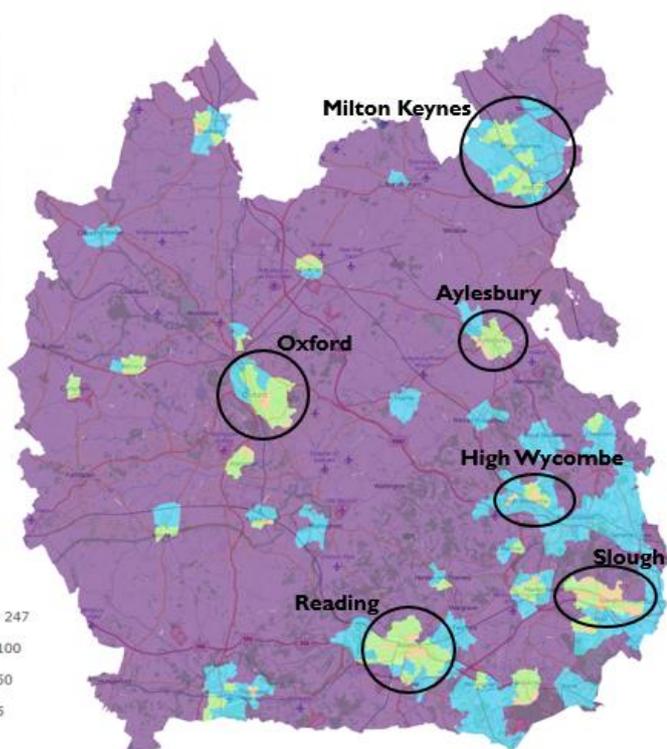
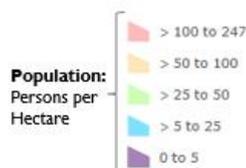


In such major conurbations we suggest developing a Resourcing Hub with Church Planting firmly within its DNA. An existing church could bid to become a Resourcing Hub, or a new one could be grown or planted. There are already churches in the diocese with a record of self-sacrificial planting and resourcing of others, in urban, suburban and rural settings. Fresh Expressions type of smaller scale developments may be particularly relevant in more rural areas.

## Major Population Areas

	Population*	Attendance 2016	Att per Capita	Ministry Cost per Capita (Estimated)
Reading	235,755	3,702	1.6%	£5.94
Milton Keynes	213,304	1,962	0.9%	£2.80
Oxford	172,608	5,749	3.3%	£9.73
Slough	135,487	1,000	0.7%	£3.52
High Wycombe	86,091	1,416	1.6%	£5.11
Aylesbury	73,313	825	1.1%	£3.09
<b>Diocesan Average:</b>			<b>2.1%</b>	<b>£8.03</b>

\*Population of the parishes that make up the major urban conurbation of each area



## Vision summary in response to our changing context

**We will enable the growth of new Contemplative, Compassionate and Courageous churches and congregations in across the whole diocese, with a special focus on Mission Priority Areas. Christ-like churches for the sake of God's world.**

## Key differences between now and 2030

- **Growing churches and congregations will be the norm, not the exception.** New Churches, congregations and fresh expressions will have helped turn the diocese from the current net decline to net growth.
- Generous churches that give themselves away to bring life to others will thrive and multiply.
- Fresh expressions of church will be found increasingly in every place, as part of a flourishing mixed economy. Parishes, Benefices and Deaneries will be encouraged to think beyond their boundaries when looking for partners and opportunities to serve.

- Parish churches, fresh expressions, church plants, chaplaincies and church schools will know themselves to be involved in a common mission, under the Bishop. Churches will naturally share expertise and ideas with each other e.g. See [www.parishtriedandtested.org](http://www.parishtriedandtested.org)
- Resourcing Hubs will be identified and any conurbation of 100,000+ people should have one. They will both provide resources to others and receive extra resource such as extra curates, who will go on to plant or revitalise churches in their turn.
- The Bishops and their staff will continue to set out the diocesan vision of a 'Christ-like Church for the sake of God's World.' Area Teams will work with Deaneries and Benefices and the Mission Team, with the help of an additional diocesan officer in the early years, to initiate and negotiate church plants, grafts and partnerships and to encourage the growth of Fresh Expressions. They will enable learning communities, straightforward pathways for training and authorisation, and access to resources such as a Growing New Churches and Congregations Fund. Bishop's Mission Orders (BMO) or other pastoral measures will be needed in most cases where new congregations cross parish boundaries.
- Each New Church or Congregation will have a Development Plan showing how they will be part of the local Deanery from the start. Recipients of Growing New Churches and Congregations Fund grants will have a plan showing how and when financial sustainability will be reached, and how and when contributions to Deanery share will begin.

## Goals for this focus area

By 2030:

1. **750 New Congregations or Fresh Expressions of any size and shape, that are in intention Missional, Contextual, Formational and Ecclesial.** To achieve this goal, we would need an average of two per deanery per year, or just over one per parish by 2030. Guildford Diocese had a similar goal and produced 71 in the first 18 months, and they are much smaller than us! Most will be lay led and self-supporting, reaching people and places current provision doesn't reach. The Discipleship proposals in WG5 may be a key resource for this, as will the outworking of Setting God's People Free and 'Partnership for Missional Change or PMC. Parishes, Church Schools and Chaplaincies, urban, rural, suburban can all be part of this. It is hoped that initiatives will come from local people, parishes, benefices and deaneries, with enabling resources available from the centre e.g. Grants from the new Development Fund, mission team support and

networking, and national training and inspiration through [www.freshexpressions.org.uk](http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk)

2. **50 New Churches or Congregations with 100+ adult members.** These might be a new congregation grown in a school or community centre on a new housing estate, or a revitalised church in a neglected area, or a struggling church now able to fulfil its potential through a new mission partnership with a resourcing church. All will have the authorisation and support of their Area Bishop. Being 100+ in size should make them sustainable in the long term. These larger Growing new churches and congregations can be found in any area, rural, suburban or urban, though priority for diocesan resources should go to designated Mission Priority Areas: new housing areas and urban priority (deprived) areas as described in section 0 above. Some will be enabled in partnership with Resourcing Hubs below, but any benefice, deanery or archdeaconry can produce proposals for these.
3. **6 New Resourcing Hubs with 250+ adult members,** each of which will be expected to plant at least one new congregation or church beyond themselves every three years. Some will develop from existing large churches. Some may be revitalised or completely new churches. The Five Marks of a Resourcing Hub will be:
  - *Audacity – setting audacious goals in faith.*  
Ministry without Boundaries: If every parish church has a vocation to enable mission and ministry within their parish, a Resourcing Hub feels they have a vocation to resource and enable mission and ministry beyond their parish boundaries.
  - *Generosity – with people and money*  
Contributing to Parish Share, £50k in the budget each year for church planting, hosting events, sharing courses, expertise, leaders and training. They are generous in planting new congregations and new churches, whether by grafting, partnership or transplant, and share that experience with others.
  - *Humility – honouring others and the gifts that they bring.*  
Resourcing Hubs revitalise and release mission potential. They do not empire build or look to takeover
  - *Unity – actively blessing other traditions and churchmanships.*  
Resourcing Hubs are loyal and work closely with the Bishop, sharing collaboratively in the Cure of Souls.
  - *Tenacity – prepared to face challenges of every sort with patience and perseverance.*  
Resourcing Hubs put down roots and produce leaders with vocation

groups, leader development and vocation pathways a natural part of their life.

NB. These goals will be subject to more detailed contextual analysis, for example looking at where we might expect larger new churches and congregations to be and adjusting goals and costings accordingly.

## Outcomes

If these three goals were met by 2030, in collaboration with the Discipleship (WG5) and Catechetical (WG2) Workstreams we would hope to see:

- **a total of 18,000 people in new, growing churches and congregations** (12,000 in smaller worshipping communities (average of 16 in each) and 6,000 in larger new churches or congregations. All will be encouraged to enter catechesis/discipleship programmes. The current usual Sunday attendance across the diocese is Diocese has 41,113.
- **6,000 baptisms and/or confirmations.** (Based on one third unchurched)
- **1600 new lay leaders** (average of two per new church or congregation)
- **180 ordinands** (1% of people who join new churches and congregations)

## So how do we start?

### WG3: Outline Five Year Plan 2019-23

#### Introduction

- The overall vision and strategy remains, but we focus on a manageable Phase 1 from 2019-23.
- An SDF (Church Commissioners Strategic Development Fund) Stage 1 bid will be made in April 2019, with the detailed stage 2 completed in October 2019. On this basis we hope to secure SDF funding by the end of 2019.
- This package of work will allow for a Programme Manager to oversee and enable this work over its formative first three-five years. Two resourcing hubs will be created and seven new “100+” churches. In addition £750,000 will be released to enable parishes, benefices and deaneries in setting up fifty smaller scale Fresh Expressions.
- This will involve spending £5m in total, split 50/50 between SDF money and Diocesan ‘total return’ money.

## Key components of the work package

For the first five years (to end 2023), a total spend of £5m as follows:

1. **Programme Manager.** Full time role, as recommended by Church Commissioners, plus 0.2FTE admin support, starting as soon as possible.

*£402k as agreed by Bishop's Council. Recruitment in progress*

2. **i. Resourcing Hub 1.** Based on an existing large church, probably in Reading. Funding an additional minister from 2019 (plus housing). Minister goes on to lead first church plant, and will be replaced by a 'planting curate'.

*£316k nb. detailed proposals for this and other elements of the package will come to Bishop's Council in December 2018, so are yet to be agreed.*

**ii. Resourcing Hub 2.** Renewed congregation in an existing building, possibly in Slough and launching mid 2020. Funding based on a staff team of incumbent, assistant minister or children and families worker (plus housing), with curate (plus housing) and operations manager. Curate to plant another congregation after three years. £630k plus £750k for building refurbishment.

£1,380k

3. **Seven new "100+" churches.** Funding proposal based on costs of seven ministry leaders (plus housing), to enable benefice, deanery or archdeaconry initiatives to develop sustainable new churches with 100+ new disciples in challenging areas or areas of new housing. Some are being considered now for support in 2019 and 2020.

£2,129k

4. **Fifty new Fresh Expressions** for the people and places in our diocese that current provision cannot reach. For inspiration, videos and stories and the new Godsend App go to <https://freshexpressions.org.uk> With **all** parishes, benefices and deaneries able to bid for support funding from a Diocesan Development Fund .

£750k

### **Total Investment**

£4,977k over five years. £2,500k of this will be sought from SDF

## Expected outcomes

The key expected outcomes (not all delivered in full after the first five years):

- Dedicated programme manager, to coordinate and facilitate the different strands of work required in a complex workstream.
- Two Resourcing Hubs, each resourcing mission across their area and producing a minister every three to four years able to plant further new congregations.
- One new or revitalised congregation of 250+ and seven new congregations each of 100 disciples.
- Fifty Fresh Expressions for the people and places in our diocese that current provision cannot reach. For inspiration, videos and stories and the new Godsend App go to <https://freshexpressions.org.uk>

*Martin Gorick*

*Archdeacon of Oxford and Chair of Working Group Three*

*All Saints Day 2018*