



Diocese of Liverpool

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# **RESPONDING TO THE CALL**

## **TAKING THE DIOCESAN REVIEW FORWARD**

**2007 - 2011**

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**March 2006**

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# INTRODUCTION

## **OPPORTUNITY AND ANXIETY**

The Archbishop of Canterbury has spoken of how the current church faces opportunity and anxiety in equal measure. The opportunities are there as an unchanging God works through us in fresh ways as we seek to reach out and minister to those around us. The anxieties centre on the fear of losing the church we know and love, of meeting its financial demands and of changing patterns of leadership and priesthood.

In the Diocese of Liverpool we have much to be thankful for. We have over 30,000 people worshipping in our churches week by week and over 30,000 children in our church schools. We are conducting 5,000 baptisms, 1,200 weddings and 7,000 funerals a year, putting us in face to face contact with well over 100,000 people a year. We have more Readers than ever before, and more still in training. We have 2 more NSMs and OLMs than ever before, and more in training. We have more people coming into formal and informal leadership in our churches than ever before. We have some quite outstanding community projects. All this stems from the on-going and faithful work and witness of clergy and lay people across the diocese over many years.

Bishop James has challenged the diocese to be a house of prayer for all people. We have a strong tradition of being inclusive, as our work alongside people who are disabled as our work with the deaf community and through our Disability Awareness Officer illustrate. We have been at the forefront of encouraging and enabling women to serve as

priests, readers and Church Army officers. We continue to push for racial justice in all communities in the diocese, and we are assiduous in protecting children and vulnerable adults within our churches.

Sector ministry in education, penal institutions, the health service, among seafarers and through Mission in the Economy (in town and city centres and at Airport) is often at the cutting edge from which we can draw insights to benefit parishes and deaneries, especially in areas such as equality, inclusion, ecumenism and ethics.

We have a range of partnerships, formal and informal, inside and outside church and faith networks. The trade justice movement has shown ecumenical working at its very best. We have joint Anglican-Catholic schools being built and more in the pipeline. We have been involved in the creation of faith networks in almost all the boroughs of the diocese. We have strong link with local councils for voluntary service and volunteer centres.

We also have anxieties. The reductions in stipendiary clergy numbers have left parishes feeling that 'we have lost our vicar'. Parish finance – of the lack of it in some areas – shows itself through the difficulties in maintaining Parish Share payments, the constant demands of ageing buildings, declining reserves, the general battle to survive or simply the frustration of feeling that we constantly miss opportunities because we simply do not have the resources. We have put a lot of emphasis on the creation and nurturing of teams without the necessary training and support; clergy are left feeling that

they have to do twice the work and lay people are told they have to take on more responsibility but are unsure about what and how. People feel that we are either maintaining dated or burdensome structures and patterns or that we are abandoning good and rightful traditions in the headlong pursuit of the new and fashionable. There is a fear that we are becoming congregationalist rather than parish churches with all the introspection this entails, and certainly not the house of prayer for all people that we are challenged to become.

Some feel priesthood is being undermined, others that it is too dominant. Some clergy feel isolated, under-valued and ground down by a seemingly relentless pressure of and for change. Some in full-time sector ministry can often feel overlooked by the emphasis on the parish. There is a constant fear of initiative-itis, that someone somewhere will soon have another bright idea that we will all be expected to respond to even if it doesn't fit with our good plans. Many fear that the church will die as its ageing congregations die. There never seems to be enough time and it certainly doesn't appear that we have been able to do less but better to any significant extent. The list could go on.

### THE THREEFOLD QUESTION

At the same time the new work started through the Review process is bearing good fruit as appendix 1 illustrates. So to return to the Archbishop's challenge we have to maximise opportunity and overcome anxiety. To that end this plan is based on and seeks to reinforce Bishop James' constant challenge to us all, whether as parishes, deaneries, sector ministries, the cathedral or DBF employees:

1. What is the mission of God?
2. What ministries are needed to fulfil this mission?
3. What resources are needed for these ministries?

This is not about throwing everything out and starting all over again. Much of what we currently do is good and right and we must seek to affirm the work that is done and the people who are doing it. This plan is not a blanket rejection of the current and the past; rather it is about looking ahead and asking

God where He is taking us and then trying to respond to that call.

### CLERGY NUMBERS INTO THE FUTURE

However, it also recognises that things cannot just carry on as they are – if for no other reason than the declining number of stipendiary clergy. Finance is not the issue any more. Within the Diocesan financial constraints we should be able to maintain the number of clergy stipends beyond 2006 at the 2006 level on the basis that annual Parish Share increases should equate to clergy stipend increases.

However, nationally the numbers of stipendiary clergy is falling. Even if we have the money to pay for them, in the future they simply will not exist in the numbers we might like. From 2007 onwards there are going to be around 208 full-time equivalent parish clergy paid from Parish Share. However, Ministry Division in Archbishop's Council tells us that our allocation of clergy will fall significantly below this level in the coming years. By 2013 it is likely that our national allocation will be around 180 – 185 stipendiary clergy. Thus we might have the money for 208 stipendiary clergy but our share of the national pool of stipendiary clergy will be 20-30 fewer. This creates a major challenge but also the opportunity of using these 20-30 salaries in new ways.

### BUILDING ON THE REVIEW

Therefore, this plan for 2007 – 2011 seeks to recognise the national constraints and realities and build on the local strengths evident across the parishes and ministries in our diocese. It looks to maximise potential for mission and ministry, to enhance flexibility and release individual people and parishes to be creative and positive in their witness. It is based on the strong belief that following the Review as a diocese we are in a better position and are now more strongly placed to grow the church in varied and exciting ways.

This plan is based on the same assumptions as the Review. It still assumes the primacy of deaneries and parishes in terms of decisions about mission

## Introduction

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and the deployment of resources. It emphasises the need to move away from uniformity to locally appropriate ways to proclaim the gospel and demonstrate the presence of God in our villages, suburbs, towns and city. It welcomes the cathedral's desire to play its part within the mission of the diocese, as the seat of the bishop, as a resource for the parishes, deaneries and diocese as a whole, and as itself a place of opportunity for mission, ministry and outreach to the many people and groups who visit it, use its facilities, or come into contact with its ministry. It encourages risk-taking in the strongly-held belief that if something doesn't work we should try something else. It seeks to give more substance to the aspiration to do less but better. And unlike NASA it assumes that failure is very much an option. In the Diocese of Liverpool people are not condemned if they fail; the great crime is not to try.

The plan is divided into 3 sections:

Section 1 – What is the mission of God? We aspire to have 'a sustainable and led Christian presence in every community'. Bishop James explains what that means.

Section 2 – What ministries are needed to fulfil this mission? A description of the fictional Diocese of Looprevil describing how things may look into the future.

Section 3 – What resources are needed for these ministries? A description of the ways in which various diocesan structures will support and encourage the realisation of the vision.

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# SECTION 1

## WHAT IS THE MISSION OF GOD?

Over the last couple of years Bishop James has been speaking of and developing a vision of a sustainable, led and transforming Christian presence in every community in the diocese to enable all to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God. This section explains and unpacks that vision and sets the tone and context for the rest of this plan.

### **‘Every Community’**

People belong together in different ways. Living in a family or a household in a neighbourhood is still at the heart of many communities. The traditional parish with its geographical boundaries encompasses such people and still provides the church with countless opportunities for connecting with them from the cradle to the grave. We remain committed to mission in this form where there is a graduation from pastoral care for all who live within the parish boundary to evangelism. But alongside these familiar relationships there are now many more networks through which people relate and also belong. Work, leisure and the internet afford some of the new ways in which people meet and form strong bonds and in which Christians find themselves. These provide ‘invisible parishes’, in ‘new communities’ alongside the visible parishes and present Christians with the challenge of doing and being church in a different way. New and fresh expressions of church begin with a point of communality different from the traditional point of contact of people living in the same place. There is no limit to these possibilities. And therefore there is no limit to the mission of God.

Wherever there is a Christian there is a ‘Christian presence’ and the opportunity for sharing their faith with another person. And, wherever two or three people begin to explore the message of Jesus he is there with them and a Christian community becomes a real possibility. We are committed as a Diocese to ‘pushing out the boat’ and exploring new frontiers of mission as well as maintaining the geographical base of our mission in the parish system. “Every community” is in our mission statement because the love of God knows no boundary. Wherever and however people come together we believe they are not far from the one ‘in whom we all live and move and have our being’.

### **‘Christian Presence’**

Jesus revealed to us a God without frontiers or favourites. Even though out of our freedom we try consciously or subconsciously to keep God at a distance the story of Christian Mission is that God does not concede any ‘no-go’ areas. In fact, one of the constant surprises of Jesus’ life to his many critics was the people and places that he frequented. It is our duty as his disciples to follow in his steps and under the great commission to go wherever he sends and leads. Put simply, wherever we go and are we constitute that Christian presence.

In a house in a street, we are a Christian presence; at work in an office or factory with work mates or colleagues we are a Christian presence; in a club or

## Section 1 - What is the mission of God?

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a pub, on the terraces or the field we are a Christian presence. When our faith is shared by others then the presence of Christ is assured and manifest.

It may well be practically impossible for, say, Christians at work to belong to the same church since they commute in opposite directions. Perhaps they'll strengthen their faith by getting together over a pint and a Bible in the upper room of a pub. We need to be more adventurous and encourage people to step out into new ways of feeding their Christian faith together. We need also to recognise the richness of our ecumenical inheritance which means that many expressions of Christian presence will have the characteristics of other Christian traditions both ancient and modern.

### 'Led'

When people come together leaders emerge. In order for any group to move forward in a particular direction there needs to be leadership that commands a following. Christian groups and churches are no different. It is significant that the first time that Christians come together in the Acts of the Apostles is to pray for the vacancy in the leadership team.

New expressions of church need new expressions of leadership; and even traditional forms of church such as the parish system need to be recalibrated for mission in a changing culture. Too often mission has followed ministry; in a missionary focused church ministry needs to follow mission.

As deaneries answer the three questions:

1. What is the mission of God (the priorities)?
2. What are the ministries needed?
3. What money or resources are required?

they need to ask seriously whether a stipendiary priest in a parish is the best way forward everywhere. It may well be for some places but not for all. It could be, for example, that a stipendiary reader in charge would be right for one parish, in another, it might be best to have a specialist minister for elderly people across a group of parishes; in

a densely urban deanery it might be right to use a clergy stipend to appoint an administrator to relieve clergy of administration and release them and their gifts for mission. The future will see us having money for more posts than we have clergy for - on average each deanery could in the near future have two stipendiary lay posts. The question therefore facing the leadership of our deaneries is how do we discern the prophetic voices in the deanery, how will we discern what the priorities are in the Mission of God locally in order to decide on how to deploy these resources in mission. I am looking forward so much to this process of discernment locally. It will be a great adventure of faith.

We have to be prepared to find and appoint the right people who can exercise leadership in sympathy with our Anglican ethos but not necessarily ordained into the three-fold ministry of Bishop, Priest and Deacon (and, by the way, it's worth recording that for most of our history we've been a two fold ministry; perhaps we need to recover our heritage - and the Diaconate - for the new possibilities ahead!) However, what we must ensure is that all who are called to leadership have their vocation and ministry tested, formed and accountable. We must also be prepared to work ecumenically and appoint people beyond our tradition. We must also equip the laity not just to lead in the church but to be Christian leaders in the world.

### 'Sustainable'

"Sustainable" is more than maintenance. It is about growth for unless the church grows it cannot sustain a future. But "sustainable" is also about our corporate responsibility, and how as a diocesan family of parishes, visible and invisible, we support each other in the mission of God.

It is the responsibility of the Bishop, with the advice of the Core Group and the Team Meeting, and of the Diocesan Synod especially through the Bishop's Council and the Finance Committee, to ensure that we share our resources fairly in God's mission. Certain pioneering initiatives will require up-front investment for a limited period; some inner city Christian presence may require long-term support financially but these experiences of mission will

## Section 1 - What is the mission of God?

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not only touch the hitherto unreached but will also enrich the Body of Christ in the Diocese.

The source of our sustainability is the generous grace of God and the empowering of the Spirit. As God's love impacts on our lives, transforming us individually and corporately, so we give of ourselves in new and sacrificial ways.

The Christian presence in every community is about redeeming us and our society out of the dominion of darkness and transferring us all into the Kingdom of the Son in whom there is redemption and the forgiveness of sins. It is about bearing witness to the Lord Jesus Christ through and for whom all things came into being.

The traditional visible parish speaks to me about our connectedness to place; the new invisible parishes speak of the importance of relationships with people. It is both place and people that are transformed in and under the Kingdom of God who will reconcile all things to himself through the Cross of Christ.

### **'To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God'**

T.S. Eliot offered a definition of culture as "Those things that make life worth living".

If you had to choose three virtues that turn neighbourhoods into communities and make life worth living for everybody it would surely be justice, mercy and humility. Of course, the word humility comes from the Latin for earth, for the soil. Humble people are those who know that God made us from the soil of the earth, are those who walk close to the earth. Christians are those whose lives are formed by the daily prayer that God's will should be done on the earth and by the hope that one day earth and heaven will be fused in a new world.

As we wait for the final appearance and consummation of the new Kingdom we work towards it by acting justly and loving mercy. To do so is to reflect the very nature of God who is both justice and mercy, Judge and Saviour.

The sustainable, led and transforming Christian presence in every community has a purpose – it should be a sign of justice, mercy and humility and an agent of God's justice, mercy and humility here on earth.

Whether we're in our visible or invisible parishes, within our traditional church or our fresh expression, in our teams, clusters or deaneries let this be our manifesto in the Diocese of Liverpool – to work with all Christians of every persuasion to see "a sustainable, led and transforming Christian presence in every community to enable all to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God".

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# SECTION 2

## WHAT MINISTRIES ARE NEEDED TO FULFIL GOD'S MISSION?

### A DESCRIPTION OF THE DIOCESE OF LOOPREVI

The previous section has outlined the mission of the diocese – to see a sustainable, led and transforming Christian presence in every community. This section seeks to stimulate thinking about what ministries would be needed to fulfil this mission. In many ways this must be an inward-looking question – how should the church organise itself – but aim of the diocese is to better carry out the Mission of God.

The diocese of Looprevil is, of course, fictional. Nevertheless, the description contains the various elements which are likely to make up the future shape of mission and ministry within the Diocese of Liverpool in the next ten years. This description of Looprevil gives a better feel for how things could look than a list of proposals for Liverpool. It is designed to stimulate individuals, parishes, deaneries and the diocese as they seek to respond to God's call in their context, and to 'give permission' for the emergence of these kind of responses. It is not a blueprint but a challenge.

### Bridgetown

The Bridgetown area has a population nearing 50,000. While in Anglican terms only part of the wider deanery, for local people it is an identifiable area with its own integrity. The church there is now organised in a single unit, led by an experienced stipendiary rector. Within Bridgetown there are six different churches (congregations not buildings).

Three are traditional churches, in church buildings with congregations on a Sunday and community outreach in their immediate areas. All three have local leadership teams who 'hold the vision' for their church. One traditionally enjoys the ministry of Bridgetown's curate. One feels that within the structure of the Bridgetown unit it is self-sufficient with its OLM and two readers and a tradition of lay involvement. The other church still feels it misses 'its vicar' but has been greatly helped by the wise presence of a retired priest.

The other three churches have particular focuses. One is a youth church, led by a stipendiary priest, for all those aged 14-21 in the area of Bridgetown. This is organised as a network with monthly gatherings. The cells are led by local people, authorised by the Bridgetown rector, with the church's priest having a training and empowering role. The other two churches are based in different parts of the area, reaching out to particular groups: older people in one part of town, and young families in another. The rector is conscious that there are similar needs everywhere, but there is only so much one can do and these churches sprung up out of particular local sense of 'God's opportunity'. The young families' church is based in a church school and led by a team including an NSM teacher.

The church for older people (led by two readers) is centred on a good network of pastoral support and visiting organised by a few of the members, and meetings on a Tuesday afternoon for lunch and worship. This church has its roots in the fourth traditional congregation in Bridgetown. However since its buildings were in such poor condition, and its

## Section 2 - What ministries are needed to fulfil God's mission?

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congregation exclusively one-generational, the congregation took the challenge of selling its building to pay for the redevelopment of St Thomas' building (one of the three other Bridgetown church buildings) and uses St Thomas' building for its Tuesday meetings and for other events.

The controversial decision was taken for the Rector not to be identified with any one church in Bridgetown. She has worked hard to 'keep her feet on the ground' and worship regularly in the different churches. Her perceived neutrality has been valuable in holding the different churches together, particular in the occasional tensions when churches seem to be encroaching on the others' territory. This is further helped by the fact that support for the whole area is provided by a single office. It has also freed up her energy to engage with community and business issues in Bridgetown as a whole.

### Grimethorpe

In the Grimethorpe deanery all of the churches (Anglican and of other denominations) were struggling to one degree or another. There didn't seem to be an easy way forward. Finally it was agreed that resources would be concentrated on two churches (St Timothy and St Titus) in one part of the deanery in an attempt to build up the church there as a first step to later developments elsewhere in Grimethorpe. These resources came both from outside and within. Externally, funding was provided from the Mission Opportunities Fund and DPA funding. Internally, the rest of the deanery accepted that rather than St Timothy's and St Titus' sharing an incumbent, they would have an incumbent each (putting pressure elsewhere, partly eased by a new sharing arrangement with the Methodists at the other side of the deanery). The overall result was that St Timothy's has an incumbent a curate and a youth worker; St Titus' an incumbent and a lay 'pioneer minister'. They were both also able for the first time to pay for some administrative support.

For the first few years, not much changed at St Timothy's and St Titus' - resources do not build a church. However, gradually the extra time and investment did show results. Also the feared 'transfer'

from other churches in the deanery didn't occur - the growth was genuinely new people and although the growth is small, it has changed the mood in the whole deanery - "God is at work even in Grimethorpe". In addition, a lay reader who is a teacher is being paid half-time by the diocese to provide specialist support to clergy for schools' work. Church House staff have been working with parishes to help the development of enculturated local leadership teams.

### Saltflats

The Saltflats area has taken a different approach partly at least because across its area of small towns and rural parishes there is a far stronger sense of local identity than deanery identity. Here the whole deanery has chosen to go down the route of remaining as thirteen separate churches, even though many of them are small. The four stipendiary clergy each have oversight of several of the churches, though they try to work together as a team. For many of the churches it is important to be able to identify 'their priest', but the clergy are trying to increase a sense of team between them and specialisation. A crucial move (not welcomed by the laity initially) was the implementation of the diocesan policy of 'only one PCC per priest'.

All of the churches have chosen to retain Sunday worship and the pattern is complex. One difficulty is that those churches with lay readers, or who don't have a tradition of weekly Eucharist, can feel that they therefore get less clergy time on Sundays. Three churches have recently established lay ministry/leadership teams which are giving a sense of focus and direction in their churches - two have OLMs in training, one has offered to go part-time in her job if the church would pay her a small stipend, so as to head up new opportunities in that village.

Buildings remain a source of difficulty, despite the appointment of a deanery buildings officer, but the deanery mission plan is centred round the buildings being a resource to their communities. Two recent successes of partnership agreements to share the use of buildings with a Primary Care Trust and a library have demonstrated the possibilities here.

### Drumlins

Drumlins deanery has a different pattern. Here there is still a whole range of churches from those with a single incumbent, to some multi-benefice situations and a traditional 'team ministry'. The people in the deanery were relieved that the diocese did not pressurise them to adopt a new model. Nevertheless, a key new step has been the establishment of a new pattern for funerals, in which there is a dedicated team led by an NSM who took early retirement, and mainly staffed by some readers and retired clergy, which conducts many of the 'non-church' funerals. It took some time for the incumbents to trust the system, and it made changes to the shape of pastoral care. However, being realistic everyone knows that the funeral provision is now better and the dedicated team have developed new ways in which the mission opportunities of the pastoral offices are actually taken forward (as opposed to previously when privately many of the clergy admitted they didn't have the energy to do this).

This has also freed up the clergy to think strategically about the mission needs of the deanery. Recently the churches felt that God was calling them to establish a new work in one of the two town centres in the deanery among those employed there. Two lay people from the deanery have become 'pioneer ministers' to establish this work, building a team from across the deanery. While technically in St John the Baptist's parish, the work is seen as a deanery initiative, and the ministers licensed to the area dean.

### Elsewhere in the diocese

St Oliphant's is a large church in a wealthy part of a deanery which covers both poor and more affluent areas. It accepted the challenge from the diocese of becoming a resource church for the deanery. This meant that for every hour of staff time spent on itself it committed an equal hour to the deanery. The congregation valued its own youth work too much to allow it to be watered down, and so raised the money to double its youth staff to three. They employed a 'lay pastor' to make its 'pastoral staff' up to three (vicar, curate and lay pastor), again committing half the time elsewhere - the vicar is the area dean, the curate spends much of her time

training and supporting bible study group leaders across the deanery, and the lay pastor is the centre of the valued healing ministry.

A key element of the resourcing is with readers. St Oliphant's had five readers, and since it became a resource three more have come forward for training (now as there seems something for them to do). Six of these see their ministry as being elsewhere in the deanery, three of them semi-permanently at particular churches, three with more of a 'supporting where necessary' role. The congregation at St Oliphant's had taken time to adjust to the situation, particularly when they realised the financial challenges and that they couldn't just 'give of their excess' to others. The rest of the deanery also took time to adjust, and some still feel the arrangement it patronising, but on the ground it works well.

St Flowerdew's is another large church in a different part of the diocese. This took up a different challenge from the diocese, which the church felt after much prayer and discussion was what God was calling them to do. It agreed to try to plant a church every three years, based around their curate working for two years in St Flowerdew's, and then leading the plant, and becoming its 'incumbent'. Gradually St Flowerdew's has built up experience in how to make this work, and the congregation has got used to the idea. It is a strain for them, and people complain that the church is always in flux, but the challenge has released many new gifts.

The new plants are overstaffed from a diocesan point of view (a stipendiary priest in each) but it was judged a worthwhile investment because the plants are located in areas of strategic need. These were identified through the diocesan 'finding the gaps' process in which clergy were asked to highlight parts of their parishes (whether geographical or demographic) that were not reached by the current or likely future ministry. St Flowerdew's also agrees to fund the parish share for the first three years of the plant's lives. Some worry about a St Flowerdew's network emerging, but the planted churches have quickly gained a local independent flavour.

### **Clergy time**

Two deaneries made agreements on the use of clergy time. In one it was decided that all stipendiary priests would have a deanery role, thought of as occupying a day a week. This saw a great sense of affirmation among the clergy as their own particular passions and specialisms were given permission to flourish and were seen of being of use to their colleagues. It also brought the stipendiary priests much closer together as they shared skills and expertise with each other. Discussions are now ongoing as to how to include some others with particular skills who are not stipendiary priests in the same system.

In the other, a group of lay people, partly as a result of the diocesan courses they had been on, 'pushed' at deanery synod for an agreed target that all clergy should spend at least 50% of their time in prayer or engaged in mission. This led to considerable soul searching among clergy some of whom came to realise that while previously complaining about the demands of parish administration, at times it had been an excuse to remain in their comfort zone. Of course, clergy have interpreted 'prayer' and 'mission' differently but this has led to a flowering of new initiatives (the whole experiment is now the subject of a programme within Continuing Professional Development sharing this experience with others across the diocese). In two churches the congregations continue to complain strongly about the reduction in 'service' they receive from their vicar. In many of the others it has resulted in congregation members contributing previously neglected gifts in ministry. Many of the clergy have reported that the release to engage in the priestly ministry that they felt originally called to has been profoundly liberating.

### **Partnerships**

The work in Barren Prison has been rejuvenated by the new partnership forged with the deanery in which it is located. A group of lay people caught the vision of this as 'their prison' and a deanery mission opportunity. The shared ministry team which has emerged has its own distinctive shape (partly because of legalities and security issues) but its success has led to interest from prisons elsewhere.

Ecumenical partnerships have produced notable fruit in several areas of the diocese. Movement in this area was generated by the controversial decision that deaneries and the diocese would take note of where there were strong existing Trinitarian churches when assessing the needs of different areas ('finding the gaps'). Arguments continue about the provision of Anglican worship in these areas and legal rights, and some of the headlines were depressing, but most accept the logic of focusing on 'a sustainable and led Christian presence in every community' when deploying limited resources. The respect it has communicated to other churches has been of great significance.

In Nurston, for example, St Luke's (Anglican) church recognised that the local Methodist church had a thriving ministry in the area roughly equivalent to the parish, and that its building, opposite the enlarged hospital site, was ideally situation for mission and ministry within the hospital. A partnership was struck by which St Luke's congregation joins with the Methodist, and St Luke's building became the base for the chaplaincy team. The facilities it provides have helped the work in the hospital thrive. Similar, though on a larger scale, has been the partnership in the New Town area, in which four churches (two Anglican, one Baptist, one 'community church') now share resources which as allowed the appointment of an ecumenical youth minister to work with the local schools.

### **Beyond the deaneries**

The diocesan 'fresh expressions' initiative, operating outside of the deanery structure, has seen notable experimentation. Of the six projects launched, two fizzled out within eighteen months, though in the process a great deal of experience was gained. The other four have resulted in small networks churches, two based round worship (one 'alternative', one 'highly liturgical', the cathedral having helped facilitate both), one at a gym, and one among walkers (none meeting on Sundays). Two of these have now developed leadership teams which have been recognised through the normal diocesan processes.

## Section 2 - What ministries are needed to fulfil God's mission?

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All Saints' Cathedral spent some time reflecting on what its calling was. The result was a focus on five strands: prayer, building on the tradition of the daily offices and prayer for the diocese, but expanded through closer links with the parishes, the new prayer rooms and courses; outreach, making the most of its draw as a tourist attraction and its 'civic' position seen as a natural ground for performance, debates, festivals and engagement; worship, by offering choral worship which was becoming rare in the diocese, while also welcoming events on the 'alternative' fringe; schools, build up its reputation as 'the best classroom on Merseyside', particularly cultivating links with non-church schools; and being 'mother church' supporting parishes in interregnum or pastoral difficulties.

### Central structures

The central structures of the diocese of Liverpool surprise many outsiders. While governed by the same sometimes archaic legalities as other dioceses, the way of working really does seem different. Here the diocese's key role seemed to be pushing deaneries and parishes to identify the mission of God in their area (and therefore what ministries, support and resources they need) and work-

ing with them to identify how they can be provided. Some clergy have found this difficult either because they want a stronger sense of direction from the centre, or because previously they disliked having to interact with colleagues, preferring their previous 'hot line to power' through contacts with senior staff. Visible changes have been the stronger role for area deans in clergy appointments, the provision of courses to suit new ministries, a clearer set of 'packages' which parishes can call on (the 'one-stop-shop Church house') and the 'centre' relating to leadership teams not just clergy.

The bishops' role has also changed. Their episcopé has been shared to an extent which surprises other dioceses, however the example it has given to clergy sharing with lay people in local churches has been significant. Gradually their role has become less 'overseers' with their hands on levers of power, and more 'apostolic'. Their key function being giving encouragement, challenge and blessing, uniting the different parts of the diocese, and offering wise discernment in the situations which present across the parishes and deaneries, and striving to stop the institution looking to itself not the mission of God. Naturally, they are still blamed when it goes wrong.

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# SECTION 3

## WHAT RESOURCES ARE NEEDED FOR THESE MINISTRIES?

### INTRODUCTION

The Diocesan Review covers the period 2002 – 2006. It stemmed from the financial situation facing the DBF (annual deficits approaching £1 million). However, although it required the DBF to adhere to a strict and demanding financial plan the main focus of the Review was re-gearing our resources – human, financial and spiritual – for mission.

The Review made 42 keynote recommendations. Appendix 1 outlines the progress towards achieving each. As we move into the final year of the Review and look beyond it to the next stage in the life of the diocese we need to learn from our successes and failures, build on what has begun to help deliver profound and lasting change in the diocese, and approach the coming years with confidence and expectancy

This plan differs from the Diocesan Review in that it does not contain a list of specific recommendations. The first two parts of this document have set out a vision of mission and ministry in the diocese in the coming years. This section details ways in which various diocesan structures will support and encourage the realisation of that vision.

There is a danger that this section can read like a list of top down initiatives that all must respond to. Therefore, it must be emphasised and re-emphasised that this is neither compulsory nor universal. It is not a case of every parish doing Giving in Grace and School of Leadership and Child Friendly Church Award and the Church School Award and Operation EDEN. Some may well do none of these.

Rather, the plans in this part of the document will become the focus for diocesan support. Bishop's Council will be charged with implementing it as it was charged with delivering Diocesan Review. The Board of Finance will need to ensure there are sufficient resources to enable all this to happen. Church House staff will focus their energies on the plans outlined here, and in this way help the church realise the vision set out in the previous sections.

A key issue for Bishops, Diocesan Synod, Bishop's Council and Church House will be how to make all this actually matter to people on the ground, to move from words on a page to actions which transform our churches and communities.

### 1. MISSION PLANNING

#### **(i) Parish development planning – the key to less but better**

At parish level, just like any other area of activity, we do what we do either by default or by design. If we simply do what we have always done and then add in activities because we feel we ought to or it sounds like a good idea then the volume of work, the level of expectation and the feeling of burden just grow and grow. It also becomes very difficult to stop doing things out because there is no real basis to make that decision. This is planning by default – reacting to events and taking every decision in isolation and based on its own merits.

### Section 3 - What resources are needed for these ministries?

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Planning by design is different. It tries to understand where God is leading and then agree some priorities for action in pursuit of this. It rules things in and rules things out and gives particular people specific responsibilities in particular areas. It also provides a framework against which to evaluate new ideas. It is by far the most effective way to limit expectations and activities.

A parish development planning process will need to be developed to help parishes think through their mission plans and priorities, and the actions that will need to be taken to deliver them.

Parish development plans will interact closely with the deanery mission plan. The deanery mission plan will give a lead and direction to the parishes. Parish development plans will provide and understanding of each parish's priorities and thinking and the resources this will require. Parish plans may also highlight particular concerns, opportunities and specialisms which may be offered more widely to the deanery.

#### **(ii) Transforming deaneries – building on a promising start**

The Diocesan Review placed a lot of emphasis on deaneries as the lead bodies for planning and resourcing. There is something of a changed relationship between deaneries and diocese as deaneries have taken on responsibility for clergy deployment. The progress so far has been erratic – some deaneries have used the process dynamically for mutual support in mission and ministry and to think creatively about current and fresh expressions of church; others have struggled to get off the starting blocks. The diocesan structures also have some way to go to fully take on board the implications of these changes.

In summer of 2005 Bishop's Council agreed a process for transforming deaneries. Mission planning is now the prime responsibility of both Area Dean and Lay Chair. There will be a programme of leadership training for Area Deans and encouragement for all members of clergy chapters to go on a 24-hour residential to establish what precisely needs to be done to make chapters an effective means of mu-

tual support in priesthood and ministry. Bishop's Council recognised that this programme is a starting point and not a conclusion and more will need to be done.

Furthermore, deaneries will need to engage with new issues around the deployment of resources. Until the end of 2006 the deanery focus in terms of deploying resources has primarily centred on deciding how to reduce clergy numbers in their deanery. From 2007 onwards the issue changes to what is the best way to spend the available money given the national shortage of stipendiary clergy.

It is important that deaneries go beyond just shuffling the ministry resource pack. They need to create a vision of mission and ministry in their deaneries which excites and galvanises their parishes, which addresses some of the key concerns (especially buildings) and which helps parishes feel part of and involved in something bigger than themselves as they respond to their distinctive communities. Deaneries also need to recognise, support and build on the vital work of the sector ministers in their areas – in hospitals, schools, prisons, universities, workplaces and elsewhere. It is vital that deanery mission planning remains very firmly on the agendas both of Bishop's Council and the Team meeting.

## **2. RESOURCING MISSION**

### **(i) Giving in Grace – releasing new resources for mission**

Many parishes remain under great financial pressure, whether this is the struggle to meet current costs or the desire to be able to resource new mission plans. Giving in Grace is a programme linking faith with giving as an act of worship, thanksgiving and ministry. It brings together understanding on stewardship and church growth to produce a new model which recognises that people are at different places in their journey of faith, their relationship to the church and their practice of giving.

Giving in Grace was launched in 2005. Currently around 35% of our parishes have undertaken or are undertaking a programme. Those who have em-

### Section 3 - What resources are needed for these ministries?

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barked on the programme are generally enthusiastic about the process and discovering both new vision and lay leadership skills. Pilot programmes showed Giving in Grace to be highly effective in increasing levels of giving.

Giving in Grace will remain the centrepiece of the diocesan support for parishes looking to enhance their giving levels. The website will be updated to reflect new thinking, ideas and experience. However, the core message and process will remain the same.

#### **(ii) Designated Priority Areas – mission and ministry in areas of greatest need**

In 2004 Diocesan Synod affirmed the need for priority in those parishes, teams, groups and clusters that suffer from intense multiple deprivation and launched the new Designated Priority Area (DPA) strategy. 59 parishes are within the 10% most deprived communities of the country. Of these, 44 are within the most deprived 5% and 15 within the most deprived 1%.

The strategy provides for two responses for DPAs. The first is a scaled provision to lighten the load for those in need – Parish Share continues to be linked to deprivation, as are now local contributions to parsonage improvements.

The second response is a small grants programme to assist DPAs engaged in mission within their communities and those which wish to undergo a process of reflection and planning for mission. A parish development planning process has been developed for DPAs. Grants are available towards administrative staff and community development projects, in addition to support in setting up projects, local parish audits, and fundraising.

Creative work with Tearfund UK has produced a Church Community Change programme specifically designed for smaller churches, especially those developing into teams and clusters. Theological reflection and leadership skills develop through identifying practical projects and community development activities.

Church Urban Fund is being relaunched and has the Diocese of Liverpool as one of its priority areas for increased grant levels, reflecting the levels of intense deprivation here. The diocese will be one of the grant-making dioceses and work has started on developing the local delivery plan, in consultation with deaneries.

Fundamentally all this represents a programme of support for and investment in the church's mission to some of the most deprived communities in the country. It is not something for nothing; support and investment sits alongside clearly articulated plans for action and development. However, it remains a priority to have an authentically local Christian voice and presence in the lowest income parts of the diocese.

#### **(iii) School of Leadership – leadership for growth**

The School of Leadership (SoL) came about as a response to the Review recommendation to increase church attendance in a percentage of our churches. It is designed to encourage growth and vitality in churches and to provide them with individualised, specialist consultation, support and training to enable them to grow numerically, as well as in quality and maturity, and to sustain that growth for the long term.

It begins with an intensive time of learning, study and reflection for participating clergy, facilitated by recognised leaders from around the country. Part of the incumbent's training is to identify and develop leadership within their church, and to work with their leaders to create an appropriate action plan.

To enable measurement of the process, an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the church is carried out early on as a benchmark that can be repeated half way through the 3 years and again at the conclusion. This is done through using the Natural Church Development (NCD) process.

Because NCD allows each church to identify their areas of strength and weakness, such planning can be very intentional. By utilising their strengths, and drawing on outside resources, churches can work

### Section 3 - What resources are needed for these ministries?

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at their weaknesses, thus improving the overall quality of church life and mission. Growth is therefore seen as a natural result of health rather than an end in itself.

Nearly 30 churches were part of this process by January 2005. In 2006 the School will target incumbents of the churches with congregations of 200+. Beyond this it will revert to a more open recruitment pattern, the aim being that by 2011 over 80 church leaders will have gone through the SoL or similar. So far all those who have taken part have found it an intensely valuable experience with the common response being that they wished they had been offered something like it a lot earlier in their ministry.

#### **(iv) Child Friendly Church Award – recognising children as the church of today**

The 'welcome and integration of children and their families in the worshipping life of parishes' was a keynote recommendation in the Diocesan Review. The Child Friendly Church Award is the main response to this aspiration. It is a light touch scheme encompassing the 0 – 16 years age range. It covers nine key areas including implementing child protection policies, offering safe environments, the inclusion of children in services and listening to the voices of 14+ years.

The award process helps parishes to find the gaps, create nurturing groups and reach out to all children. It ensures that parishes promote the importance of valuing children, regularly place children's work on agendas, advertise to communities that churches welcome children and their families, and take them seriously. All parishes that have taken part in the process have found it to be very helpful. Not all have lots of children.

Several other dioceses and denominations showed interest in this scheme so a national launch took place at the Cathedral in January 2005 and a diocesan launch in October 2005. The award has quickly established itself as a valuable tool in the diocese; the challenge is to promote the award – and par-

ticularly its aims, aspirations and values – to as many churches in the diocese as possible.

#### **(v) Church/Church School Award**

We have over 30,000 children in our church schools. This is probably 4 or 5 times as many as take part in church-based youth activities each week and is a hugely important area of mission and ministry. Many of our churches have excellent relationships with their church school; others struggle to get much beyond doing the occasional assembly.

Building on the success of the Child Friendly Church Award we will look to develop an award which identifies the characteristics of a good relationship between a church and its school. We believe that this will help recognise the excellent relationships that already exist and give others who see this as a mission priority a helpful framework in which to operate.

#### **(vii) Operation EDEN and partnerships with the local voluntary and community sector**

Operation Eden based in the Diocese but promoting environmental action among all Christian denominations and communities of minority faiths. It is sponsored and supported by the North West Development Agency and other statutory and voluntary partners. It builds on Bishop James' passionate commitment to the environment and on Church & Society's long established commitment to working in partnership with relevant agencies.

Operation Eden's work is likely to expand in the years ahead but one fruit should be a real commitment to environmental initiatives at all levels of Diocesan life. One which overlaps with other areas is our commitment to trade justice. In addition environmental auditing is not only a moral challenge but also an economic opportunity as it may lead to savings on expenditure on utilities!

This work is not an add on; rather it is central to the future of the church and the planet. It is hoped that parishes will consider the following vital issues and draw upon the resources of Operation EDEN to:

### Section 3 - What resources are needed for these ministries?

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- ◆ Consider undertaking environment audits of their church, the parsonage and ancillary buildings
- ◆ Reflect on how church land may be used
- ◆ Show commitment to trade justice and sustainability by using fairly traded products
- ◆ Consider adopting the Loaf principle where they can buy Local Organically grown Animal Friendly and fairly traded

Operation Eden is one high profile example of partnerships. Another vital area is to complement the resources that exist in the diocese by those that exist locally notably Councils for Voluntary Service and Volunteer Centres. All of these will soon have faith networks which will be further resources for parishes and projects as they try more effectively to serve their communities.

#### **(viii) Shared Ministry and Local Leadership**

A key development in the Church over the last generation has been the growing recognition that mission and ministry is the responsibility not just of the clergy but of all of the baptised. The Diocese of Liverpool has been at the forefront of promoting collaboration and establishing the significance of the laity in the structures and ministry of the church.

There now needs to be a major development in this area, moving from them being innovations affecting a minority of churches to being key elements of the life of diocese. This development is right theologically, takes seriously the experience of our churches that the releasing of the God-given gifts of the laity are vital to the sustenance and growth of the church, and is increasingly necessary given the changing patterns of mission and ministry.

This will involve:

- ◆ The development of the understanding of shared ministry to emphasise further the sharing of leadership and vision, the mission focus of the church, and the team's role in encouraging the involvement of all of the baptised.
- ◆ The development of suitable structures for local teams to 'hold the vision' for churches which are not operating in the traditional one-vicar, one-

church model. Such teams could involve OLM and NSM clergy, Readers, office holders such as churchwardens, as well as those more generally called to this role from within congregations.

- ◆ The revision of the existing structures and training for Shared Ministry Teams so that they more clearly emerge out of churches' existing collaborative practices and are in keeping with churches' context, size and tradition.
- ◆ Diocesan support for the development of collaborative structures and practices within churches outside of formally commissioned teams.
- ◆ A greater stress on collaboration in the training of licensed ministers.

#### **(ix) Initial Ministerial Education and Continuing Professional Development**

Clergy and Readers have a key role to play in the mission and ministry of the church. New programmes and structures are being developed to ensure that all licensed ministers receive the highest quality Initial Ministerial Education and (more importantly since it has traditionally been more erratic) Continuing Professional Development.

Such programmes centre on the following principles:

- ◆ The belief that ministry emerges out of an ongoing and deepening discipleship and spirituality.
- ◆ That full recognition must be given to prior experience and logical pathways exist for the development of ministry and vocation.
- ◆ That placements (in parishes or other contexts) and training parishes for curates are chosen strategically on the basis of what will result in the best learning and development for those in training for their ministry in the future. This would include consideration of whether the 'parish' would give constructive experience of clergy team working, the development of lay leadership (teams) and engagement in issues surrounding church growth.
- ◆ That the purpose of Continuing Professional Development is effecting positive change in professional and ministerial practice resulting

### Section 3 - What resources are needed for these ministries?

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from a reflective learning process, not a one-off 'session'.

- ◆ That proper support and training needs to be given to those who, although experienced, are taking on new roles or patterns of ministry.
- ◆ The importance of a learning culture in which there is encouragement to turn 'competency' into 'excellence', to share best practice and innovation, and for learners to become teachers.
- ◆ That partnerships ecumenically, within our region and further afield, offer great benefits financially, in quality, and in supporting the broader mission of the church.

#### **(x) Resourcing Lay Discipleship**

At the heart of the mission of God is not clergy or church activities, but people living out a life of discipleship, witnessing to God's love in their everyday lives – in their workplaces, families, recreation and communities.

There will be a new programme of events and courses, building on the success of the Foundation Course but going wider, aimed at helping lay people deepen their spirituality, strengthen their discipleship, develop their understanding of the faith and sharpen their grasp of contemporary issues. These will operate in a range of different modes including speakers at a central point, dispersed small groups, one-off events and ongoing courses.

Such a programme will no doubt lead to growth in vocation and offering in mission and ministry. However, the primary aim is to resource lay discipleship.

#### **(xi) Breaking Divisions – Using all God's Gifts**

Ministry in the Church of England has evolved considerably over the last fifty years, with the emergence of non-stipendiary priests (whether NSM or OLM), Readers having a far more significant role, the average age of ordinands increasing, women being ordained priests and far wider lay involvement in areas of ministry which traditionally might have been seen as the preserve of the clergy. However, the structures of the church have often not kept pace. Thus there is the danger that *our* struc-

tures may hinder what *God* is wishing to do; allowing our anxieties to blind us to the opportunities presented by the gifts God is giving to his Church.

We need to examine the ways we structure ministry with honesty and courage, keeping hold of what serves God's mission today but being prepared to change established patterns in response to God's call. For example, does the division between stipendiary and non-stipendiary priests serve the mission of God, or should we be far more open to 'part-time' working? Are ordinands on average older because God is calling fewer younger people, or because somehow our structures put off the young? Should the parishes, deaneries and diocese be more open to employing lay people to work in mission and ministry (not just administration and youth work)? If so, what structures do we need for accountability, training and support? These are challenging questions, but if the vision of Looprevil in Part 2 has anything to offer our diocese, they will have to be faced.

### **3. GROWING CHURCHES – DIFFERENT APPROACHES FOR DIFFERENT SITUATIONS**

In trying to best create as many healthy and vibrant churches and communities as possible, we need to adopt different approaches in different situations. Some of this will be about enhancing and affirming what is already there; alternatively, it might be planting new churches and fresh expressions of church; or it might be discontinuing current patterns and looking afresh to a very different future. As a diocese we will need different strategies to encourage and facilitate this.

Some of this will centre on releasing individuals for fresh expressions of church (through the Mission Opportunities Fund). Some of it will be about creating positive and healthy relationships between two churches to allow one to draw down resources from another (the Resource Church idea). And there is the desire to see more churches planting new churches, whether in inherited mode or as fresh expressions (the Church Planting churches concept).

### Section 3 - What resources are needed for these ministries?

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Getting this right could release major new opportunities and energies for mission and ministry in local communities, network communities, workplaces, hospitals, on the streets, in day care centres – the list of possibilities is endless.

#### **(i) Mission Opportunities Fund – releasing people to lead in fresh expressions**

As a diocese we aim to become a national centre of excellence in fresh expressions of church. The Mission Opportunities Fund is a key means of achieving this.

In 2004 and in response to *Mission-Shaped Church* Diocesan Synod established a Mission Opportunities Fund for the diocese. This £500,000 fund was created from a one-off allocation of capital from the money freed up after negotiations with the Charity Commission. The fund would be time-limited with no future commitments. It was recognised that it would need to complement/be additional to parish ministry and that it should not undermine or alter current plans for parish ministry or mission within the deanery.

*Mission-Shaped Church* gives the overriding challenge ‘what does it mean for the Church of England to be Mission Shaped Church in contemporary society? The new reality of mission is that we have to move from a “come to us” mode to a “go to them” mode.’ As Bishop James said when introducing the *Mission-Shaped Church* debate at General Synod: ‘In Anglican Missiology there is an unbroken thread from pastoral care to evangelism, but in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century people live not only in parishes; they also inhabit what I call “invisible parishes”, relationships that transcend geographical boundaries through work, leisure, common interests.’

A Fresh Expressions Adviser has been appointed to be responsible for encouraging, reviewing and supporting existing and developing church plants and fresh expression and for their integration into the ministry of the diocese as a whole. Beyond this the aim is that the money should be used for mission initiatives that will lead to a step change in mission and ministry activities and opportunities, looking to build on what is already there and spot-

ting ideas, energy and enthusiasm for new forms of mission. At the same time there needs to be a sense of it fitting with a broader diocesan vision and being complementary to parish and sector ministry.

Fundamentally we should aim to do a few transformational things well. This will be a key task for Bishop’s Council. Alongside this there is a challenge to the Finance Committee to see if the diocesan asset base can be further re-worked to release more resources to sustain and develop this work.

#### **(ii) Issues of sustainability - buildings, churches and mission**

Over the past ten years in our diocese three worshipping communities have left their previous places of worship to join with neighbouring parishes, and the redundant buildings disposed of, and five worshipping communities have built brand new churches and demolished or sold their previous buildings. Sometimes a problem prompted a creative process of change; other times an opportunity presented itself. The impetus generally came from the local worshipping community.

The mission of God is dynamic not static, and the wider community is always changing. Sometimes, for example, an urban community can be completely changed by a regeneration scheme. Our mission and ministry should reflect and respond to this. This means that at times it can be right for new work or a new church to be launched in an area or parish alongside the existing church(es). It also means that at times God will call existing churches to change creatively perhaps through finding a different use for their buildings or joining with other churches in the area.

All churches need to be listening for God’s call for them to change in challenging ways. Some churches find that their energy is consumed with the struggle to maintain services, finances and buildings. Others are burdened with stories of a golden past and feel so guilty about the difficult present that they cannot move onto a different future. In these and other situations churches should reflect carefully on whether God is calling for creative change.

### Section 3 - What resources are needed for these ministries?

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It is important to recognise churches do not close; a church is an organic community of people led by the Spirit in worship and service. However sometimes church buildings cease to be assets in mission, ministry and worship and become millstones, draining life, energy and money from the worshipping community and making ministry in its current form unsustainable. Hence a need for change.

However, this is not just about buildings. If parishes and deaneries are to make the best use of their limited resources then tough questions may have to be asked and answered more generally.

This cannot and must not be done on the basis of a crude formula or ticklist. It certainly must not be seen as a blanket exercise around closing smaller church congregations. Many smaller congregations have a vitality and vibrancy that needs nurturing to allow it to flourish and grow. Rural communities are often smaller and more disparate so the gathered congregation is, almost by definition, therefore smaller.

Equally, however, smaller congregations can be a sign of consistent and continuing decline, of spiritual and financial exhaustion, of the need to think afresh about the future rather than remain locked in the struggles of the past and present. Problems in the following areas may be pointers to the need for serious prayer and reflection:

**Patterns of membership and attendance** – an average attendance of under 35 which has been in consistent decline

**Local authenticity** – a worshipping community that is predominantly eclectic and one generational and has no current story of engagement with the parish

**Local alternatives** – the geographical proximity of other churches

**Ministry costs** – an inability to meet parish share

**Buildings** – inappropriate buildings in a poor state of repair and unused during the week

**Community interest in the building** – the church building has lost its role as a community facility or landmark and focus for celebration and commemoration

**Vision** – an inability to envisage a future story and help it become reality

There is a diocesan 'Creatively Changing Churches' group already engaged with a number of churches exploring possibilities because their buildings have no future and the church needs a different home or because there is an opportunity to sell their land and buildings to prepare the ground for new and creative ways to serve their community and develop worship space. The group will sometimes approach parishes which appear to be in difficulties to assist in reading the signs and exploring the opportunities.

The CCC group is also discharged with smoothing bureaucratic and other processes which could present barriers to change.

Parishes can approach this CCC group directly. Alternatively the deanery mission planning process could identify churches that need to think creatively about their future. Either way, ensuring that this group is sufficiently resourced and appropriately involved should be a priority for Bishop's Council.

#### **(iii) Resource Churches – designated to kick-start growth**

Resource churches are a pretty familiar concept. It usually is understood to mean one church sharing expertise with another, such as in liturgy or leading worship. The idea behind the designated resource church is rather different as it is explicitly designed to enable churches to grow by giving under-resourced churches significant short to medium-term support from other churches which have the capacity to do so. The basic process would be as follows:

- ◆ The resource church would receive a curate (or stipendiary reader) who would be trained specifically in church growth strategies.
- ◆ The resource church would also commit to releasing resources, especially people, to support a receiving church.
- ◆ Training would be provided to both the resource and supported church on how to provide and receive resources respectively.
- ◆ At the end of the training period the curate would move to the receiving church and establish his/her leadership there.

### Section 3 - What resources are needed for these ministries?

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- ◆ At an appropriate point the supported church begins to draw down resources from the resource church.
- ◆ At an appropriate point the supported church ceases to rely on the resource church.

Various key points emerge from this:

- ◆ It is not one church taking over another. The supported church remains responsible for its own mission plans and thinking. It controls the way on which resources are drawn down from the resource church.
- ◆ The curate will become the vicar of the supported church and will remain his or her own person. S/he will not be expected to become a clone of the sending vicar.
- ◆ The relationship must be voluntarily entered into.
- ◆ The relationship can be formed within a single deanery or across deaneries. Either way it should be done with the support of the deanery/ deaneries involved.

Fundamentally this relationship is about the giving away of resources for others to use under the leadership of a known leader. It may well be possible to vary the terms of the relationship. For example, it does not necessarily require the involvement of a curate or stipendiary reader – it can simply be one church making gifted lay people available to another. However, it does require a deliberately constructed relationship of the giving and receiving of resources for growth.

#### **(iv) Designated church planting church – new churches to reach new people**

Historically all current churches were once a church plant. The idea behind the designated church planting church model is to challenge, support and enable a well-resourced church to plant and nurture new churches in areas of mission opportunity. These new churches would be planted under the authority of the bishop and the leadership of an established church. They can be in inherited or fresh expressions mode. It may involve the provision of deanery or diocesan resources – lay or ordained – to develop sufficient leadership capacity within the church planting church. For example, it

could require the provision of a curate or stipendiary reader to be trained up in church planting. Or it could be a question of providing leadership for the existing church to enable its incumbent to go out and plant churches.

As with the designated resource church it will be important to involve the deanery in the planning for the designation of a particular church as a church planting church and also for its church planting plans. However, the presumption should be that church planting is a positive step and something to be encouraged within the deanery. Indeed, it is to be hoped that every deanery will have at least one church plant or resource church relationship by 2011. It may well be that these plants and resource church relationships go across deanery boundaries.

#### **4. A WORD ON CHURCH HOUSE**

The role of Church House must be to continue to support parishes and schools in their work and witness, and to be seen to do so. There has been considerable re-organisation since the Diocesan Review with reductions in staff numbers in many areas. There has also been a concerted drive to generate money and resources beyond Parish Share.

In May 2005 Bishop's Council agreed to move to an outcome-based reporting system. This means that diocesan committees must all report into Bishop's Council on what they are trying to achieve and how successful they are being in doing this. This is a clear move away from activity-based reporting which can easily highlight busyness at the expense of effectiveness. The new approach, intentionally and rightly, places far more pressure on diocesan committees and staff to demonstrate good progress towards meeting agreed objectives and that they are making the very best use of limited resources. At times, no doubt, it will make for a pretty uncomfortable ride.

#### **5. AND FINALLY ...**

Where will all this end up? What will the diocese look like in 10 years' time? The aim of this plan is to nurture a confident, growing church which is more diverse in its mission and ministry patterns. For

### Section 3 - What resources are needed for these ministries?

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many centuries a 'church' has implied a body of believers meeting on a Sunday in a consecrated building. No doubt this will continue as the shape of many churches, but others will look very different. Indeed, Anglican churches within the diocese may well no longer have a common 'shape'.

In many ways this is going back to our roots. At the heart of Anglicanism has been a commitment to churches being locally-owned and appropriate to their tradition, setting and mission context. Society has always been mixed: Wigan has never been Ormskirk; Southport has never been Kirkdale. However, society has if anything become more fragmented with factors such as age, outlook and employment becoming as important as geography. Churches into the future will be far more responsive to these broader understandings of what is meant by community. Nevertheless, throughout all this, we must maintain an unyielding commitment to a worshipping and witnessing presence in every community in the diocese.

As a result of the actions in this plan we should all be better thought through in ministry and mission, working to our strengths under a more confident local leadership. The luxury of only using some of the gifts God gives to the church will no longer be an option. Structures and leaders will focus on identifying, empowering and releasing, blessing gifts and removing the unintended barriers to the ministry of all the baptised.

There will be a much stronger recognition that the needs of an area and the diocese will be far in excess of what can be met. Leadership will consist in identifying God's priorities for that place and time amid an on-going challenge to remember the parts of the population which are currently unreached. There will also be much greater flexibility. We are no longer building institutions intended to remain for centuries. Initiatives, projects and whole churches can successfully last for just a few years.

Structures and authority will remain important. Discerning the things of God, giving appropriate permission and leadership and, where necessary, reigning in excess will be the necessary flip-side of a greater freedom to innovate and experiment.

We should be better linked to other churches and the service delivery in Church House should be significantly improved. Indeed, Church House should be under greater and greater pressure from Bishop's Council to demonstrate the progress it is making in delivering agreed objectives.

In short, we should be seeing a vibrant and led Christian presence in every community in our diocese. But it can only happen through prayer. As Paul says: 'in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God'. We must pray for ourselves, for each other and for our diocese. And in prayer we must always be open to the God who is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine. He will lead us to places and ideas that we have never dreamed of.

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# APPENDIX

## DIOCESAN REVIEW UPDATE

The Diocesan Review made 42 keynote recommendations to advance mission and ministry in the diocese and to address the deep-seated financial problems facing the Diocesan Board of Finance. This appendix gives a brief update on progress made under each recommendation.

Those responsible for delivering on the different recommendations, while always accountable to Bishop's Council, have tried to follow the work through seriously and determinedly. However, events inevitably overtake some recommendations, fundamentally re-shape others and give a few an unanticipated impetus. Some ideas that seem plausible in principle don't work or don't gain sufficient currency in practice; others are an unexpected success.

For example the Hind report on clergy formation and training has dominated the lifelong learning agenda in a way which could not have been predicted in 2001. The re-structuring of the DBF funds, with the full support and involvement of the Charity Commission, offered a whole range of new possibilities around stimulating new mission opportunities. And nobody had anticipated developing a nationally recognised Child Friendly Church Award.

Throughout all of this diocesan officers and committees have been assiduous in trying to stay true to the good and demanding agenda set by the Diocesan Review but also trying to re-interpret aspirations in the light of ever-changing circumstances.

The 42 recommendations are very different in tone. Some, especially under the developing ministry

heading, are very wide-ranging and demand an equally wide-ranging response. Others are very specific and place responsibility for delivery very clearly at the door of individual committees or diocesan officers.

This appendix does not aim to give a comprehensive account of everything that has been attempted or accomplished since 1 January 2002. Rather it focuses on key developments under each recommendation. Much is work in progress where we are part way through a long and concerted programme of change – this particularly applies to work under recommendation 17 (around church growth), developments within and plans for lifelong learning and within deanery mission planning.

In general we believe that the Diocesan Review has set us on a good and helpful course. In many new areas we have built solid foundations from which we can expect much in the future. In others we are clearly at the leading edge of national and indeed international practice. In some we have barely scratched the surface. To borrow from the world of politics we believe that this appendix shows that there's a lot done and a lot more to do.

### DEVELOPING MINISTRY

#### *1. Affirm and encourage lay people of all ages in their service of God*

A multiple response from evangelism conferences to support for children's workers, from deanery mission planning to supporting lay people working in

schools, from churchwardens' conferences to lay chairs' training.

***2. Encourage, support and equip lay people in a wide range of ministries***

A multiple response. See 1 above. Also, the expansion of Shared Ministry Teams, the increasing take-up of the diocesan Foundation Course, the significant expansion of Readers entering training, the appointment of Stipendiary Readers, the First Steps in Ministry and Theology for All lifelong learning series.

***3. Identify expertise and share good practice across the diocese***

A multi-layered response including forming new networks (e.g. through the School of Leadership, the Modern Catholic Clergy Forum, the civic churches network) and the work of Church House officers making connections and distilling best practice into training and briefing and advice work. This theme will become central to the new Continuing Professional Development element of the lifelong learning programme.

***4. All churches to take active steps to welcome and integrate children and their families into the worshipping life of their church***

The on-going work of the Children's and Youth Workers and, in particular, the development and implementation of the Child Friendly Church Award which was pioneered in the Diocese of Liverpool and then launched nationally. Also significant are the establishment of a second Ark to showcase and provide leading edge resources for children's work, and the continued development of the Childstalk web pages.

***5. Prioritise security needs in UPA vicarages***

We have continued with our programme of installing CCTV cameras in parsonages across the diocese, supported by grants from Marshall's Charity, alongside other security measures. We have also relocated clergy out of particularly vulnerable houses.

***6. Help all clergy reflect on and re-assess their priorities in their ministry***

We have continued to advocate the programme of integrated appraisal, annual work consultation and ministerial review. We have established the School of Leadership and ran the Creative Church leadership course. We have new and over-subscribed training for clergy on a range of management issues including use of time, strategic planning and such like. We are in the process of developing a Parish Development Planning process to enable this reflecting to take place more formally in the broader context of parish mission thinking.

***7. Offer clergy more effective support through the appraisal process, but within a context of greater accountability for development targets and activities***

See 6 above. There is still insufficient emphasis on local accountability. This will become sharper as issues around clergy performance become formally enshrined in new legislation on clergy discipline and terms of service. A working group is again looking at this whole area.

***8. New elements of clergy training on maximising the use of available clergy time***

See 6 above.

***9. The Council for Lifelong Learning to develop and model collaborative approaches to clergy training and development***

Both the Committee for Lifelong Learning and the Church House department have been reorganised and re-built firmly on these principles. Reader training has been re-structured to promote collaboration, as will be training for curates and the professional development of clergy.

***10. All trainee curates to have some experience of best practice in UPAs as a substantial part of their training***

The 3<sup>rd</sup> year placement for curates very specifically reflects this.

***11. OLMs and NSMs as 'Priest in Charge' of parishes***

We currently (March 2006) have 2 House for Duty priests with day-to-day responsibility for their churches with 2 more in the pipeline.

***12. Readers to be used more widely***

We now have two stipendiary readers with day-to-day responsibility for their respective churches. We hope that the next round of deanery mission plans will look at further creative deployment of the many talented Readers we have in the diocese. It's not just that we have the largest number of Readers in training of any diocese in the country; in fact we have twice as many in training as any other diocese (bar one).

***13. Provide information and training for clergy and laity on maximising the possibilities of work in schools***

There is now regular training on this provided within the lifelong learning programme. The coverage of the Diocesan Board of Education services has been greatly enhanced through the development of a Service Level Agreement with schools.

***14. Establish a half-time stipendiary post to be a chaplain to young adults***

Malcolm Chamberlain was appointed in 2002. The Dream churches are now established, with a total of c. 100 members. The aim remains that the network of Dream churches expands throughout the diocese.

***15. Create a new post with specific responsibility for discipling children in their family context***

Jane Leadbetter was appointed to a full-time post in 2002. See also 4 above.

***16. Develop an on-going programme of race awareness training across the diocese***

Training for clergy and staff at Church House was undertaken in June 2002 in collaboration with the Diocese of Virginia. We are awaiting the inter-denominational appointment of a Racial Justice Worker to take this work further forward.

***17. Set a target of a 10% growth in Usual Sunday Attendances within 20% of churches in the diocese by 2006***

Five conferences on evangelism were organised for February – June 2003. There are now nearly 40 churches involved in the Going for Growth programme through the School of Leadership. This programme will be evaluated by summer of 2006.

Unfortunately, the way in which we count church attendance has been changed as a result of the implementation of the new Parish Share system, so a broader assessment of church attendance is pretty much impossible other than through the national church statistics. These suggest that our weekly attendances have marginally increased since 2002 (by 0.8%). However, the more detailed evaluation of the School of Leadership will give more targeted information on the impact in individual churches.

**RESOURCING MINISTRY**

***18. Deaneries to take strategic responsibility for mission, pastoral re-organisation and ministry numbers***

Almost all the deaneries have developed plans for pastoral re-organisation in the light of the clergy number targets set by the Diocesan Review. The Core Group has been making appointments on the basis of these plans. Some deaneries have gone much further and developed mission plans around the clustering of churches and/or the development of specific deanery initiatives (such as the development of youth cells in Widnes). Very few have significantly addressed thorny issues around church buildings in a systematic way.

***19. Re-consider deanery boundaries***

Minor changes have been made to deanery boundaries with c. 5 parishes changing deaneries as a result of consultation. The deaneries of Wigan East and West have been re-united into the single deanery of Wigan. There are still proposals around mission in the city centre of Liverpool which may have implications for deanery structures, as may discussions around whether the Kirkby team is best located in Walton or Huyton deanery.

***20. Encourage parishes to cluster together***

Clustering has been the basis of many of the deanery mission plans. In theory many churches in the diocese are in clusters. However, the practical implications have probably not been fully worked through in many cases.

**21. Every parish should produce a development plan**

Some parishes already have very good mission plans; many do not. It has become clear that we need to develop a better process to assist parishes think through their mission challenge. This is currently being done. Rolling this out is a central element of the new diocesan plan.

**22. Build systems of accountability across the diocese**

Some key steps have been taken in this regard. The Synod is now the Diocesan Board of Finance so that financial information is much more widely available than before and that strategic decisions about mission and money can be held together in a single forum. All committees and Church House departments now report into Bishop's Council on an outcomes basis so that Bishop's Council, as the executive arm of Synod, can ensure that appropriate progress is being made in delivering the Diocesan Review and the new diocesan plan. There are much clearer and stronger accountabilities between DBF staff members and the DBF Finance Committee as their employing body, and the Finance Committee has worked through its governance policies and practices. Area Deans have new role descriptions and are subject to annual appraisal by the Archdeacons. There is an on-going attempt through e-currents and under-currents to improve communication to the parishes.

**23. Affirm Bishop James' statement that there is no barrier to baptised and practising Christians from other denominations to Holy Communion**

This has been done.

**24. Encourage existing and potential Local Ecumenical Partnerships**

Appointed new Diocesan Ecumenical Adviser (DEA), plus a new Senior Officer for Church Growth & Ecumenism. We hold regular meetings with clergy in LEPs to look at common issues and offer support. The DEA meets informally with those exploring possible ecumenical engagement or partnerships to offer advice and guidance with an emphasis on 'light touch' ecumenism.

**25. The cathedral to develop a more transparent approach to its finances and structure**

The cathedral publishes its annual report and accounts and through the Dean, Chapter and Canons engages actively in the mission and ministry of the diocese in a variety of ways and a number of levels.

**26. Fundamentally review committee structure**

A new committee structure was agreed at the March 2003 Synod. A key element was bringing together Diocesan Synod and the Diocesan Board of Finance (so that decisions about mission and money could be made in the one governing body) and establishing Bishop's Council clearly as the executive arm of Synod with all diocesan committees and staff reporting into it.

**27. Reduce people time spent on diocesan committees by 33% by end 2004**

As 26 above. The numbers of committees were reduced by over 50%.

**28. Instigate a thorough review of working practices within Church House**

An independent group reviewed the working practices at Church House. Staff costs met from unrestricted income were reduced by over £100,000 a year (by over £170,000 a year before the new posts required by the Diocesan Review were taken into account). Any additional staff appointed have been paid either from earned income or external grant funding. All the work undertaken at Church House is now either a church or charity law requirement or is an explicit outworking of the Diocesan Review. Any work deemed non-essential has been discontinued.

**29. Sell and relocate Church House**

This has been agreed in principle. The aim is to relocate to the cathedral campus once space becomes available in 2007 and, wherever possible, share administrative functions and costs.

**30. Explore inter-diocesan co-operation in administration**

We are in the process of appointing a Human Resources Officer to be shared between the dioceses of Liverpool, Manchester and Chester. We hope also to appoint an inter-diocesan Child Protection

Officer on the same basis. As a group of north west dioceses we have contracted with an agency to review back office costs. We hope to begin processing Criminal Records Bureau applications for other north west dioceses in 2006.

## **FINANCIAL**

### ***31. 11% decrease in stipendiary clergy numbers over next 4 years***

We were on target as at December 2005.

### ***32. Real terms reduction of £125,000 a year in DBF expenditure by end 2004***

This has been achieved through staffing and other administrative costs savings.

### ***33. Increase DBF income by £100,000 (other than from parishes) by end 2004***

The 2006 budget includes over £250,000 of earned income.

### ***34. Aim to keep annual quota increases within RPI + 2.5%***

Parish Share has been contained to RPI + 2% each year.

### ***35. The diocese should accept the separate financial status of the cathedral but explore a contribution system from the cathedral to the diocese***

The DBF does recognise the separate financial status of the cathedral. However, discussions around a contribution system have stalled. There are broader questions about organisational joint working being explored but not currently a financial contribution from the cathedral to the DBF.

### ***36. Deaneries to propose building development plans (including closure of unnecessary and/or unduly expensive buildings) by end 2003***

This has not really happened. There are a few cases of buildings being re-worked but the impetus has generally been at parish or archdeacon level. We all seem to think that buildings are a problem, they are expensive to maintain and are in the wrong place, but this does not easily translate into radical thinking about alternatives.

### ***37. Contract out management of DBF assets in two deaneries on a trial basis by end 2003***

This has now been shelved. There are currently discussions about the viability of establishing a development company as a subsidiary of the DBF to maximise the income potential of DBF property assets.

### ***38. Re-examine Quota by Potential system in 2002***

A new Parish Share system was introduced in January 2004. This has had a positive effect on overall Parish Share collection both in its own right and compared to neighbouring dioceses.

### ***39. Maximise the benefit to the diocese as a whole of current levels of parish reserves***

We have moved away from this thinking since the Diocesan Review. The emphasis is now far more on local funds remaining local and encouraging the creative application of funds for local mission.

### ***40. Funding for ecumenical work conditional on recipient bodies demonstrating good outputs at the local level***

The Ecumenical Funding Group is now established and reports annually to Bishop's Council with detailed recommendations on how best to apply the budgeted allocation with and through our ecumenical partners.

### ***41. Promote a diocesan giving campaign to increase average individual giving to 5% by end of 2008***

Giving in Grace was launched in March 2005 with parishes undertaking programmes from autumn 2005. The early feedback is very positive. There will be a more formal evaluation in spring 2006.

### ***42. Maintain a reduced level of a minimum 3 months' usable reserves in DBF accounts***

We have used DBF reserves to continue to cushion parishes from the full effects of the increases in clergy stipends and pension costs and smooth the transition to break-even in the DBF budget by 2007. Despite the major fall in stock market values in 2000 – 2003 we still have 5 months' useable funds in reserve, even after the establishment of the Mis-

## **Appendix - Diocesan Review Update**

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sion Opportunities Fund. Our reserves position has been greatly assisted by a major re-structuring of funds which transferred, with the full agreement of the Charity Commission, over £1 million from permanent endowment into unrestricted funds and could therefore be applied far more directly in support of parish mission and ministry.