

2025 Updated Revisions of Stratton Deanery

This report presents the updated Deanery Plans, incorporating all recent revisions approved through the appropriate governance processes. To enhance clarity and transparency, an overview table at the beginning of the document outlines each change request, including the nature of the change, the date of approval, and links to the relevant section it affects.

Change requests have been noted alongside the original text and are clearly highlighted with red underline for ease of reference with a link back to the change request table. Corresponding endnotes provide further context and justification if needed, ensuring a clear audit trail.

These updates reflect ongoing developments and alignment with strategic priorities.

Deanery update with approved change request

Change Request	Changes	Date Approved	Link to change in text
1	<p>Proposal for the underspend of LICF from 2023 to be utilised as an offset on MMF call, utilising the Multiple Indices of Deprivation to ensure fair distribution.</p> <p>The proposal is to use the funding like this:</p> <p>Boscastle Group: £5181 Bude Coast & Country: £5925 North Kernow Benefice: £12894 Total: £24000</p>	13/05/2024	No link to main body of text as no financial table

Deanery Plan

Stratton Deanery

Version Number and Date V2, 10/06/2025

Approved by Deanery Synod 05.07.22

Rural Dean Rev. Rob Dickenson

Lay Chair Mrs Micheline Smith

PROCESS FOR THE CREATION OF THE DEANERY PLAN

Note

1.0 Consultation

2

1. The Deanery Plan was completed during 2019 and presented to Bishop Philip in February 2020. It involved extensive Pastoral reorganisation which was facilitated by the establishment of a Conventional District and formalised by Pastoral Measure in March 2021. The original consultation involved the entire Deanery being invited to take part in Leading Your Church into Growth and the plan was developed during Diocesan led AMD2 meetings, Deanery involvement in Leading your Church into Growth and training of the College of Clergy including both the Clerical and Lay membership
2. Since then, the Deanery College have continued to meet weekly and the clergy working in each of the three new Benefices have reported on the progress that has been made towards achieving the targets of the Deanery Plan. We have been unable to meet in person as a Deanery during the COVID pandemic but have kept in touch by virtual meetings and shared services.
3. In Spring 2022 the Laity met in two special meetings to discuss their hopes, fears and aspirations for the future of the deanery

4. We examined the statistics for the Deanery (Attached at APPENDIX 2) This exercise can be summarised as follows:

We looked at the statistics in detail when carrying out our Deanery re-organisation. We have only one large centre of population in our Deanery with 48% of the Deanery's population living here. A further 15% are based in two large villages/small towns. The remaining 37% are spread across eighteen rural villages/hamlets. In addition, these figures showed that 48% of the population live in 8.5% of the square mileage of the Deanery, a further 15% occupy just over 16% of the area. This means that well over a third of the population are spread over 75% of the Deanery's square miles. This obviously has huge implications for the clergy when involved in visiting and services. When carrying out our re-organisation we bore all this in mind. We are also aware that there is significant deprivation in many areas not all of which is accounted for in the statistics that are noted.

5. During 2021 we completed a series of Listening Exercises facilitated by our advisor, Rebecca Evans, the Notes for these are include at APPENDIX 4 and a summary is as follows:-

Initial meeting following On the Way Listening meetings

All the parishes approached the meetings very differently, but it was evident that from all the aim was about Churches working to enable witness in their communities. Whilst this emphasises that one size does not fit all, even within a deanery setting, there were nevertheless some themes that emerged from all:

International links

Transformation

Meeting people in the everyday/where they are

Nature/creation

Particular focal points:

Boscastle Group - liturgy and arts

- Finding ways to meet people where they are - sharing Bible stories in community setting.
- Developing new ways of worship eg weekly Zoom Evensong. Regular congregation including worshipers in Somerset and Sussex
- Developing Teatime Church for younger children

Bude Coast and Country Group - meeting the community outside of the church building and a continuing, particular mission to young people and families, Environmental considerations, updating liturgy.

North Kernow Group - family of churches/ fellowship plus focus on care for creation

Joint concerns: Community - a major concern for communities will be do we still have the buildings for our major life events?

How do we reach those who aren't here? How do we hear voices that haven't been heard? How do we get into the community? The answers will be different for rural and town churches.

How do we think about capacity and sustainability? What are we able to do?

Plan from 2020 overlaid into the On the Way process looks as follows:

Be a praying community	Fruitfulness	Christ's Church	Discipleship
Mission to families and children	Fruitfulness	Christ's Kingdom	Schools, children and youth
Be an outward looking church to make Christ known	Sustainability	Christ's Faithfulness	New faith/growing faith
Be welcoming:-in church, in our community, in our lives	Fruitfulness & sustainability	Christ's Church	Community life
Progress our international links	Fruitfulness	Christ's World	The global Church
Develop the St James Way	Sustainability	Christ's Gifts	Buildings/resources

Post Covid, it was thought that this plan was still viable moving forward but that the expected dates for action had to be modified.

Further work with the Laity in May 22 showed that these priorities are still foremost in the minds of the people who are working in the parishes. They summarised their needs as the following :

Priority:	Actions to achieve this:	Concerns to overcome:	Category:
Work closer as a deanery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel to other churches for services on a rota basis as opposed to deanery services • In the past, there was deanery-wide schools work for Open the Book and Experience Festivals. • Using Zoom to bring people together. • Invite Bishops or Archdeacon to give a talk that we can invite people to - AD Kelly will be asked to come to give an overview of roadshows. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders need the resources to lead • Sometimes a sense of competition between churches or feelings of insecurity in those that are smaller - need to value each for the part it brings to the whole. • Succession planning 	Christ's People
Greater confidence in prayer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deanery prayer via Zoom • Zoom church to continue for some services and discussion groups • Covid has helped people to find other ways to worship - let's explore what these are and see where we can join in. 		Christ's Faithfulness Christ's Church
Cost/maintenance/repair of buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide ranging review of all church buildings to focus our resources to support each other with funding and expertise • How do we share out resources and support each other with funding for the buildings? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building responsibilities are a massive disincentive to church members - sapping people's energy and has pushed many volunteers into retirement • We need time to grow the Church and not just seek people to come in 	Christ's gifts

		to sustain us by taking on roles/donating/caring for buildings	
Growth, mission and outreach Matthew 5:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish based mission and outreach based on relationship building • Recognition that the current state isn't working - how do we adapt our services/try new things - ask people what they think about the services, don't assume they want them to stay the same • How do we help one another to stand apart as Christians - show kindness/grace so people know us by our works • Setting up a deanery laity group across Zoom to look at specific issues • Be intentional about Church not just being on a Sunday but throughout the week - how do we grow this? • Half time post to focus on spirituality, prayer and the growth of discipleship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need a better understanding of where we have come from - how we are grouped as a deanery and what the history of the church in these places has been. • How do we challenge the way we are perceived by people outside the church? Is our view of how we are perceived accurate? 	Christ's Church Christ's Kingdom

Most of the priorities are closely aligned with the original plan but show some additional highlights and varied actions. There is one additional category which mentions the concerns about maintaining buildings. Part of this concern has been brought into focus by Covid, as people feel that their energy is being sapped by their work to maintain buildings whereas during the period where churches were closed, they were still able to maintain their faith and take part in worship. Over the next five years it was felt that an audit of the buildings should take place to rationalise their use and importance to communities.

DEANERY PLAN

Note

1.1 Vision & Mission Priorities

1. The overarching aim of the Deanery is to Make Christ known and grow the church.
2. At all times pray for God's guidance and listen to His directions.
3. Support financial liabilities into the future,
4. increase children's and families work,
5. to embrace change where it produces results and to be prepared to re-examine initiatives which do not do this.
6. to freshen Liturgy where this aids the achievement of our targets,
7. to work hard at constantly improving our welcome
8. to encourage personal ministries.
9. place safeguarding at the heart of our culture,
10. encourage the development of International links
11. In 2021 our House for Duty post in the North Kernow Benefice became vacant on the retirement of Rev Richard Ward-Smith and since then we have deliberated long and hard about the sustainability of this post, finally concluding in January 2022 that we need to plan to fill the post to assist in developing projects across the Deanery. This will be essential to the achievement of our aims to grow the church and although we will need significant funding from outside the Deanery it's success should ultimately make it affordable. An initial discussion document for this can be found at **APPENDIX 3** but work is ongoing in June 22 to develop a formal Job Description and apply for funding through the Diocese

3

2.1 Who we are

4

The Data Pack for the Deanery is included in the appendices

1. The Deanery consists of 23 churches organised into 16 parishes. There are three benefices, the boundaries of the two more rural of which encompass roughly the same populations and the third having a more urban character in part, has nearly double these figures.
2. There are three stipendiary clergy:-
 - 2.1. Rev David Barnes (Rural Dean) The Bude Coast and Country Benefice with five parishes and six churches
 - 2.1.1. Comprising one coastal town (Bude), and four mainly rural parishes
 - 2.1.2. There are seven active LWLs in the Benefice, one curate and a PTO
 - 2.2. Rev Teresa Folland, The North Kernow Benefice 5 churches and 5 parishes
 - 2.2.1. Includes two parishes very close to Bude, a large village parish and 2 very rural parishes - Morwenstow & Launcells
 - 2.2.2. There are 2 Readers, 2 PTOs & 6 LWLs
 - 2.3. Rev Heather Aston, The Boscastle Group of Parishes 6 parishes , 12 churches
 - 2.3.1. Two rural three church parishes, two village two church parishes (one with a Festival church and one with a small chapel) and two rural single church parishes
 - 2.3.2. The Rector has the services of one PTO and a Lay Reader plus 4 Worship Leaders

What people say about us?

- (Recent Baptism) Would just like to thank you and rev David, and the other lady for Willow's Christening on Sunday, it was a lovely service for her.
- (Adventure Church Litter Pick) Great evening ladies Lucas loved it talking all the way back and he picked up a bottle top on the way home .
- (New Adventure Church Members) Thank you so much, Elijah (and I) really loved our first adventure church 😊
- (Child passing on news of a church event) Just had very excited video call all about it! You guys do a wonderful job enriching the children of this village.

(Elderly lady without transport coming to a LWL Zoom Service) Was meant to be going to Poundstock Phil forgot and his phone line is down So Came to you No sound Pulled the plug out of the computer Shoved it back in again - Miracle - I enjoyed the service Thanks!

- Holiday makers who do not have Evensong in their home parishes, join Boscastle Churches weekly Zoom Evensong. Bude Coast and Country regularly welcome Zoom worshippers from London and Singapore
- Weekly email goes out from Boscastle Group to 144 people contains readings for morning service and Evensong, hymn sheet, and orders of service– some non-church attenders say they read the service, hymns and Bible readings at home and are pleased to receive them
- “I received such a warm welcome from Launcells when I went to hear my Banns being read, I am going to join my local church (Clarice - Kingswood, Bristol)”
- 4 different comments from people who have started attending Kilkhampton - along the lines of This isn't my style of worship/churchmanship, but (I feel welcomed) I feel this is where God wants me to be.

2.3 The issues we are facing

6

We are a fundamentally rural area with a scattered population and only one major town, Bude. The populations in the towns and coastal villages are often transitory, increasing dramatically during the summer. The Deanery is stretched out along the North Cornwall coast and transport and communications are problematical. The central part of the Deanery which includes parishes in the Bude Coast and Country Benefice and the Boscastle Group of Parishes has recently been designated as the most isolated place in the whole of Cornwall. We have a large number of churches serving small populations, putting a great strain on resources.

The pastoral reorganisation was completed in the only way possible to ensure that the populations were evenly spread making sure that pastoral care was adequate for everyone. This has unfortunately meant that church buildings have been unevenly shared and has highlighted the drain on finance that tiny populations have to bear to even maintain the insurance of their buildings. Some very small parishes have been combined into United Parishes, but this does not relieve the pressure to individually support their churches. Over the past two years the Deanery has been successful in paying its MMF on the basis of paying for the cost of ministry, but this is not thought to be sustainable into the future without serious growth. Intensive discussions have not found a solution to the lack of financial sustainability of a benefice with 12 churches to maintain in a rural area with dwindling congregations.

Sustainability does not just depend upon our ability to pay MMF but also upon the needs of the community. It would be impossible to cope without the minimum three clergy we decided upon in the original plan. The Deanery has to be worked around that.

Our MMF contributions have been maintained since the start of the plan but there is serious concern over the near future of this status.

Fruitfulness is not an issue, but sustainability may be an issue in a few places. One Parish is in consultation for closure of the church building.

Succession planning is a distinct worry across all of the levels of ministry in all of the parishes

Our plan was expected to be sustainable, but COVID has interrupted progress and we are not yet at the point where we can surge forward because we have to keep reconsidering gatherings and meetings. At the time of writing, the high COVID numbers are slowing down development plans

We are regrouping in order to move forward with our plan.

We are happy with our plan and we just want to refresh it.

We are aware that there are areas where we need more support, many churches are showing growth even if only in small numbers and this growth will create sustainability of the church in the communities.

C Our current fruitfulness & sustainability

Fruitfulness

The poor	Christmas Collections for Women's Refuge, Shoebox Appeal, Food Banks Children's Society, Salvation Army appeals, support for Bude Welcomes Refugees Group
Schools & YP	Open the book, School Assemblies, Adventure Church, Messy Church, Posada Events Christmas and other festivals, Saints and Sausages, Family/All Age Services, Tea Time Church, Sunday School. North Kernow SOCKS Youth Club Programme of half-termly visits to the church by local primary school - on variety of subjects within curriculum
Discipleship	Christians Together, Children's Youth work, Zoom Services, House Groups, Diocesan Online Courses, Alpha, HUBS group, House Groups, Christingle in schools and community, School assemblies, Free Family Fun Festival in August at Bude CAP, TLG (both via Christians Together) marriage prep, Benefice Lent Courses
Community Life	Street Pastors in Bude, Open Air Services (Beach, car parks, village greens). Volunteers involved in essential services and community groups. Pastoral Care Teams, Welcoming newcomers to the community, Use of church buildings for cultural experiences such as concerts, displays, galleries. Leading in celebration of National Events
Global Church	Continuing support for existing links, charitable events for current crises, Shoebox appeals.
Creation	Development of Environmental Policy during lockdown, Fair Trade churches, Living Churchyards, Wildlife preservation projects, efforts to improve carbon footprint, lighting, heating, plastic reduction, limiting paper use, recycling. youth beach cleans

Sustainability

New faith	Alpha, Start!, contacts with families at children's events, welcome for casual and holiday visitors Free Family Fun Day outreach
Growing faith	House Groups, HUBS, Boscastle Posada figures, families of Adventure Church members, Bible Study (College Meetings included) Study resources including Diocesan Courses, Redemptorist materials, etc. Continuing development of Local Worship Leaders
Leadership	College Meetings, Local Worship Leaders Meetings, Training courses, baptism and wedding ongoing contacts, C of E online resources, monthly ministry team lunch & meeting, bi-monthly Churchwarden meetings
Diversity	Enabling people to follow their own particular calling e.g LWL, LPLs, Telephone contacts, prayer rotas, Intercession writing, developing IT solutions. Encouraging people to use their gifts. Living in Love and Faith, Wide variety of Worship available BCP, CW, Taize, Prayer & Praise, etc public worship with communion by extension, Common Worship Morning and Evening Prayer, Family/All Age services,
Money	All churches striving to meet MMF commitments. Deanery Plan was developed to make this target achievable but has not proved to be sustainable yet - COVID has much to do with this. Buildings remain a drain on resources as regards maintenance, adaptations for modern worship, community use and utility bills plus the enormous costs of insurance. Several churches make regular substantial supportive contributions to overseas work and UK Mission Societies Progress is being made in contactless giving
Buildings	All but one of the 23 churches are listed, the majority are Grade 1. All churches kept in reasonable order to maintain their function as safe public buildings in the community. However, maintenance and Insurance costs are in many cases NOT sustainable by the local congregation.

3.1 What God is doing

Current activities that are seen as a blessing in the communities e.g Adventure Church, Morning Prayer on Zoom, Boscastle figures, weekly Zoom Evensong and weekly emailing of services
Lego Café, Men's Group, Fellowship groups, Community Lunch Groups, Ladies prayer group, targeted prayers in groups and by individuals, can all be seen as sparks of growth.
Living in Love and Faith has encouraged deeper thinking about inclusivity
Other new initiatives: Social Action Fund, Schools equipment Fund, support for families without internet devices.
North Kernow also has Choir, new people joining congregations, adult baptism & confirmation preparation, re(new)ed connections with schools, prayer & praise/Taize services and sees real growth in Sunday School & youth club.
We welcome the appointment of Steve and Julie Swann who are coming into the Methodist Circuit and their ecumenical input will be helpful, particularly in the area of children's work. Looking forward to increased liaison with our Methodist colleagues.
God is also drawing new people to join us for worship.
Bringing parishes within benefices closer together

3.2 What God has been saying *On the Way*

That our Bishop's conference findings were right and that we need to continue with that.
That now is the time to consider employment of a Missioner to assist across the Deanery and that we need help financially with this in order to drive forward to increase fruitfulness and sustainability.
That Covid has taught us we are more adaptable and open to change than we thought
New initiatives can be fruitful and there is a need for us to go out into the community to encourage others. We must use the human resources that we have and enable members to use their gifts.
Small steps make a big difference - in very small communities, very small increases are a great success and must be celebrated.
A major conclusion from the Lay consultation meetings was that we want to work closer as a Deanery, sharing our faith, praying and meeting together, learning from each other and supporting those who are struggling.

4.1 Becoming more fruitful and sustainable

Fruitfulness

The poor	Support for Social Action Fund, Schools equipment fund and internet support funds CAP Christians against poverty Schools & yp - improved links with schools, TLG (Transforming lives for Good)
Schools & YP	Improving Open the Book availability post COVID, developing youth work, continuing school assemblies. schools encouraged to use village churches to host large school events such as leavers' assembly; and also as a history and RE resource
Discipleship	Growth in Adventure Church participation, continually improve welcome Teatime and Messy Church Increase in number of house groups
Community Life	Continue to strengthen the ties with Christians Together, get more involved – one parishioner has become a school crossing patrol person - lollipop lady by day & night (also street pastor), large number joined Bude refugee support group - for Ukraine, N Kernow as a benefice offering homes plus support to Ukrainians - that is responding to needs. County Councillor also a church member (Shorne Tilbey)
Global Church	strengthen ties with overseas mission
Creation	Joining Creation Care and taking part in Diocesan initiatives such as electing Creation Care Champions, cutting carbon. expanding living churchyard initiatives, connections with school groups, environment added as a standing agenda item on PCCs, joining Green Kernow
Sustainability	
New faith	Mission initiatives, recruiting a Missioner to assist in the development of projects across the Deanery. Continuing to offer courses such as Alpha, Start & Being there. Encourage wedding couples to become regular worshippers, invite community to special services continually look at welcome

Growing faith	Songs of praise outside of the church raises profile, Labyrinth events, developing cafés in churches, prayer groups, faith courses, personal testimonies. House Groups
Leadership	Take advantage of the opportunities for training to develop confidence in people with gifts that they are currently insecure about.
Diversity of calling	Recognising how much we do now, improving our current offerings with an open mind to developing further ideas as fruitfulness allows. Encouraging more input from communities to support pastoral initiatives
Money	We understand that Financial stability requires a growing membership plus support from the community at large. Encouraging parishes to sign up to Parish Giving and increased adoption of electronic giving
Buildings	Our buildings are a major drain on financial resources and yet we still need to maintain them even if we use them less.

4.2 Our plans I – How we expect to change

11

We have discussed changing the recent structural reorganisation to make the distribution of churches more fair we think what we have got it right rather than not reached a conclusion. We are now at a place where we are looking to better support & resource. We have carefully and prayerfully discussed the future of the half time post recently vacated by Rev R. Ward Smith. The current situation is illustrated by the attached discussion notes (**SEE Appx 5.Consideration of the HFD post formerly occupied by RWS**) and are now considering the details of a Job Description in preparation for a bid for funding.

We continue to discuss Liturgy and Welcome in our Benefices

We have always said that we need to stop doing things that do not fulfil the major aims of the Deanery – These are to Make Christ known and Grow the church plus to become fruitful and sustainable. Some churches are looking at Liturgy becoming more adaptable and user friendly and moving away from BCP. Some have already changed certain areas of Liturgy and in the process reduced the reliance upon published services whilst still including the required content (eg WSM Monthly All Age services) Boscastle Group has a new Teatime service and is also moving towards common liturgy across the Benefice

There are areas which have too few Local Worship Leaders, we may encourage further training so that we can participate fully in the Diocesan vision of the Saints Way where lay and ordained ministries show God's transforming presence in our community and common life.

4.3 Our plans II - Specific actions & projects

St James Way

This project is delayed at the moment due to pressure of work elsewhere but remains a Deanery Wide aspiration to unify the Parishes throughout the Deanery

International links

Boscastle Group has link with Malawi children's hospital

Week St Mary continues to remember Mzimvubu in prayers and Poughill have a range of International links that members support In the North Kernow Benefice a Ukrainian refugee support group is starting, Registered with Sanctuary Housing, the Government initiative etc.. Bude Welcomes Refugees will also be offering support. Several homes are offered for refugees, including rooms at the Rectory.

Poughill also continues support for medical and dental support projects in Africa

St Andrews, Stratton wants to offer the back of the church as a meeting place and worship space for Ukrainian refugees.

Environment - North Kernow Benefice Living Hedge Project

Bude Coast and Country Benefice Environment Plan was developed through the Green Church Lent course

Appendices

5. App 1 Risks

Appendix 1 - Risks

The following are the main risks associated with the Deanery Plan.

Risk	Consequence	Likelihood	Impact	Score	Controls/Actions
Burn out of clergy and lay leadership	Activities not taking place, poor quality services both inside and outside of the church	HIGH	HIGH		Increase the number of lay leaders and their back up, Ensure everyone has time off and recognise signs of strain.
Retirement of Clergy – inadequate Succession Planning	Lapse in leadership leading to delays in moving forward with mission and ministry	HIGH	Mod to High		Prepare for retirement with clergy and lay members in advance, recruit people to prepare the statement, Plan Time and expertise required to produce a Statement of Needs
Unattractive Rural Cornish location for clergy moving to work in Cornwall	The challenges of the management of a benefice in this deanery are immense and clergy may not be willing to relocate to Cornwall. Problems include employment opportunities for spouses. Younger clergy with families find it difficult to make the decision to move here, only clergy near to retirement may be willing to apply	HIGH	HIGH		Ensure there is an adequate support organisation in each benefice to reduce the demands of administration. Provide good information about local opportunities , education etc plus highlight opportunities for development within the Deanery
Erosion of congregations due to the “time out” caused by COVID, illness and loss of older members	Reduction in support across the Deanery and in particular congregations	MOD	MOD		Encourage younger members by programmes of fruitfulness.

NOTE : We see no value in scoring Risks and have used this part of the report to remind us of the risks identified within the document