

Background

The Diocese of Truro currently has 232 Local Worship Leaders who carry out a varied ministry to all ages and in a broad range of church traditions across Cornwall, the Isles of Scilly and our 2 parishes in Devon.

From anecdotal information we knew Local Worship Leaders were leading many services but the true scale and scope was unknown.

During October 2023 Local Worship Leaders were asked to complete a 'Snap Shot Survey' asking them about their ministry.

The questions asked were

- Name
- Parish
- Benefice
- Are you baptised?
- In the last 12 months how many services have you BEEN INVOLVED WITH in any way? (reading, leading intercessions, leading whole service etc)
- In the last 12 months how many services have you LED? (either alone or with others)
- In a typical month how many services do you LEAD or HELP TO LEAD
- Please tick any services you have LED or HELPED TO LEAD in the last 12 months (a list of the services can be found below)
- Please tick any services you have LED or HELPED TO LEAD at ANY time (not just in the last 12 months)
- Are you currently in a transition? (ie without an incumbent)
- Have you EVER assisted with, or taken a Funeral?
- Do you currently have a working agreement?
- When did you last complete safeguarding training?
- Is there any training you feel would help you?
- Any other comments

The following report details the responses to help the ministry team and Lay Ministries Development Officer make informed decisions on training and support offered.

Response

146 Local Worship Leaders responded to the survey giving a **63%** return. It also returned some responses from people who had stepped down from leading worship in the last few months allowing the database to be updated.

Those who had stepped down were contacted to establish their reason for stepping down, no problems were identified; rather they reported feeling they were no longer able to effectively lead due to age or ill health. They were thanked for their ministry.

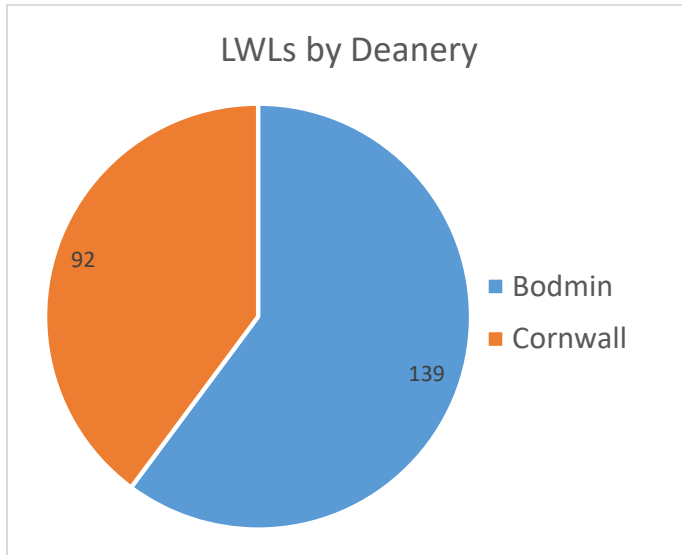
Distribution of Local Worship Leaders

Local Worship Leader Snap Shot Survey

For full representation of the distribution the information for all Local Worship Leaders was taken from the Contact Management System (CMS)

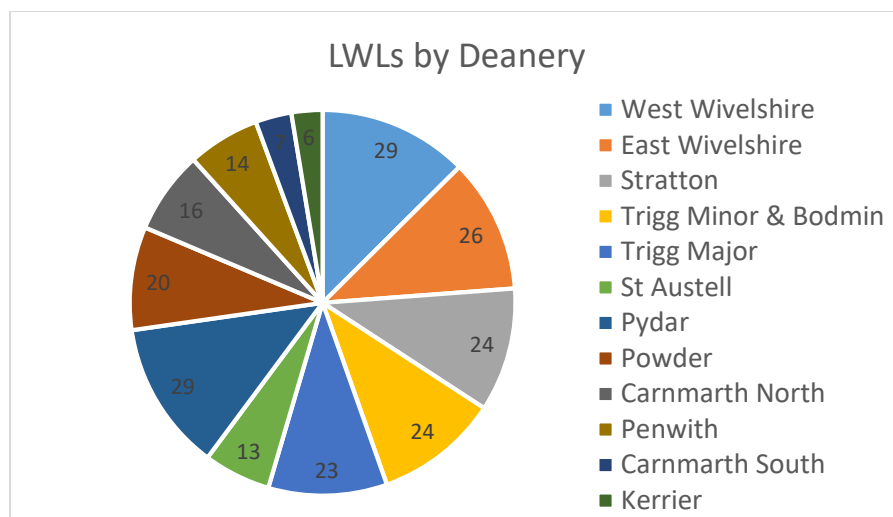
Of the 232 Local Worship Leaders the distribution is as follows;

139 are based in Bodmin Archdeaconry and 92 in Cornwall Archdeaconry. 1 is not currently linked to a single benefice and this is being looked into.



The distribution by deanery is as follows;

- 29 in West Wivelshire
- 26 in East Wivelshire
- 24 in Stratton
- 24 in Trigg Minor and Bodmin
- 23 in Trigg Major
- 13 in St Austell
- 29 in Pydar
- 20 in Powder
- 16 in Carnmarth North
- 14 in Penwith
- 7 in Carnmarth South
- 6 in Kerrier



Number of services Local Worship Leaders are leading

The questions regarding the number of services Local Worship Leaders were leading was broken down into 2 areas. Firstly asking how many they were INVOLVED with (including reading scripture and leading intercessions) and then how many they LED or helped to LEAD.

It was felt necessary to distinguish between the two as we wondered whether Local Worship Leaders were often undertaking roles such as reading scripture and leading intercessions on days they were not leading services.

The responses to the survey bore this out.

Of those who answered the questions;

- The average number of services **involved** with in the last year was **31**
- The average number services **led** in the last year was **15**

The responses also indicated the following;

- For every 3 services a Local Worship Leader is involved in they are leading (or helping to lead) 1. For example many lead once a month but are involved 3 times a month.
- In the last year the respondents **led 697 services**. (it should be noted this might be a higher than the actual number as some Local Worship Leaders lead services together)
- If we take the 63% response as an accurate representation across all the whole diocese this would indicate almost **1000 services a year** a year are being led by Local Worship Leaders.

Types of Services involved in

Local Worship Leader Snap Shot Survey

The survey asked two questions regarding the type of services Local Worship Leaders were involved in leading; those they had led in the last **12 months** and those they had **ever** led.

Unsurprisingly leading the way was **Sunday Morning Services of the Word** with 116 out of the 146 Local Worship Leaders recording leading these services in the last 12 months. This equates to **80%** with 121 (83%) ever taking a Sunday Morning Service of the Word.

It was encouraging to see the number of Local Worship Leaders assisting with Sunday Morning Eucharistic services (29%) and leading services in Advent (27%) and Holy Week (27%).

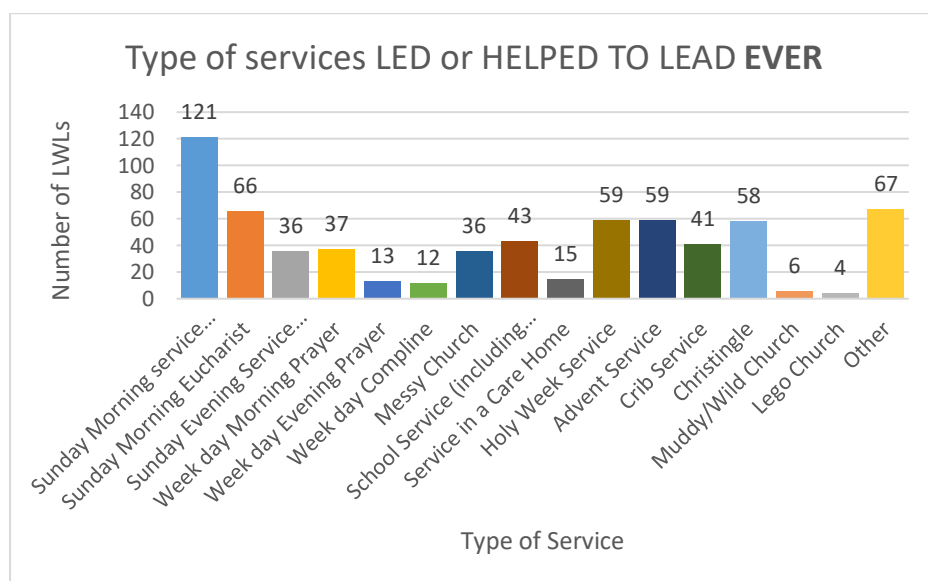
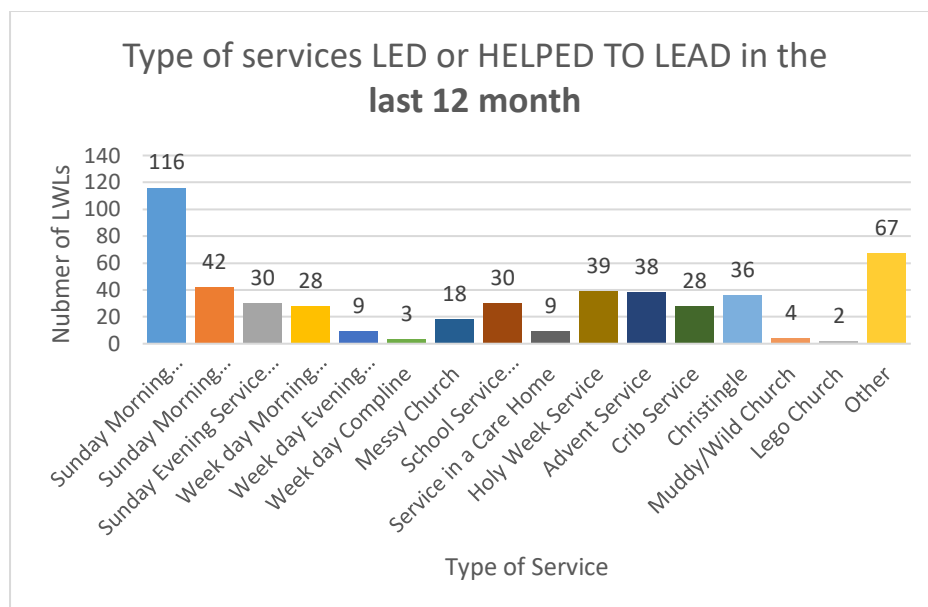
The survey also allowed respondents to note if they had led 'other' services with 67 (46%) indicating they had (both in the last 12 months and ever). The types of services led here included Matins, Pet services, Remembrance Day, All Souls and services for children and youth.

The full details can be seen in the word cloud below.

The survey confirmed our thoughts regarding the scope of Local Worship Leader ministry in Truro Diocese showing it to be deep and diverse.



Local Worship Leader Snap Shot Survey



Other notable findings

The remaining questions were asked to help us get an understanding of other areas of ministry

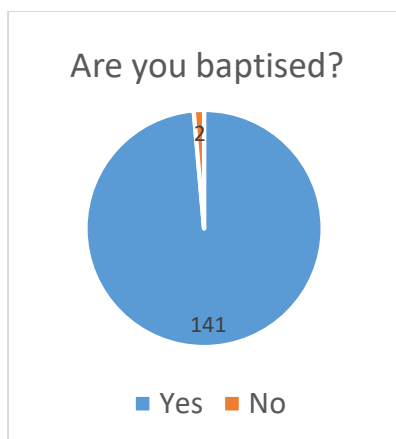
Baptism

Local Worship Leaders were asked if they were baptised as it became apparent we could not be confident this was true. It is felt baptism should be an expected requirement for commissioning as a Local Worship Leader but until this time this has not been asked.

Baptism is the 'inherited norm' of those entering into any form of ministry within the Church of England so asking this question seemed timely.

143 of the respondents answered this question with only 2 indicating they were not yet baptised.

Local Worship Leader Snap Shot Survey

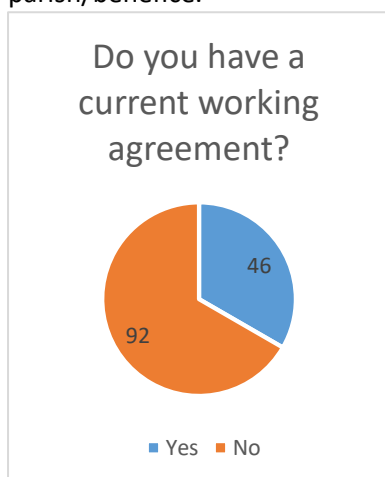


Those indicating they are not baptised will be contacted to discuss whether they would like to be baptised and to arrange for this to happen.

Moving forward all new Local Worship Leaders will be asked on their application and current Local Worship Leaders will be asked when they are due to be recommissioned until we have asked all Local Worship Leaders.

Working agreements

Until now working agreements have been encouraged by not compulsory for Local Worship Leaders. The survey showed only 32% of Local Worship Leaders have a working agreement with their parish/benefice.

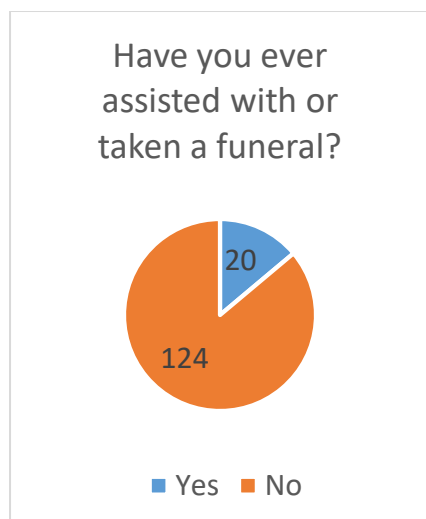


From Easter 2024 working agreements will become a requirement for commissioning for Local Worship Leaders to bring them in line with other lay ministries in Truro Diocese.

Funeral Ministry

It had come to the attention of the ministry team some Local Worship Leaders had been involved in funeral ministry. The numbers are small with 20 out of those responding indicating they had been involved in some way.

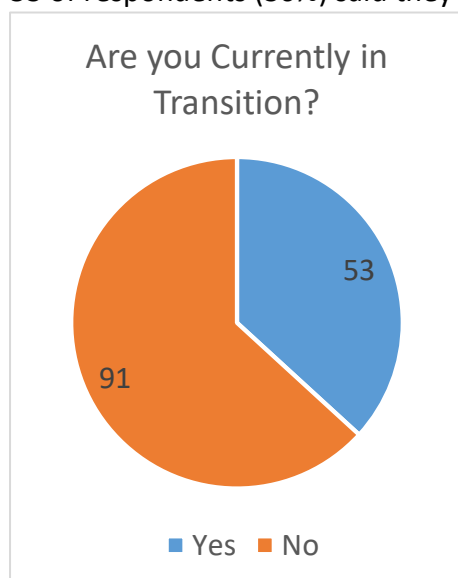
This question was asked so we could understand the scope of involvement and plan a way forward.



Transitions

As a ministry team we are clearly aware of the number of vacancies in the diocese at present. As such it felt necessary to get a glimpse of the number of Local Worship Leaders who were in a benefice/cluster in transition.

53 of respondents (36%) said they were currently in transition.

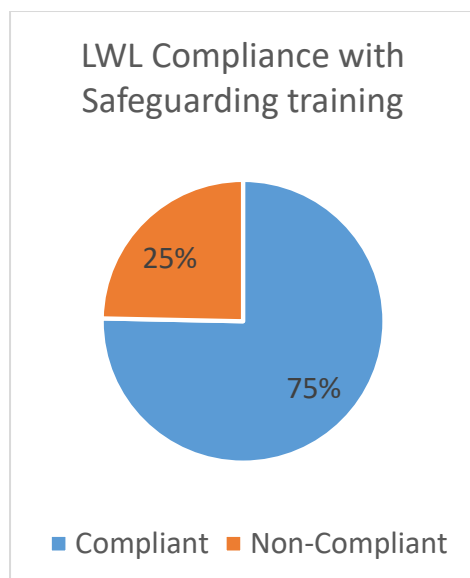


It should be noted that just because a Local Worship Leader is in a benefice/cluster in transition they are not necessarily without support as many have Associate Priests, PTOs and Licensed Lay Ministers (Readers) who help to head up these churches during this time. It does pose the question as to whether we, as a ministry team, need to enquire whether more support is needed in this time.

Safeguarding training compliance

It became clear from asking Local Worship Leaders when their last leadership level safeguarding training was a number of them were unaware of when they last did training and as such would not know when they needed to update their training.

Safeguarding compliance with Local Worship Leaders has been a challenge for some time however compliance has recently raised to 75% (full data from the safeguarding team) with more being done to increase this further.



Ongoing training

To enable us to put on relevant workshops, Local Worship Leaders were asked if there was any training they would like. The biggest responses were regarding giving talks and some refresher training with intercessions and other styles of worship also being requested. In February there is a joint training day with Local Pastoral Ministers where there will be an opportunity to look at other styles of worship and starting in September 2024 a new course will start for current Local Worship Leaders who want to dig deeper into worship and gather with others on a regular basis.

Conclusion

This was a useful exercise to get a snap shot of Local Worship Leader ministry in Truro Diocese at present.

It has highlighted the breadth and depth of services Local Worship Leaders are taking at the moment as well as some gaps we need to investigate (how to approach Local Worship Leaders involvement with funeral ministry and whether this is appropriate as well as the ongoing concern of safeguarding training compliance)

It has also helped to identify some opportunities for training and ongoing support to Local Worship Leaders.

Ultimately it has confirmed how much Local Worship Leaders are being used and valued across the Diocese and I thank them all for their ministry and work.

Written by Lydia Remick – Lay Ministries Development Officer