

# NEXT STEPS ON THE WAY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**TRURODIOCESE.ORG.UK**

This document is intended to provide answers to some of the frequently asked questions about the deanery plans for fruitfulness and sustainability.

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If you have a question and the answer is not included here, please do get in touch and we will be happy to answer it for you and include it for others in this sheet.

## **MORE INFORMATION**

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**DIOCESE OF TRURO**  
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# NEXT STEPS ON THE WAY DEANERY PLANS DIOCESAN PLANS CHURCHES

## CHURCHES

### Q Is there a plan to close churches?

**A** The Bishops, Archdeacons and Truro Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) do **not** have a plan to close lots of churches.

- A handful of churches in Cornwall have closed in the last ten years and there are a small handful exploring that option now, but the decision to close or to explore closing comes from the local church, the PCC, not the bishop or archdeacon.
- Bishops and archdeacons do not have the legal power to close churches and it is not in the DBFs interests for churches to close, closed churches cost the DBF money and even if they are sold it is rare for the diocese to recover its costs.
- Hundreds of churches closing would be a nightmare for the DBF as well as for the ministry of the church in Cornwall.
- None of the deanery plans includes plans for closing lots of churches, all the deanery plans include plans for helping lots of churches to be fruitful and sustainable - that is what we asked the deaneries to do.

### Q How do I stop 'the diocese' from closing my church?

**A** We are all 'the diocese'.

- The best way to support your local church is to be a member there, to turn up, pray for it, join in with worshipping God and serving your local community. 'The diocese' does not want to close your church, we all (ie 'the diocese') want your local church to be fruitful and sustainable.

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## PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCILS (PCC)

**Q** Do we have to merge our PCC?

**A** No!

- Some deanery plans include proposals to change parish governance arrangements, where this is the case it should be because the proposal is more likely to lead to fruitfulness and sustainability. Why is this?
  - Some PCCs are struggling to find Churchwardens, Treasurer, Secretary, Safeguarding Officer and all the officers necessary for a proper charitable board with statutory duties (that's what a PCC is). Combining PCCs can make sense because there are more people to draw on;
  - If several churches want to work together on a shared plan for the long-term fruitfulness and sustainability of the church in an area it can make sense to have a unified leadership and accountability;
  - It makes it easier to recruit good clergy if PCC governance is rational and sustainable.
- Combining into one PCC is not the only option and may not even be the best option, Joint Church Councils (JCC) and Group Ministry arrangements can also be good options depending on what local resources there are, we encourage local leaders to talk to an Archdeacon about the way forward.

**Q** Our PCC want to keep our own identity and do not accept that others should have any control over our affairs. Can you assure us we don't have to become a Joint Church Council?

**A** Yes.

- Joint Church Councils cannot be imposed.
- Where parishes struggle to gain members and officers such as churchwardens, they can decide to join with other parishes in a Joint Church Council, but **it will be the individual parishes' decision** as to whether they do this.
- Healthy PCCs would likely not wish to do this and would not be forced to do so.
- PCCs may choose to work together on individual initiatives or projects.

# NEXT STEPS ON THE WAY DEANERY PLANS DIOCESAN PLANS CHURCHES

## VICARS

**Q** Why is ‘the diocese’ cutting vicars?

**A** ‘The diocese’ is not cutting vicars.

- ‘The diocese’ has asked people in parishes and deaneries to prayerfully decide what pattern of ministry and mission will be fruitful and sustainable in their local place. ‘The diocese’ hasn’t dictated the plans, the planning has been locally led.
- The Diocesan Board of Finance budget for 2023 matches local deanery plans.
- The plans are different in different places, (because they are genuinely local plans) in some places the plans are for clergy numbers to stay the same, in other places the plan is for fewer clergy, and in some places the plan is for more lay posts (children and family workers, for instance) but in every place it is for what the parish/deanery think will be fruitful and sustainable.
- Overall there will be fewer clergy, this is because that is what the deanery plans say.
- Where parishes have planned for fewer clergy it is, we think, usually because the income from the churches there cannot support current clergy numbers. To counter this the DBF is making £2m available over 5-7 years to support a return sustainability where parishes think that they can turn things round.

**Q** Why doesn’t ‘the diocese’ pay for more vicars?

**A** The cost.

- Vicars are “paid for” by a mixture of Ministry & Mission Fund (MMF), diocesan support, and national funding.
- Clergy costs include stipends, pensions, Council Tax, National Insurance, housing, training as well as contributions to the national church for theological colleges etc.
- MMF contributes to two things; part of the cost of clergy, and part of the cost of “Church House” – it doesn’t pay for TM or mission funding.
- The DBF tops up MMF to support parish ministry, mainly by using Glebe, rental, fee income and other investment income.
- Remember that our total budget is £9.5m, the total cost of parish ministry is about £5.3m and in the 2023 budget MMF is £3.3m.

# NEXT STEPS ON THE WAY DEANERY PLANS DIOCESAN PLANS CHURCHES

## VICARS

**Q** If our parish can afford a full-time priest, why can't we have one?

**A** We are in this together.

- There are shared costs to which parishes contribute and therefore it is not only about meeting the costs of what happens in a single parish.
- Deanery plans often try to be equitable in the way ministry is deployed so that wealthier parishes don't benefit at the expense of parishes less able to afford their ministry costs. We hope that parishes will not only want to give towards their own costs but support ministry in other parishes in a way that enables many parishes to flourish.

**Q** What is 'the diocese' doing to help parish ministry?

**A** Providing more financial support.

- This year in particular we are providing direct support to clergy and PCCs (£500K) with the energy costs fund.
- We are providing £2m of mission funding over five - seven years to help parishes to become fruitful and sustainable (roughly £400K this year).
- We are allocating more than £800K of Lowest Income Community Funding (LICF) to the local church to support their work in lowest income communities.
- We are protecting PCCs from the worst effects of inflation on clergy and diocesan costs by honouring the deanery planning indicative costs (roughly another £450K).
- That's over £2m in the next 12 months to directly support parish ministry.

**Q** So why didn't we spend the £2 million on more clergy?

**A** We are putting the money where the deanery plans need it.

- Local planning decides how to spend most of it, and much of it is paying for clergy.
- We expect the energy cost support to be a "one-off" but it is supporting clergy for the short term by helping PCCs get over the bump this winter.
- The £2m mission funding is budgeted but ongoing funding for new mission beyond this is not likely to be sustainable, much of it is supporting parish ministry.
- Some of the LICF is being used to support stipendiary ministry.
- The money to honour indicative costs does directly support parish ministry, without it there may have been less clergy.

# NEXT STEPS ON THE WAY DEANERY PLANS DIOCESAN PLANS CHURCHES

## VICARS

**Q** Are we just adding more and more churches to overworked clergy?

**A** No, we are supporting new patterns of ministry.

- We know that just doing that doesn't work, which is why deanery planning asked local leaders to think creatively and to think about other ministries alongside stipendiary clergy.
- Trying to sustain traditional patterns of clergy ministry with far fewer clergy is unlikely to work, hence the need for new patterns of ministry.

**Q** Will clergy be concentrated in hubs based around towns?

**A** No.

- All the plans have been developed locally. Hubs would only happen if it were included in your deanery plan and the majority of plans do not propose this. What they do all include is the desire to seek the flourishing of rural as well as urban churches.

# NEXT STEPS ON THE WAY DEANERY PLANS DIOCESAN PLANS CHURCHES

## HOUSES

**Q** Why is 'the diocese' selling houses?

**A** We don't need them all.

■ The DBF owns or manages about 130 houses but we only need about 85 houses. We want to concentrate on supporting parish ministry not on being a landlord.

**Q** Why didn't we [the parish] get the money when our rectory was sold?

**A** There is a legal requirement for the money to be used to support stipendiary ministry.

■ Most clergy houses are owned under a legal trust arrangement that means that the proceeds must be used to support stipendiary ministry. When a vacant house is let or when a surplus house is sold that is what we use the money for. We either use the money to help maintain (or buy) other clergy houses, or we invest the money and the income helps to push down the MMF call for everyone. To be fair to parishes across Cornwall we don't ask for more MMF if the vicar lives in an expensive area, but we also don't credit those parishes with a larger share if we sell an expensive property.

# NEXT STEPS ON THE WAY **DEANERY PLANS** **DIOCESAN PLANS** **CHURCHES**

## PLANS & PROJECTS

**Q** Why do we spend all the money on new things and not support the old things?

**A** We don't need them all.

- The total 2023 DBF budget is about £9.5m. There are four key areas of spend, parish ministry, mission funding, diocesan support teams (Church House) and Net Zero.
- Most, £5.3m is spent directly on parish ministry; clergy, curates, training.
- In 2023 we will spend roughly £2m on parish based mission, £700K to support ministry in the poorest communities, £425K to support parishes to become fruitful and sustainable, diocesan funding for TM is just £160K in 2023 – plus £400K of national mission funding (mostly TM) (the balance is mostly supporting implementation of the deanery plans).
- So you can see that we spend far more on traditional ministry than on anything else.
- Diocesan Support teams (Church House) budget in 2023 is £1.8m (after a roughly 12% cut).
- Net Zero is only £350K in 2023 but likely to rise.

**Q** Why has the bishop got X plan?

**A** There really is no secret plan.

- The bishop set out his vision for the church in Cornwall (The Saints' Way) and this was supported by Diocesan Synod (made up of clergy and parish representatives). It is a vision based on / growing out of the history of the church in Cornwall, it isn't an imported up-country vision. We based our understanding of "fruitful and sustainable" on the priorities in The Saints' Way.
- There will be a "diocesan plan" this will do three things:
  - Combine the 12 deanery plans;
  - Describe the support that deaneries and parishes will need to implement their plans;
  - Describe priorities that are in The Saints' Way but which haven't been picked up in Deanery Plans and ask what space there might be for these.
- The diocesan plan will be widely available.



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## PLANS & PROJECTS

**Q** What measures are being used to ensure On The Way is being carefully evaluated?

**A** It is one of targets for the Change and Renewal team.

- Ruth Marriott has been appointed by the diocese to lead on evaluation and delivery.
- Ruth will be visiting PCC meetings and deanery synods to explain more.

**Q** Are there contingency plans in case the deanery plans don't work?

**A** The deanery plans have been developed by the deaneries.

- They are ambitious and they will need evaluation.
- If plans need adjusting, it will be for the deanery to decide that and act on it.

**Q** Are there other regions where On The Way is happening and what is the outcome?

**A** All regions have their own strategies. This programme is ours.

- Every deanery plan is unique.
- None are far enough advanced for us to be able to evaluate their outcomes yet.

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## CHURCHMANSHIP

**Q** Is there an evangelical takeover of 'the diocese'?

**A** No.

- The Anglican Church is made up of a wide breadth of Churchmanship. All types are visible in our diocese including at the Episcopal College (diocesan leadership) level.
- We are all concerned for the life, health and growth of the Church whatever tradition we come from.
- Deanery plans were created by the local parishes and deaneries, not the bishops, and those plans reflect the churchmanship of their area.

## GET IN CONTACT

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