

DIOCESAN GROWTH STRATEGY

This strategy is brought to Diocesan Synod for approval prior to Bishop's Council considering an application to the national Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board for the funding necessary to carry out the strategy, and considering the DBF's contribution to this strategy.

1. Overview

We have seen considerable decline in church attendance over many years, coupled with an increase in the average age of those attending worship in our churches. The covid pandemic made this decline much steeper. Overall, the

Church of England has lost one in five of its Sunday worshipers since before COVID. For children at worship, the impact is greater still.

In 2023 (the latest year for which we have data), just over 28,000 people worshipped in our churches in a typical week – but just twelve years earlier the numbers were half as much again – 43,700 – similar to the pattern of decline we've seen nationwide. But not all the churches in our diocese follow the same pattern. Between 2019 and 2023, 67 (or one in five) of our 348 parishes grew numerically, whilst four in five declined.

This document presents a Diocesan Growth Strategy – a plan that in its first phase, under God's grace, might see growth over the next ten years of between 3,000 and 4,300 in the numbers attending church, including up to 1,600 children and young people. The approach described in this strategy would be a £22.3m project over ten years, for which we will seek initial funding of £12.2m from the Diocesan Investment Programme, with contributions of £5.1m from the DBF (largely through ministry cost not covered by Parish Share) and £5.0m from parishes (making contributions towards the cost of children, youth or families workers).

The core of the strategy is to take approaches that have been proven to be successful through SDF and other projects and expand them across a wider cross-section of the diocese. By learning from the past, and adopting more rigorous models of implementation, we seek even greater fruitfulness than we have seen previously. The strategy seeks growth across all traditions and contexts, but because they are less well represented in our churches, particularly amongst children and young people, together with their

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families. We also want to emphasise those communities where a smaller than average percentage of people come to church, especially where there is a high level of deprivation.

Following our three bishops presenting the strategic pillars at the May 2024 Diocesan Synod, this strategy has been refined following feedback from a series of ten consultations and other meetings with SDF project leaders held in January and February. (See Annex Five).

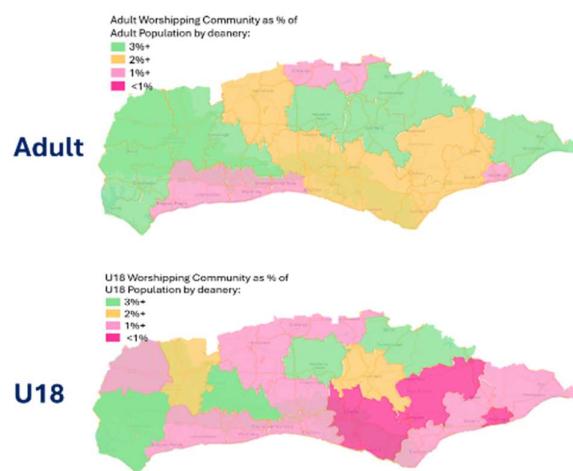
2. Context

The Diocese of Chichester essentially covers the counties of East and West Sussex. Population is largely (63%) along the coastal strip at the bottom – including Bognor, Worthing, Hove, Brighton, Eastbourne and Hastings, with wealthier, more rural parts of the county north of this including the South Downs national park.

Average incomes across Sussex are below those for the UK, and there are some more significant areas of deprivation along the coastal strip and in Crawley. The diocese currently spends just over £1 million a year subsidising ministry in parishes which are in the 20% of the most deprived parishes nationally. In terms of age demographics, worshipping communities in Sussex are slightly older than the Church of England at large (e.g. 36.4% aged over 70 compared with a national C of E figure of 35.4%).

The proportion of the population attending worship at a Church of England church varies considerably around the diocese, with the higher engagement levels typically seen in the deaneries further north. Engagement with children is lower than with adults.

Over the past ten years the Diocese has engaged in three largely successful SDF programmes, which have sought to revitalise churches through Apostolic Partnerships (our term for Church Planting).



3. Vision and Strategy

Our SDF projects have been fruitful in a small number of parishes, albeit important ones. They have consumed a significant amount of energy and focus, and we have not had the financial or human resource to provide similar focus elsewhere, with the result that we have seen above average decline in many other areas around the diocese. We now need a diocesan-wide strategy that will provide growth in a significant number of parishes, simultaneously making them more sustainable.

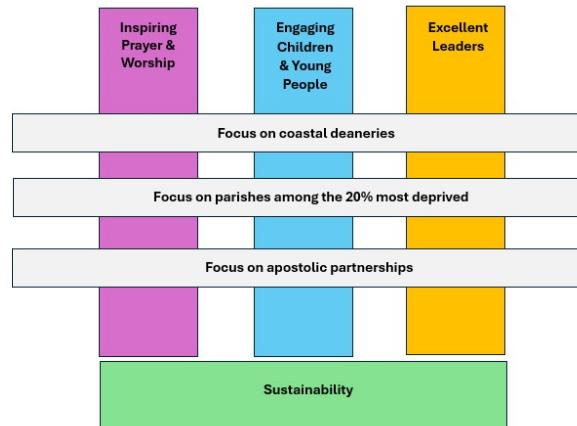
Our diocesan vision remains unchanged - to encourage people across Sussex to know, love and follow Jesus and to grow as disciples in worship and witness to the truth of the gospel. We have a vision of four *mores* - becoming:

- More open – a sign of being one
- More converted to Jesus Christ – a sign of being holy
- More generous – a sign of being catholic
- More engaged – a sign of being apostolic.

As we think about how we approach the next ten years, our bishops have identified three strategic pillars at the core of our strategy, underpinned by the need for increased sustainability:

- Inspiring Prayer and Worship
- Engaging Children and Young People
- Excellent Leaders.

In the strategy set out in this paper we have chosen to prioritise three strands going across these priorities:



First, a focus on Coastal Deaneries. The maps shown above demonstrate that we are connecting less well with the populations of larger towns and urban areas along the coast. As the Church of England, we seek to be a presence in each and every community, and to minister to the entire population not just those who choose to attend church.

Second, we choose to give a priority to those in our most deprived communities. The Church has a long heritage of doing so, following the gospels' demonstration of Christ's love for the poor.

Third, in this strategy we focus on working in partnership – asking churches to work together to achieve greater fruitfulness than working alone.

The next three sections expand on what the outworking of the strategy might be expected to look like.

4. Inspiring Prayer and Worship

Principles:

- The first commandment is this... *'He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.”'* (Matthew 22.37) Prayer and worship are primary ways we express our love for and praise to God. Therefore, encounter with/experience of him through enabling prayer and worship – especially through the sacraments – should be a top missional priority. Any decrease in numbers of stipendiary clergy should not detrimentally impact the access of anyone to high quality sacramental worship and preaching.
- Prayer and worship – whatever the theological tradition - is the bedrock of everything we do: *'Pray without ceasing'* (1 Thess. 5.17). At a time when society (and the church?) is becoming more target driven, mental health is at crisis level and the church seems dominated by despair/angst, we need to fall back in love with God and the gospel. Augustine, in his Confessions says: *'You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.'*
- A church building is God's house and a vehicle for mission so should be accessible/open for people to pray, worship and encounter him, including those living or working in the parish who don't ordinarily attend services.
- Prayer and worship aren't just things we do in church, but also at home and in schools. They involve the whole person – heart, soul and mind.

Outworking:

1. **The plan sees the reinvigoration of at least twenty three churches** in the first phase of the programme through either Apostolic Partnerships or revitalisation, with a further thirteen envisaged for the second phase. This includes extension of our successful SDF programmes. Over the past ten years we have engaged in fourteen Apostolic Partnerships across the diocese, and these have, on average, seen growth of 72 adults and 28 young people. See Annex One for a more detailed description of Apostolic Partnerships and Revitalisation.

2. **Increasing sustainability of smaller churches** by rebalancing the provision of stipendiary ministry in the diocese towards the areas with greater population. We remain committed to the parish system with continued provision of high quality ministry of Word and sacrament, in order that the people of God are gathered, fed, formed and sent out confidently in mission. Alongside pastoral reorganisation, we will commission focal ministers in at least thirty smaller churches to provide focused local leadership with the expectation of modest growth¹ in these churches despite a reduction in stipendiary ministry. Focal ministry is an emerging model across the Church of England that appoints local leaders, known as focal ministers, in smaller churches or communities that are part of multi-church benefices to become the local “face of the church” under the oversight of their incumbent. Some focal ministers will be deacons or priests (SSMs or PTO), others Lay Apostolic Workers or Readers, depending on what is appropriate in the context. Such models can lead to a more sustainable and regular pattern of worship, providing greater continuity of the ministry of word and sacrament. See Annex Two for more information.

Other pastoral reorganisation will enable other parishes to make a more sustainable contribution through Parish Share towards average Parish Ministry Costs.

3. We will need to become more effective at helping contacts become members – enabling those who encounter the church to explore a pathway to faith. We are providing new catechetical resources to support baptism and confirmation preparation, and to support ongoing formation.

5. Children and Young People

Principles

- Ministry and mission with children, youth and families is not solely the domain of professional, paid workers. Every parish in any context can welcome and nurture children, youth and families in the faith and should strive to be intergenerational.
- Whether or not a parish is able to afford to pay workers for ministry with children, young people and families, it will also need volunteers, who need to be trained and resourced.
- There should be a greater sense of flow and continuum in Christian nurture from toddlers, primary, secondary, young adults, middle aged etc. Throughout this continuum there need to be pathways to and through faith such that formation is lifelong.
- There are 3 key communities of growth: church, family and school. Strategically we need to work on the overlap between these 3 communities so ensure they’re all working together to form disciples.
- It is of central importance that clergy and laity are confident in knowing and telling the Christian story. Adults in churches should be confident in responding to children’s questioning and curious about learning with younger disciples. Young people want to participate in and experience authentic faith and worship.

Outworking:

1. **We plan to increase paid Children and Youth worker resource available to give greater capacity for missional outreach activity**, especially building on relationships with the 150 church schools across the diocese. We will increase the focus on proven good practice, supporting with common resources. We expect to be able to support the provision or extension of paid resource in 37 churches in the first phase.
2. **We will affirm and encourage the home as the ‘little church’**, providing parents, grandparents and families with resources such that people can grow together in the faith and in their life of

¹ On the basis of learning from eleven other dioceses alongside limited learning in Chichester.

prayer and worship throughout the week. Youth, children and families team should work collaboratively with the Education team, seeking better integrative working and thinking. To affirm and encourage the role of grandparents in Christian nurture.

3. **Encouraging greater integration between our Church schools and parish ministry**, supported by the Education team and children, youth and families team (within Apostolic Life) working in a more integrated and effective way. Exploring greater use of chaplaincy in a variety of models- ordained, parish workers spending some time in schools, or voluntary chaplains. Developing the Growing partnerships initiative.

6. Excellent Leadership

Principles:

- All Christians are called to a life of service and witness by virtue of their baptism and called to be formed and conformed into the image of Christ. Clergy and lay ministers should therefore have a culture of lifelong learning and Christian formation, which they take responsibility for as disciples of Christ.
- We need ordained and lay leaders in the church with a depth of spiritual life who are strong, missional, loving, creative and collaborative ministers of the gospel.
- A key strategic priority is providing high quality clergy and lay ministers to ensure the provision of sacramental ministry and teaching in every parish within the diocese. This requires an effective vocations strategy, discernment process and MDR process and also pastoral oversight, mentoring, fellowship and ongoing CMD.
- Laity must be encouraged and equipped to be confident Christians in their roles and jobs in wider society, and in their ministries within the Church.

Outworking:

We plan to:

1. **develop a more proactive vocations strategy** that encourages, nurtures and calls out candidates for ordained and lay ministries. This to flow from a differently structured team within Apostolic Life.
2. **assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of our current suite of licensed, authorised and locally commissioned lay ministries** (readers, lay apostolic workers, ALMs, LMCs) and how they are called out, trained (initially and ongoing) and developed.
3. **develop high quality training and support for salaried children's, youth and family workers**, both initially and ongoing. To develop training for those who manage them.
4. **analyse what lifelong learning and formation looks like** for lay and ordained leaders and then to develop appropriate pathways, support and relevant and high quality training that also engages in practical skills.
5. **undertake more strategic mentoring and nurturing of clergy**, so good leaders can become excellent. This will include use of MDRs, peer groups to provide oversight and accountability, redeployment and succession planning. To develop and pilot a new year-long leadership programme (c.12 in a cohort) aimed at clergy after they have completed their initial period of first incumbency.
6. **develop, pilot and roll out training and mentoring for clergy and appropriate lay leaders in initiating and developing apostolic partnerships**, encouraging this in all traditions represented in the diocese and in every type of context e.g. urban and rural.

7. Sustainability

Principles:

- We are stewards of all that God has entrusted to us. Our use of the financial resources entrusted to us is a spiritual matter and not just a financial one.
- Generosity is an important Christian value – both in individual giving, in parish contributions to the household of faith and in our use of diocesan finances. We strive for equal generosity, not necessarily equal contributions (2 Corinthians 8:11-15).

Outworking

1. As we are seeing sustained shortfalls in Parish Share contributions, we are planning to make some reductions in the number of stipendiary clergy.
2. We expect that our most deprived parishes will not be able to contribute the full Parish Ministry Cost. These parishes are currently subsidized by just over £1 million a year (the gap between PMC and Parish Share contributed). We expect this level of subsidy to continue.
3. In other areas, we will reluctantly need to reduce the provision of stipendiary clergy to a more affordable level. Where this happens, we will try to find alternative ministry solutions that enable parishes to flourish under a reduced level of stipendiary ministry e.g. focal ministry as described in Section 4.2
4. We have learned from our SDF and other programmes that it takes time for an incremental parish post to become sustainable. Our strategy now allows seven years, rather than five, for this.

8. Support and Programme Management

Our main outworking of the strategy is to place additional resources in parishes. It is not our desire to increase the team at Church House, but to a limited extent we will need to do so in order to provide the programme management that is required to deliver this ambitious programme, and to satisfy the needs of the national church. Nearly all of the resources described in this section will be funded by the national church, with two exceptions. But even in these exceptions where the DBF will pick up the cost, we have planned that it will not be borne by Parish Share (i.e. included in Parish Ministry Cost) during the lifetime of this programme (until 2035).

We will apply for funding to continue existing roles that are already funded by the national church:

Head of Strategic Programmes (full-time) and Project Delivery Manager (0.6 FTE, currently Geoff Payne). We have already secured funding through to the end of 2026, and will seek to extend these until the end of the Programme.

We have funding for a Project Finance Officer (0.5 FTE) to manage grant claiming until end 2027. The role is currently vacant, but we would aim to fill this until the end of the Programme. Claiming the funding from the national church for such a diverse and complex programme will require resource.

We currently have funding for our Children and Youth Strategy Officer (0.5 FTE) until the end of 2026 (currently Rev'd Jamie Gater). This role would be extended until 2030, but re-focused onto the delivery of the Children and Youth programme.

We would seek DIP funding for one additional role until 2030 – a Programme Resources & Comms Officer. This role would provide good news stories to illustrate what is happening in parishes, develop website content and create and signpost quality resources e.g. for home as little church project.

The two exceptions mentioned earlier that will require DBF funding are:

- Firstly, we will need to make some contribution to the Head of Strategic Programmes role, and have planned to contribute half of the cost from 2030 to 2034.
- With the focus on Children and Youth, we believe it is right to appoint a Children and Families worker to work alongside Dan Jenkins as Youth Officer. The DBF used to employ such a role but it was taken

out as part of a cost saving exercise some years ago. Children and Youth ministry is vitally important, and we think this should probably become a completely permanent role.

However, given the challenges of meeting PMC, both of these roles will be funded until 2034 from either the Pastoral Fund or from Transitional funding that we expect to receive from the national church over the next few years.

9. Strategic Choices

Any good strategy makes choices. Those inherent within the proposed approach are:

This is a strategy that focuses on numerical growth. Other things are also important, but this is the main objective of this strategy largely because it is the main objective of the principal funder. The growth we seek is particularly in the number of young disciples and their families so that our parish communities more closely match the demographics of the wider parish. Spiritual growth should then follow from good nurture, catechesis and ongoing discipling.

We will invest in a broader range of parishes, scaling up existing missional approaches that have proved successful. Our first phase programme will strengthen around 120 parishes, with funding primarily focused on the provision of additional paid resource. The second phase should strengthen around a further 50 parishes.

We will prioritise contexts that have higher levels of deprivation, are less well resourced and have larger populations, which in geographic terms means an emphasis on the coastal strip and Crawley. These parishes are also resource poor, and less able to fund missional engagement themselves. Prioritising does not mean an exclusive focus and other parishes will receive investment where there is a clear case for this.

Within this focus, we are identifying Hastings as a particular area for investment. This is on the basis of particularly low levels of churchgoing and high levels of deprivation.

We are choosing to primarily invest in approaches that we know work. Both the missional challenge and the need for increased sustainability are urgent. We have clear evidence that apostolic partnerships / revitalisation lead to growth, and that investing in children and young peoples workers, alongside volunteers, makes it easier for churches to scale up their work with young people and engage in missional activity.

Which parishes receive investment will be determined over time on the basis of their context, and a clear plan for each that sets out missional intent and desired outcomes for growth, and how that growth will be achieved. Each project will require episcopal sign-off, and where there is project investment, this will require approval from the relevant project board.

We also want to offer something for every parish that wants to grow. We will ensure that there is a menu of support and development options for every parish (see Annex Three). This will also allow for additional missional innovation and creativity through an enhanced Mission Fund.

10. Illustrative Outcomes

First, let us consider what would happen, if we do nothing. Unless something different happens, we are likely to see the downward trends in attendance continuing. Extrapolating existing trends by 2034 we might expect to see:

- A further reduction in the number of adults in our churches to 22,500 (AWA), a drop of 18% compared with 2023.
- A further reduction in the number of children and young people in our churches to 2,100, a drop of 30% compared with 2023 (AWA).

We already have the funding to complete our SDF projects, and if they deliver the fruit that is expected, then these numbers won't be quite as bad:

- The number of adults would be 24,200 (AWA) a drop of 12%.
- The number of children and young people in our churches would only have declined by 10%, to 2,800 (AWA).

Next, we turn to consider what fruit the strategy might deliver, under God's grace.

Which parishes receive investment will be determined over time. However, to test out the validity of the strategy, we have carried out an analysis of all of our parishes, creating one possible scenario for investment to understand what the potential impact might be.

This scenario envisaged...

- Ten apostolic partnerships where a leader and some people transferred from one church to help revitalise another church. Funding provided for additional paid resource e.g. Operations Manager or Children and Youth worker. In six, there was a planting curate who had served their title in the sending church, in the other four a planting Associate Vicar had been in the sending church for a year to build relationships.
- The revitalisation of a further 13 parishes, whereby again additional resource was provided, sometimes alongside a new leader.
- Supporting the appointment of a Children's, Youth or Families worker, or supporting the extension of the hours of an existing one, in 25 parishes (excluding the ones above). Helping the ministry of nineteen other parishes who already employ a Children, Youth or Families worker to be more fruitful as a result of implementing learning and good practice.
- The identification and training of a focal minister in thirty churches in some cases alongside pastoral reorganisation. Following re-organisation, we expect another twenty parishes will be more sustainable as a result of being able to contribute, in Parish Share, a greater proportion of Parish Ministry Cost.
- Twelve parishes being willing to provide "Apostolic Resourcing", typically larger churches having a clear commitment to make available resources to support growth in other parishes. (This is an enabler of growth elsewhere, rather than growth in the resourcing church.) This may mean a variety of things depending on geography, context and tradition.

Looking at the evidence of previous projects in this and other dioceses, we might expect that this example scenario would result in:

- us having turned the corner on adult attendance, with 2034 numbers just higher than in 2023.
- seeing a significant improvement in U16 attendance, with 2034 numbers potentially exceeding 4000, up 36% compared with 2023.
- 60 parishes having higher congregations than they did in 2023.
- At least 120 parishes being more sustainable than they were in 2023.
- A "greener" map of the proportion of children and young people engaging with church, with 4 deaneries having changed colour compared with 2023.

Outcomes we Seek

As a result of this scenario, we have developed a set of "core" outcomes based on prior experience in either the Diocese of Chichester or from other dioceses, and consequently we have a high degree of confidence that these can be delivered. We also have a set of "stretch" outcomes that are based on

improving missional design and the quality of execution on the basis of lessons learned. Over the next ten years we believe that we should seek as a first phase:

- Growth of between 3000 (core) and 4300 (stretch) people worshipping in our churches, of which 1100 (core) and 1700 (stretch) are aged under 16.
- This growth to be skewed towards the deaneries with the lowest engagement with children and young people so that the lowest four deaneries have significantly greater engagement² with children and young people in 2034 than in 2024.
- 42 churches being numerically larger in 2029 than in 2024, and 60 churches being numerically larger in 2034 than in 2024. 120 churches being financially more sustainable in 2034 than in 2024 (able to contribute a larger percentage of Parish Ministry Cost in Parish Share).
- In terms of vocations, we are seeking to nurture new vocations to both lay and ordained ministry, aiming to double the number of those entering training for ordained ministry to twenty a year, and seeking 150% growth in the number of ALMs ministering across the diocese to 500 (currently 197).

11. The Project Plan

Our plan has a number of elements to it, and each of the principal elements is planned to be executed in a number of parishes. We are planning on two phases to the strategy. Those shown as pink are a potential second phase, not modelled in the example scenario. This second phase would be conditional upon a successful first phase, and could lead to a second application for follow on funding around 2029.

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Apostolic Partnerships – Planting Curate ^[1]				2	2	2	2 ^[3]	2
Apostolic Partnerships – Associate Vicar ^[2]			2	2	2	2	2	
Revitalisations		4	3	3	3	3	2	2
Churches starting Focal Ministry	3	6	12	9	5	3	3	
Extensions / Additional CY&F	4	10	3	2	2	2	2	

Notes:

[1] This is the date of the apostolic partnership. The curates begin their curacy three years earlier.

[2] This is the date of the apostolic partnership. Associates serve a year prior to this in the resourcing church.

[3] 2031 Apostolic Partnerships with planting curates – the costs of the curacies are included in Phase 1, the costs of the partnerships would be included in Phase 2.

² Measured as % of U16 population engaged in our churches.

12. The Finance Plan

The finance plan is almost independent of which parishes receive the investment, as the likely investment will be similar whichever parishes are selected. In total, the programme is likely to cost £22.4 million, split as follows.

- An application for Diocesan Investment Programme funding of £12.3 million.
- Provision of Diocesan funding of £5.1 million.
- Contributions of £5.0 million from parishes – largely in contributing to their employed Children, Youth and Families workers or Operations Managers. This excludes Parish Share contributions and other ongoing ministry costs.

Whilst these seem large numbers, it should be remembered that the programme will function over a ten year period.

The broad investment plan between the various streams is:

	DIP	DBF	Parish	Total
Apostolic Partnerships and Revitalisation	8,099,591	3,689,027	2,952,189	14,740,808
Children, Youth & Families Stream	1,795,991		2,049,127	3,845,118
Capacity	1,787,656	774,192		2,561,848
Mission Fund	400,000	550,000		950,000
Focal Ministry	182,892	133,394		316,286
Total	12,266,130	5,146,613	5,001,316	22,414,059

The Operating Committee have considered the DBF's funding contribution. During the lifetime of the strategy (until 2034) this would be sourced from the Pastoral Fund³, and would not be an increase in Parish Ministry Cost. Effectively it expects that the DBF may have an operational deficit for a number of years as a result of keeping ministry levels in a number of parishes despite parish share contributions not covering PMC, whilst over time parishes are able to steadily increase Parish Share contribution as the numbers attending the revitalised churches grows.

It is expected that there is a reasonable chance (under average equity performance conditions) that the pastoral fund may be of its current size, in ten years time, after the above investments. This is complex and involves a number of assumptions.

13. Risks and Delivery Confidence

Annex Four provides a more detailed risk assessment. There are some risks that cannot be managed internally. Two of these affecting the prospects for growth programme-wide are:

- The national reputation of, and trust in, the Church of England remaining at low levels leading to a significant barrier to the willingness of people to engage with their local church.
- A structural split in the Church of England on theological grounds, most likely as a result of differences over sexuality and gender. This would cause significant disruption and distraction, as well as potentially significant upheaval in the church economy.

In terms of programme risks the principal ones are:

³ With the potential that some can be sourced from currently proposed transition funding from the national church.

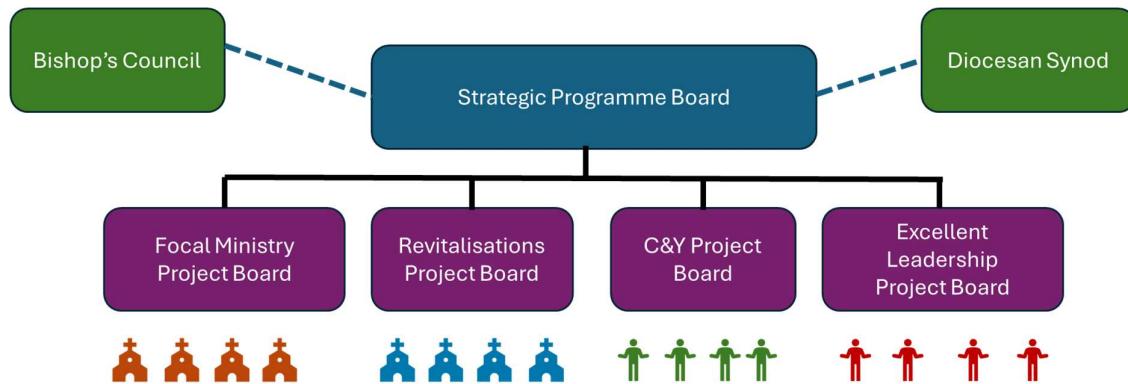
- **Strategy is too slow** in addressing declining and ageing congregations. This is mitigated by the diocesan strategy seeking to impact a large number of parishes over the next 10 years. Focus on doing simple, proven things well in a variety of contexts should provide fruit more quickly.
- **Poor delivery.** Having a strategy that works across a large number of places means that poor delivery in any one parish has a smaller overall impact. It does increase the monitoring and support challenges, requiring some (DIP funded) investment in support from Church House.
- **Recruitment of children and youth officers is difficult**, meaning that plans are delayed whilst recruitment happens or need to appoint and train less experienced individuals. Plan is to pay higher salaries which should attract better trained leaders, and support for a longer period of time for roles to become sustainable. Diocesan help with recruitment process, and developing recruitment and training pathways. In some cases, we are looking to extend hours of existing workers which avoids recruitment risk.
- **Insufficient vocations/volunteers** – We are expanding our vocations work, both lay and ordained; and will develop tactical focus on certain key volunteers e.g. people to resource children's work alongside a paid leader.

Overall, we believe this programme has a reasonably high delivery confidence. We believe programme risk is reduced by spreading investment around the diocese, across traditions and contexts, and by focusing on largely proven approaches. Ten years of learning through SDF, which is ongoing, coupled with a focus on improving quality of execution through that learning supports this. Having said this, there is additional complexity and risk that will not see equal fruitfulness across all traditions.

14. Programme Governance

The diagram below summarises proposed governance arrangements for the programme.

Each of the major strands has a Project Board focusing on delivery of that particular strand



Programme oversight is provided by the Strategic Programme Board. Its major functions are:

- Ensuring overall programme delivery and that high level outcomes are achieved
- Oversight of resource allocation between programme strands
- Major programme-wide issue resolution

The Strategic Programme Board will include senior staff⁴, representation from those experienced in this kind of missional engagement from around the diocese, representation from the national church and an independent external perspective.

The Strategic Programme Board will report progress to both Bishop's Council and Diocesan Synod on an annual basis.

⁴ Including both bishops and archdeacons, and colleagues from Church House.

Each of the underlying strands has a Project Board which will:

- Ensure project delivery and that outcomes are achieved
- Have oversight of participating parishes, and
- Improve the quality of delivery through continuing to learn from projects within and outside the diocese.
- Approve applications from parishes for engagement.

The responsibility for **individual project** execution will lie locally, but with clear expectations regarding outcomes and reporting, and a formal process to agree changes to outcomes or budget. Strong local ownership, but with accountability, feels to us to be the right balance. There will be support available from the Diocesan team and Apostolic Resourcing churches to help overcome issues.

ANNEX ONE

Apostolic Partnerships and Revitalisation

Apostolic Partnership⁵

This is Chichester's term for Church Planting/Revitalisation and in the context of this strategy it refers to a leader, together with a number of people from a resourcing church will move to revitalise a less resourced church. The leader will typically be either a curate, who joined the resourcing church with the expectation of planting at the end of curacy, or an Associate Vicar, who is likely to have been a part of the resourcing church for a shorter period of time, with a principal focus on developing relationships to build the partnership team. We will look to extend some of our successful SDF project initiatives into this stream.

Revitalisation

Similar to an Apostolic Partnership, but without the transfer of a planting group. Most often this will include the recruitment of a new priest, accompanied by some additional resourcing e.g. enabling the appointment of a community worker for deprived estates, or a children and youth worker. The project will have clear objectives and plans, which will be reviewed in the same way as an Apostolic Partnership. Other dioceses have found that this model of revitalisation can be successful in Catholic parishes.

Review of Impact

Over the past ten years, there have been a range of apostolic partnerships across the diocese, where in various ways one church has partnered with another church with the objective of seeing growth. The data on these is below. Some of these have been part of SDF projects, others have arisen in different ways. The data on growth is shown below. These have received significantly different levels of funding, and there is no direct correlation between the level of investment and the amount of fruit that has been seen. In part, this is due to where funding is required for the building which increases spend, is required for that building to be fit for purpose, but doesn't in and of itself, lead to missional impact.

Apostolic Partnerships 2014 - 2024

Parish	2014 AWA Adult	2014 AWA U16	2023 AWA Adult	2023 AWA U16	AWA Adult Change 2014 - 2023	AWA U16 Change 2014 - 2023
St Wilfrid's, Bognor	171	27	221	20	50	-7
St Andrew's, Moulsecoomb ⁶	41	4	31	7	-10	+3
St Cuthman's, Whitehawk, Brighton	64	2	69	16	5	14
All Saints, Patcham w Ascension, West Dean	76	12	70	10	-6	-2
St Matthias, Brighton & St Richard's Hollingdean	41	9	143	56	102	47
Holy Trinity, Hastings	55	1	338	120	283	119
Holy Trinity, High Hurstwood	43	12	32	9	-11	-3
St John's, Crawley	91	13	273	41	182	28
St Leonard's, Aldrington	29	5	131	38	102	33
St Michael's and All Angels, Eastbourne	79	3	102	50	23	47
Total Apostolic Partnerships	690	88	1,410	367	720	279
Apostolic Partnerships Growth/Decline					104%	167%
Rest of Diocese Growth / Decline	32,716	5,100	24,234	2,964	-26%	-42%

⁵ Whilst we use the term more widely within the diocese, within the context of this strategy and our application to the national church it will have this specific application.

⁶ Data for Moulsecoomb is for 2021 as the partnership began in 2022. Numbers declined between 2014 and 2021.

Review of Learning

Leadership	<p>Several resourcing churches in receipt of SDF funding have had a change of leadership of the last ten years, which has disrupted growth and extended the time frame to achieve the project outcomes.</p> <p>We consider that when operating a family of churches, there needs to be an Associate Minister in the resource church. Those in the second chair need the ability to lead well. There is a lack of people available for the second chair, and a lack of training for the second chair.</p>
Curate pipeline	<p>The availability of curates with the right skills and expectations has been challenging in some instances, and we have in some cases appointed curates who have turned out not to possess the necessary skills.</p> <p>Some planting curates have not had clear expectations as to where they will be planting at the end of their curacy. The earlier this happens the easier it is likely to be to retain curates through to planting.</p> <p>Post-covid, Curates coming out of non-residential colleges have not necessarily had the depth of formation, leading to formation in calling being done in the first year of their curacy. Revitalisation projects need well-formed Curates.</p> <p>An alternative has been to appoint a final year curate or Associate Vicar for a year at the Resourcing church prior to planting/revitalising. Feedback from one of these people has indicated this isn't a long time to build up the necessary relationships, although the lack of people willing to move in this instance may have been more to do with the distance involved (Brighton to Crawley).</p>
Sustainability	<p>It is important to identify early on which roles are transformation roles (which will not be needed after the end of the project) and which roles are intended to be permanent and will require funding streams to grow to pay for them.</p> <p>It is recognised that a longer/ less steep timeframe is often necessary to achieve sustainability e.g. 7 years rather than 3 years, especially if there is a significant degree of growth required.</p>
Staff Recruitment/Retention	<p>It has been challenging in some parishes to recruit suitably qualified and experienced staff e.g. children and young people's workers. There is a risk that starting salaries are too low in the current climate to retain staff.</p>
Spend Lag	<p>SDF spend has consistently lagged budget across the different projects primarily due to unfilled posts or posts filled late. Having a clear focus on and resources for recruitment will be important.</p>

ANNEX TWO

Focal Ministry

Pastoral Reorganisation and Focal Ministry

Whilst pastoral reorganisation with a lower level of stipendiary ministry allocated will not lead to missional growth, it may lead to a more sustainable position. However, if the reorganisation is accompanied by the appointment of one or two Focal Ministers, then there is every prospect of at least holding, if not growing, numbers.

Focal ministry takes seriously the pivotal role of prayer and worship in the life of individual Christians and church communities. The aim is not merely to ensure services are covered, spreading stretched clergy ever more thinly, but is built on a collaborative model of ministry.

In this model local leaders, known as focal ministers, are appointed to be ‘the face of the church’ locally – providing local leadership and a consistent presence in their communities, under the oversight of the incumbent of the benefice. Such local leaders could be ordained (SSM deacons or priests or with PTO) or authorised or licensed lay ministers. The stipendiary incumbent of the benefice would be in overall charge, but the role would change into one of overseeing, supervising and supporting the local Focal Ministers. Alongside Focal Ministers, all Christians need to be encouraged and enabled to respond to their baptismal calling, walking together on their journey of faith. Whilst it originated as a rural model, there are now urban applications. It is now in use within at least fifteen dioceses, including Chichester (currently in a limited way).

The benefits of focal ministry include:

- **Maintaining the pivotal role of prayer and worship:** The focal ministry model seeks to ensure that parishes will continue to be places where worship is of a high quality, with Christians encountering Christ in Word and Sacrament, so that they are gathered, fed, formed and sent out confidently in mission.
- **Enhanced Community Connection:** Focal ministers, being local residents, have a profound understanding of their community's needs, fostering trust and effective outreach. Being the ‘face of the church’, they may have greater availability to the community than the incumbent – who will typically be covering several churches.
- **Development of Lay Leadership:** This model supplements Authorised Lay Ministries (which focus on particular ministries) to empower individuals with a broader leadership role, under the authority of the incumbent, diversifying and strengthening the church's ministry.
- **Sustainable Ministry Models:** We know that reluctantly, we will need to reduce the number of stipendiary priests serving around the diocese. As we do so focal ministers will help to maintain an effective presence and ministry in such communities. This shouldn't be seen as reducing the importance of ordained (especially priestly) ministry, or about reducing the oversight of an incumbent for their benefice, but about collaborative ministry and baptismal calling within the body of Christ

The exact model of focal ministry in place will be locally attuned to each church and community, depending on church tradition, identified missional need and the gifts and vocation of individual ministers. Appropriate initial and ongoing training and support will be required.

Focal ministry has been seen to be effective in enabling local churches to grow. Bob Jackson, former Archdeacon of Lichfield, carried out research into twenty two churches with focal ministry in eleven dioceses. He found that in nearly every case the local church had grown since focal ministers were appointed. As these were smaller churches, the growth was not huge, averaging eight people per church. However, in a smaller church, an additional eight people is significant.

In Chichester, a couple of churches have an Apostolic Lay Worker who have effectively functioned as a Focal Minister. These churches have also grown, and indeed average growth is higher than the figure of eight quoted above. In the example scenario, though, we have only used the figure of an additional eight people on average in a church which moves to focal ministry.

ANNEX THREE

Something for everyone that wants to grow

Whilst the majority of the financial investment is focused on around 87 churches in the first phase, it is important that there is a good offering for every parish who wants to grow. This includes:

- The ability to make an application to the Mission Fund, especially for innovative contextual mission projects.
- Access to leadership development training for both clergy and lay people, including training for those managing others, ongoing ministerial formation and development of leadership skills.
- Access to a newly developed catechetical programme for preparing candidates for baptism, and confirmation.
- Support in developing children and young people's work, whether through volunteer leaders or by employing a children, youth or families worker.
- Paid for resources to simplify the running of the local church, allowing clergy more time to focus on mission and ministry. This is still a work in progress, but is likely to include:
 - Material for treasurers. We are piloting diocesan membership of the Association of Church Accountants and Treasurers (ACAT) to determine its usefulness.
 - We are exploring whether we can get a diocesan licence on one or more children's resources to simplify the preparation of material for churches.
 - We are looking at options for discounted ways to access support with book-keeping, website creation and considering other possibilities.
 - We are also keen to hear what parishes would find helpful.
- In addition, there are a number of existing solutions to help parishes simplify the running of their church:
 - Parish Giving Scheme – available without charge to parishes, which simplifies the claiming of Gift Aid, and allows donors to increase their giving annually in line with inflation.
 - Parish Buying – simplifying procurement for parishes. This has just been taken in-house by the national church, so we hope that the service quality remains.
- And importantly, we will want every church to help us learn what is working and provide case studies so that others can benefit.

ANNEX FOUR

Risk Analysis

L = Likelihood, I = Impact In general, an acceptable level of risk, post mitigation, is 9.

#	Risk name	Impact	If we did nothing...		L x I	How we manage the risk	Remaining		L x I	Further action or comment	Owner
			L	I			L	I			
1	Reducing numbers of children in church	Decline of church and its viability, isolation from community, and schools	5	5	25	Good employment of CY&F workers across parishes, strengthen outcomes by practice development shared in easy-to-reapply format. Further strengthen links with schools. Clear communication from Senior staff of the vital centrality of this ministry as a missional imperative. possibility of new services/fresh expressions at different times/days to counteract e.g. sports clubs.	4	5	20	Additional appointment of Children & Families officer, plus C&Y delivery role gives capacity to create impetus.	Youth Officer
2	Strategy is too slow in addressing declining and ageing congregations.	Decline in availability of volunteers, and those that are there are older than the people we are trying to attract. (Wider sustainability issues, but this is focusing on strategy impact)	5	5	25	Diocesan strategy seeks to impact a wide number of parishes over the next 10 years. Focus on doing simple, proven things well in a variety of contexts should provide fruit more quickly. Share learning and best practice from those places that are doing this well.	4	4	16	Focus on children, youth and families will address partially mitigate demographics.	Diocesan Secretary
3	Wider society loses confidence in the Church of England	"Good will" from the wider community is lost. Mission and engagement becomes harder.	4	4	16	Build relationships locally through community engagement - provides some separation between local churches and "the Church of England". Encouraging specific prayer for this area.	3	4	12	As this flows from national developments, difficult for us to do much to mitigate at diocesan level.	Diocesan Secretary

4	Theological differences lead to splits or different structural solutions.	Significant distraction - resource consumed by managing the impact of new structural solution or impact of numbers leaving the church.	4	4	16	<p>Missional: Proactive engagement by bishops and senior clergy, building relationships. Engagement on theological issues.</p> <p>Financial: hold reserves; apply for grants; Use of restricted Parish Share fund, monitor Parish Share pledges and payments; Archdeacons liaise with parishes; generous giving advisor and Parish Advisor. Ensuring all training engages across the spectrum of contexts and theological traditions. Deployment of resource across the spectrum of the church can assist with buy in.</p>	4	3	12	Maintain good relationships between senior clergy and parochial clergy but largely driven by national agenda.	Bishops
5	Recruitment of children and youth officers difficult	Plans are delayed whilst recruitment happens or need to appoint and train less experienced individuals.	4	3	12	Plan is to pay higher salaries, and support for longer. Diocesan help with recruitment process. Expecting to fund training for a proportion of appointments.	3	3	9	Youth Officer	
6	Unable to identify sufficient vocations to resource programmes (employed and voluntary).	Local programme success is limited by availability of resource, leading to C&Y turned away from groups, insufficient home groups or nurture group.	4	3	12	Expansion of vocations work, both lay and ordained, to include a specific focus on proactive vocations work. A clear pipeline to vocational ministry through ALM, a revitalised reader programme, the reintroduction of a renewed Bishops certificate, and the use of Faith in Action Awards and other school based schemes to promote and engage with young vocations.	3	3	9	Director for Apostolic Life, Director of Vocations	
7	Local leaders lack the skills to lead a successful change project locally.	Partnership fails to meet target outcomes due to poor acceptance/support among congregations, and/or lack of focus on, or commitment to, the necessary work to ensure success.	3	3	9	Provision of training for leaders and workers as part of Excellent Leadership stream. Ongoing management and follow up to provide early diagnosis of issues, and support in addressing these. Ensuring significant budget for training and development is available.	3	2	6	Need honesty about where CMD and support is needed	Diocesan Secretary

8	Project drift	Projects lose focus and lose sight of agreed objectives.	4	2	8	Clear contracting with the PCC, including MoU in some cases, commitment to ongoing reporting, and follow up from Diocesan programme team. Commitment to partnership working	3	2	6		Diocesan Secretary
9	Parishes not willing to work in partnership.	Outcomes for Apostolic Partnerships are dependent upon parishes providing some planting teams.	3	3	9	Early recruitment of potential parishes, along with leader networking. Support for recruitment of potential transferees, with identification of roles and commitment in advance.	3	2	6	Also want wider partnership working - apostolic resourcing	Bishops
10	Local funding challenges mean that parishes struggle to make their contributions.	Local posts are reduced or terminated reducing missional resource and effectiveness, leading to lower outcomes being achieved	3	3	9	Clear project planning and contracting at the start of the project. Timescales extended to give seven years to reach sustainable position.	2	2	4		Diocesan Secretary
11	Change in parochial leadership	That parish's plans can stall whilst waiting for a new appointment, and the new incumbent may or may not have the same degree of passion for the project.	3	3	9	Overall programme risk limited by having a large number of parishes in the project. Having clarity e.g. MoU with the PCC provides incoming incumbent with clear expectations. Need to allow in the plan for some changes of leadership and develop a model for maintaining the project during leadership vacancy.	2	2	4		Diocesan Secretary
12	Ineffective outreach or lack of engagement strategies	Even if new contacts are made, they may not come to faith without good engagement / nurture.	3	3	9	Faith pathway explicitly part of project application and initiation. Shared learning and training provided.	2	2	4		Apostolic Life team
13	Lack of diocesan consensus	The wider diocese does not support the strategy, leading to frustration / synodical attempts to modify it, or to divert spending to other projects.	3	3	9	Early engagement through consultation, Synodical approval of the strategy, regular updates to Synod	2	2	4	"Something for everyone who wants to grow" is important here.	Diocesan Secretary
14	Focal Ministry stream is ineffective and consumes more	Stream consumes more time and energy than benefit delivered.	3	3	9	FM Officer will engage with incumbents to anticipate issues, develop clear training programme. FM Officer able to engage when issues emerge	2	2	4	This will vary by situation.	Director for Apostolic Life, FM Officer when appointed.

	time than benefit delivered.								
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ANNEX FIVE

Feedback from Diocesan Strategy Consultations

This summarises our learning from both general consultation with stakeholders around the diocese, and specific engagement with those involved in leading SDF projects and apostolic partnerships.

1.0 Zoom Consultations

A series of ten strategy consultations (each 1.5 hours) took place on Zoom between 21st January 2025 and 18th February 2025.

474 key stakeholders were invited to take part in the consultations, being diocesan synod members (includes rural deans and assistant rural deans), Lay chairs, all licenced diocesan clergy and all salaried children and youth workers.

172 attendees (36% take up) were consulted on their views relating to ministry and missional growth within a local and diocesan context.

A range of options to provide feedback were offered: posting contributions in the ‘chat’ on Zoom, diocesan staff captured contributions during breakout sessions and plenaries, sending in a ‘consultation feedback form’ with written feedback.

Qualitative feedback was collated and reviewed. Key feedback strands and comments are summarised below:

Inspiring Prayer and Worship:

- Increase number of clergy/ resources – definite sense of “more boots on the ground” needed.
- Support for working across parishes and deanery boundaries – not just apostolic partnerships but in other ways.
- Prayer - clergy encouraging clergy to pray and look upwards and outwards.
- Need to improve communication of what’s working - Support for times of encouragement, innovation and creativity, sharing of good practice and celebration stories.
- Contact making is relatively easy compared with getting people into church – needs a clear focus on pathway to faith
- Challenge of competing demands on people’s time in modern society.

“Pray to the Lord of the harvest for more workers while the harvest is plentiful.”

“The key to church growth is for Vicar’s to give leadership away by raising up and coaching leaders who in turn catch the vision and do the same. That way the mission of the church can keep growing.

However, that initially takes more time than just leading everything yourself with other people ‘helping.’”

“As I continue in ministry in rural communities, I am becoming more and more convinced that it’s about building a sense of community across parish and deanery boundaries.”

“Need for a sense of ‘belonging’.”

“Nurture prayer among the clergy. More prayer at chapter meetings.”

“It is for clergy to think about this – part of our job. We need to encourage each other to keep being outward-focused.”

“Encourage positivity, celebrate what we’re doing.”

“About finding creative ways of engaging, encouragement to be pioneering.”

“Having the space to innovate.”

“Importance of relationships to develop connections.”

“Busyness is an inhibitor – people are very ‘maxed out’ – young families lead busy lives. Messy church can be an entry point, but it can be difficult to integrate this group into ‘church’ itself.”

Engaging Children and Young People:

- Increase number of CYP workers or time allocated to mission and engagement among existing CYO workers.
- Volunteer capacity quoted by several CYP workers as limiting attendance – some young people turned away.
- Make the most of links with local schools – we under use these opportunities in many places.
- Joined-up strategies and clear CYP faith pathways are highly effective.
- Don’t rely on CYP workers to do all-age services
- Church needs to be ‘fun’ and rooted in joy to attract children and young people.
- Important to also address parents/ families, not just children (so they all need to want to come back, not just the children)
- Timings of church meetings/ activities and creative solutions are important to attract children and young people.
- Recruiting paid youth workers is difficult. Need to provide a good training pathway.
- Important to pay appropriate salaries for CYP workers as this can limit retention. Where possible, can we consider providing housing assistance?

“We need people heading up the work among children and young people – resource it with paid workers. There is a limit with how much can be done with volunteers.”

“Biblically trained children and youth workers who know how to equip and train parents and grandparents to partner with the local church in this work.”

“Links with local schools and the support of school headteachers is paramount.”

“Crack the challenge of moving people from involvement in things like Messy church, holiday clubs, toddler groups etc. to engagement with the wider church fellowship.”

“Church needs to be fun again and offer a real sense of rooted joyfulness, not only for children and adults attending but for clergy and leaders too. the only way we will draw people of all ages towards us is if we are able to offer a sense of wholeness, peace, well-being and supported by a sense of enjoyment and fun in our activities and worship. We are living in very serious times, and a sense of sober realism is right and necessary some of the time, but I think it’s also sometimes about taking stock of the things we do well and what we can do positively with the resources we have to hand.”

“There is competition for time from sporting societies for the young.”

“About allowing families to develop and grow. Being invited and valued without too many pressures.”

“Tried to recruit a replacement Youth worker recently but failed to attract – do we need a programme to train up additional capacity in Sussex?”

“There is no money for CYP worker wages.”

“The rural churches are in villages where average house prices are higher, often excluding families.”

Excellent Leaders:

- Excellent leadership is vital for growth and flourishing churches.
- Faithful biblical witnesses reliant on the Holy Spirit.
- Increase curate pipeline/ numbers going through vocations training.
- Release more Lay ministry.
- Review diocesan Reader training offer?
- Review the diocesan approach to ALM training – greatly appreciated by some, others voicing concerns it is too academic/ time commitment required. Could it be delivered locally?
- Review ALM licensing requirements to increase freedoms and reduce restrictions e.g. up to 6 sermons per year.
- Explore models of parish-based training for local ministry.
- Support for training days, celebration days etc.
- Concerns around putting forward the ‘best people’ and losing them as they can’t return to sending parish.
- Age bar is too low for ordination (and lower than other dioceses).

“What is absolutely key is good leadership, good, friendly and happy priests well supported by their parishes. This is so terribly obvious but a good church breeds good volunteers and makes congregations want to support physically and financially, they are also wonderful to worship with and encouraging for new members.”

“Show that the church supports and encourages courageous witness based on a biblical view of the world (God’s way of doing things) and dependent on waiting on the Holy Spirit to see how and when to take various actions.”

“Over-worked leaders trying to run a number of churches tends to result in those churches declining. The usual practise has been to add declining churches into larger and larger groups thereby multiply this and feeding the decline. Growing churches may get struggling churches added to them and may get overwhelmed with needs and stop growing.”

“I think for the local church more generally, and for me personally as a disciple of Christ, the vision is often more naturally to the wider town. Coastal team ministries with a generosity towards different church traditions may enable mission with a larger scope and a pooling of our scarcer governance and structural resources. Finally, the proverb of uncertain provenance, comes to mind, ‘If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.’”

“We cannot afford the ordinands we need and Lay participation will be key to the growth and maintenance of the church. Pastoral care and Lay support for clergy remains vital – they cannot, and should not, do it all.”

“We have to trust and believe it is the church of Christ. There needs to be a releasing of Lay Apostolic workers – an invitation to that. Trust incumbents where they identify these people have a calling to ministry. We need freedom to test it with them. There is evidence that Focal ministry works in rural areas. Let them break bread.”

“I applaud the ALM scheme – we need a basket of things.”

“Lay vocations – the barriers are too high – difficult to pass – licensing and authorisation are difficult to achieve. Encourage at ground level and look for spiritual gifting.”

“The vocation process is too difficult. People who have a heart for Jesus don’t necessarily have a heart for academia.”

“We need to galvanise the Laity and not overburden them. Jesus turned to a fisherman and said, ‘follow me’.

“Ensure that training is not always delivered a long way from the parish.”

“Virtual option is good but not for everyone.”

“The age bar is too low. We are getting an increasingly smaller pool heading towards ordained ministry.”

Sustainability:

- General agreement to invest in additional resource – people (associate clergy, children, youth and families workers, administrators all mentioned)
- Official PCC roles hard to fill due to complexity, time demands and specialists skills required.
- PCC time consumed with faculty procedures/ buildings rather than mission and ministry – balance needs shifting and resource sharing?
- Some rural churches need an improvement in facilities (loos, running water, heating).
- Examples of churches living off legacies.
- Consistency of leadership plays an important part.

“We’re currently sustainable in an unsustainable way (age profile)”.

“Compliance/ bureaucracy issues are restricting the church. We need to maximise the time for Kingdom work.”

“The diocese should employ bookkeepers for parishes.”

“One of the secrets to church growth is appointing really good administrators.”

“Are there opportunities to share resources across benefices e.g. administrator, bookkeeper, buildings officers – who could be trained up to know church systems and therefore be effective at these tasks?”

“Hospitality is a core gospel issue – churches must be warm/ heated to be welcoming.”

“God provided in the past and we need to trust that God will provide. Prayer to provide resources.”

“Clergy wellbeing helps to sustain the life of the church.”

“It is vital churches are not forced together through perceived necessity. Humility on all sides and getting to know one another will take time.”

“Churches need consistent leadership.”

2.0 SDF/Apostolic Partnership Learning

Meetings were arranged with diocesan staff and clergy involved in the St. Peter's Brighton family of churches, the St John's, Crawley SDF project, All Saints Hove and Holy Trinity Hastings to gather learning and insight. Meetings took place between December 2024 and February 2025.

In addition, on 18th February 2025 we were provided with a draft copy of Part 1 of a 'St Peter's Brighton & St John's Crawley SDF Project Review 2025' commissioned by St. Peter's Brighton and compiled by Sarah Eagles, Research Lead and Report Consultant.

There are many celebration stories, learnings and recommendations from the SDF projects. We summarise below the learnings we believe are of most strategic importance to take forward into the Diocesan Investment Programme:

Inspiring prayer and worship	<p>Prayer - for the project and its outcomes is vital: continuing prayer during project meetings and sharing answers to prayer.</p> <p>Growth - run Alpha (or similar) each term and from the start of an Apostolic Partnership.</p> <p>Growth - where possible, form 'Families of Churches' that support the growth of new and struggling churches within both the most deprived areas and coastal deaneries.</p> <p>Approach - the incumbent needs the support of staff, church family and the diocese to achieve outcomes. For any new Apostolic Partnership, the local community needs to be understood, and the launch approach adapted accordingly. The existing congregation need to be taken on a respectful journey of change.</p> <p>Approach - develop models and culture for paid staff to cultivate a high volunteer-led culture.</p>
Engaging children and young people	<p>Ministry - Apostolic Partnerships: where possible, run high quality children's ministry during Sunday morning service from the start.</p> <p>Community - established mission social spaces have worked well (children, youth, community café) combined with having the church building open for longer and being more accessible.</p> <p>Missional energy - a 'mission-first approach' results in strong youth engagement.</p>
Excellent leaders	<p>Training and investment in people - develop a strong leadership pipeline: invest in leadership training programs at different levels (lay leadership, clergy development, emerging leaders).</p> <p>Leadership (ordained) - getting the right people in leadership positions at the right time is absolutely fundamental to the likelihood of successfully achieving outcomes. Timeframes for growth need to be realistic and are reliant on the right leaders being in place.</p>

	<p>Leadership (ordained) - Associate Vicar plus team has been more successful than a planting curate plus team.</p> <p>Leadership (ordained) - leaders who are new to the area may need additional interventions to ensure they are well supported.</p> <p>Leadership (Lay) – Lay leaders who are well supported in a clearly defined role flourish and grow. We shouldn't be frightened of appointing lay leaders, St Richards being an example. Giving responsibilities to lay leaders rather than relying heavily on paid staff helps ensure sustainability.</p> <p>Governance - share lessons learnt nationally and learn from other investment programmes.</p> <p>Governance - ensure baseline information is captured and agreed at the start of the Programme to ensure comparisons are fair/ valid.</p> <p>Communication - communicate progress and committed outcomes more widely, ensure we celebrate what God has done and is doing</p>
Sustainability	<p>Resourcing (clergy) - a level of clergy vacancies should be anticipated and allowed for during the Programme period. Good succession planning is essential. There needs to be realistic planning and resourcing of the recruitment process for positions.</p> <p>Communication - during 'project startup', and at any significant changes of leadership, it is essential the whole staff team and other church stakeholders are briefed whether they are directly involved or not.</p> <p>Communication - where there are significant changes proposed to the outcomes, it is important PCCs and staff teams are provided with information 'to bring them on the journey'.</p> <p>Growth - long-term strategic planning is crucial recognising that growth takes time; planning for 5 or 10 years rather than one year leads to better outcomes.</p> <p>Growth - maintain a balance between growth and sustainability: expanding too quickly without financial support can strain resources.</p> <p>Financial planning – where possible, diversify income sources through grants, community partnerships, giving and creative funding models.</p> <p>Financial planning - increase understanding of the national funding profile and of how parish ministry costs are expected to increase to allow better budgeting within churches and the Diocese, to avoid misunderstandings.</p> <p>Financial planning - encourage the preparation and use of 3/5/7-year budgets as an aid towards reaching sustainability.</p> <p>Governance - the management of projects and co-ordination needs to be regularly reviewed to ensure that it is appropriate for the project stage.</p>