

Evaluation of Transforming Wigan

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Church of England Attendance figures

The Church of England continues to observe a steady decline in people attending church. In 2019, prior to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, Church of England statistics showed that attendance was down 2% compared with the previous year. In the Diocese of Liverpool, between 2014 and 2019 average weekly attendance amongst adults had dropped by 14.1% and amongst children by 15.9%.¹ In 2020, due to the pandemic, average weekly attendance was 57% lower than in 2019.² In 2019, the largest source of income across the Church of England was parish giving, which (along with tax recovered) accounted for £610 million.³ In 2020, giving income fell by 7.6%, a reduction of £39 million compared with 2019.⁴

This downward trend is likely to continue. Research by British Social Attitudes surmised that religious decline in Britain is generational, with children tending to be less religious than their parents, and on average their children's children even less religious than they are.⁵

Diocese of Liverpool vision and strategy

In October 2013, the Diocese of Liverpool reaffirmed its commitment to the archbishop's quinquennial goals (which continues to be supported by the Archbishops Council).⁶ To address the declining numbers, the vision of the Diocese of Liverpool⁷ is for a bigger church to make a bigger difference, with more people knowing Jesus and more justice in the world. This was to be accomplished through 100 new congregations, 1,000 new leaders and 10,000 new disciples.

Wigan Deanery

Wigan Deanery is the largest deanery in the Diocese of Liverpool and, administratively, sits within the borough of Wigan. At the start of the Transforming Wigan (TW) project, there were 29 parishes, supported by 18 incumbents, 1 pioneer minister, 4 curates, 1 house-for-duty minister, 5 self-supporting ministers, 33 readers, 15 retired clergy with 'permission to officiate', and 2 prison chaplains. Until TW, the focus had been on established⁸ churches for both adults and children, although some new Fresh Expressions church initiatives, such as Gateway, in the centre of town and Messy Church had begun. Within the deanery, there were 33 church buildings, many in a substandard condition,⁹ 22 Church of England primary schools and one high school (The Deanery).

Wigan has an ageing population and by 2025 the 65+ population is projected to increase by a fifth. Much of this increase is due to the increase in the 85+ population that is projected to increase by almost 60%.¹⁰ At the start of the TW project, average weekly giving was £5.40 per member compared to the diocesan average of £8.57; 25% of the total offering came through fundraising. The majority of giving (75%) was made by over-50s, of which 36% was given by those aged 70+. In Wigan, only 1% of the population attends a Church of England service on a Sunday and only another 1% attend services in other denominations.

¹ www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/2019StatisticsForMission.pdf

² www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/statistics-mission-2020

³ *Parish Finance Statistics 2019* www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/Parish%20Finance%20Statistics%202019.pdf

⁴ *Parish Finance Statistics 2020* www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/Parish%20Finance%20Statistics%202020.pdf

⁵ *British Social Attitudes* www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39293/1_bsa36_religion.pdf

⁶ <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/GS%202267%20Archbishops%27%20Council%20Annual%20Report%202.pdf>

⁷ <https://liverpool.anglican.org/about-us/liverpool-dbf/vision/>

⁸ Inherited churches

⁹ <https://churchwigan.uk/assets/documents/TW+Project+Executive+Summary.pdf>

¹⁰ www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/Data-Statistics/Borough-Story/Population-estimates.aspx

Transforming Wigan project

The TW project was the first Strategic Development Fund project funded by the Church Commissioners (CC). The seven-year project was to turn around the mission and financial strength of Wigan Deanery. A project director was appointed in 2015 through a formal application process, who subsequently led a team to initiate the changes until 2020, when the Benefice of Church Wigan (CW) was officially formed.

The three principal goals of the TW project were to: (1) renew discipleship; (2) re-orientate the church; and (3) revive the community. The strategy adopted to do this was through building a growth framework to establish one church with several parishes and many worship communities.¹¹

Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide an independent evidenced-based assessment of the seven-year project, which closed at the end of 2021. This report provides the results of an evaluation conducted in November 2022–January 2023. The focus of the evaluation was to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project, and identify key lessons and recommendations.

The evaluation was mainly qualitative in nature. It collected primary data through 20 interviews with key stakeholders, nine focus groups totalling 39 people representing seven new parishes, clergy and treasurers and wardens. A SWOT and PESTLE exercise¹² was also conducted with the Clergy Team. The quantitative survey data was matched against TW project data to generate additional insight. Secondary data included project documents and related literature.

Findings

Relevance

There was general agreement amongst parishioners and clergy alike that change needed to happen to halt the decline of the Church in Wigan. In 2013 the number of clergy in Wigan reduced from 24 to 18, thereafter clergy agreed that there needed to be some outside assistance to support change, which subsequently led to the development of the Transforming Wigan bid being submitted to the CC. The successful bid identified the areas to be addressed were: (1) improving infrastructure; (2) change management; (3) church planting; (4) developing missional leaders' communities; and (5) training and coaching. It was the first large change management programme for the Diocese and the CC.

Two project teams were established to manage the change: (1) the Project Group and Clergy Team, overseen by the Deanery Synod; and (2) the Guiding Coalition to provide strategic oversight and lead change. The majority of members of the two groups shared a similar ecclesiology and desire to see change within the deanery. The lay chair was invited to meetings and had easy access to the teams, but there was no specific lay representation.

The principal focus of the management teams was to change culture through the winning of hearts and minds using John Kotter's eight-step change management model (see Appendix 1), therefore no formal framework to measure project milestones and budget was developed at the start of the project. In 2018, a scoping document was developed on how structural change would be implemented. The TW project lead reported regularly to the diocese's oversight board, who regularly monitored progress.

Effectiveness

In 2020, the new structure was implemented: the 29 old parishes ceased to exist, and a new team benefice called CW was established with seven new parishes. The Wigan Deanery Trust (WDT) was established and given charitable status. Core Services was established, and overseen by WDT, to undertake administrative, finance, buildings management communication, HR, safeguarding and funerals co-ordination. The new

¹¹ Transforming Wigan Summary Document

¹² SWOT analysis aims to identify the key Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats within an organisation. A PESTLE exercise looks at the the key external factors (Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal and Environmental) that influence an organisation

benefice is governed by a joint council and the seven parochial church councils (PCCs), for which there is no precedent within the Church of England. Therefore, it has taken time to gain greater consensus and understanding through regular meetings with the Team Rectory, WDT and CW.

CW consists of the Clergy Team totalling 13 stipendiary clergy (two less than originally anticipated at the start of TW), led by the team rector. Existing PCCs were dissolved and new PCC representatives were elected for the seven new parishes. Parishes appointed wardens and treasurers for each of the seven parishes. These roles are supported by Core Services staff. However, it has been more difficult to recruit people into the new warden and treasurer roles. Two church buildings have closed due to safety issues and another one was repurposed, leaving 31 church buildings remaining within the CW portfolio. CW is currently undertaking a buildings review.

In 2019, parishioners were given an opportunity to give feedback to the CC on the changes to the deanery. Of the 203 responses, 53% (60% of which were from three parishes) objected to the changes, with the main concerns focused on the restructuring, stress to clergy and laity, mission, finance, and consultation and communication. The restructuring of the deanery was supported by the CC and formally started in 2020. The Bishop of Warrington was appointed to oversee a reconciliation process to address concerns raised by parishioners, which also coincided with the start of the pandemic and delayed proceedings.

The Covid-19 pandemic hampered implementation of the new structure and navigating the new system has been challenging for some. Some parishioners and lay leaders in administrative roles say it has become more complicated or more time-consuming. There is also passive resistance from some churches, which do not want to engage and therefore do not provide attendance and financial data.

TW has been particularly effective at establishing missional and social justice activities, including: 29 new communities, with a total of around 750 participants; House of Prayer; a Wigan-wide Alpha course with 370 attendees; and a Pentecost event in 2016, with around 5,000 people. The project leader was keen to engage with outside agencies, in particular, Wigan Council, which paid dividends during the pandemic as relationships had already been developed. The new structure has made it easier for the council to engage with the deanery as there are no longer many parishes to contact, but rather one team.

Churches engaged in missional and social justice activities prior to TW, but activities were often ad hoc and not joined up. The pandemic acted as a catalyst to activities being co-ordinated across the deanery. CW became the council's main distributor of food to those in need during this period. Some examples are: six Wigan-wide food pantries led and run by volunteers; a Christians Against Poverty debt centre and recruitment of a manager; bereavement support groups; and piloting of the Transforming Lives for Good early intervention project, providing coaches for schoolchildren. In December 2021, CW established 'Lifted' to coordinate social action activities across the deanery.

Key activities that helped TW and CW were the training and support of lay leaders, missional and social justice activities, and financial support from the diocese and 29 former parishes, as well as support from non-stipendiary and retired clergy. Factors that acted as barriers to implementation were: poor communication; buy-in from parishes not being as extensive as initially perceived; people not wanting to change; the approach of changing hearts and minds being less tangible for some than a project framework with project milestones; and the pandemic.

Efficiency

Through CW, the financial assets of the 29 parishes became financial assets of the seven new parishes. Overall giving within the deanery has gone down, falling to 88.6% of the 2014 values in 2019. In 2020, only one parish had paid its share in full. Between 2015 and 2019, there was a 3.26% decline in giving and a sharp decline of 16.7% at the start of/during the pandemic. The addition of the new missional communities did not lead to an increase in giving. Without support from the diocese, the consequences of continued decline in giving would have seen stipendiary clergy go down to a total of eight.

Core Services costs around 13% of the CW total income. It has enabled CW to operate more efficiently and effectively. It has provided efficiencies through developing and running a centralised funerals service; saved around £58,000 on building insurance; increased churches' health and safety compliance from 25% to 75%;

improved safeguarding practice; ensured employment contracts are now legal; and provided administrative support for clergy. The challenge of funding restricts staff to being employed part-time, and only allows the service to plan for 12 months rather than having a five-year financial planning process.

Impact

The two key aims were to make Wigan a 'missional powerhouse' and turn around its financial strength. TW has been successful in its missional focus, establishing 63 worship communities in schools and the community, and engaging over 12,656 people in missional activities. The training of just under 200 lay leaders has been key to this. TW was able to provide a *permission-giving* environment through training and support of lay leaders, enabling and encouraging leaders to set up and lead various activities and courses such as dementia and faith cafes, bereavement courses, baptism support and the running of food pantries.

For those who have engaged with TW and CW, there has been positive feedback and some have been enriched through building new friendships across parish boundaries, sharing of learning and good practice, praying together and supporting one another. However, in some areas of CW there is a tension that established churches have been neglected and traditional activities are less valued.

TW was unable to halt the decline in church attendance across the deanery and observed a steady decline of 8.8% up until the pandemic, after which there was steep decline when churches closed.

There has also been significant change in the way clergy work. In general, clergy previously worked within in their own parish or (immediate parish) boundaries, but now as a team benefice they are able to work across the deanery. The Clergy Team began to work together in 2019 prior to the new structure and the pandemic. Consequently, when the pandemic forced the closure of church buildings, the team were agile and able to mobilise quickly, meeting daily using Zoom, as well as working together to coordinate daily prayer for parishioners and supporting parishioners' services using a range of media. The Clergy Team prioritise their weekly meetings and have worked to gel as a team. As a result, even with added pressures of reduced clergy numbers, clergy and curates want to remain within the deanery.

The pandemic had a significant impact on TW: in its attempts to implement a time-limited structural change programme in numerous lockdowns; challenges of recruiting new staff; closure of buildings; reduced giving; and volunteers choosing to step down from their activities; attendance figures not returned to pre-pandemic levels. Conversely, CW experienced some positive aspects: the strengthening of the Clergy Team; identifying new lay leaders; setting up and coordinating food projects with Wigan Council; and opportunities to meet and support new people in other parishes via Zoom meetings.

Sustainability

The early focus of TW to develop and train individual lay leaders using both the Local Missional Leadership diocese initiative and the TW Cultivate initiative. Some lay leaders are very positive about the opportunities presented to them through building skills and confidence to do something new, or to exploring options to go into ministry.

Feedback on the training was positive overall, though not all of the lay leaders trained were aware of opportunities to use their skills and training. Some said they felt overstretched and were concerned about succession planning to fill their roles. CW is now focusing on training of teams through the Church of England's Greenhouse initiative.

Much of the learning from TW has gone on to inform the CC Strategic Transformation Fund-supported Fit For Mission project, which is currently being piloted in two parishes in the Diocese of Liverpool. One of the key differences is that parishes will not be forced to comply with changes and will be able to opt out. CW still has much learning to share through clergy, lay leaders, working with external partners, and missional and social justice activities.

Conclusion

The Diocese of Liverpool, in cooperation with key representatives within Wigan, sought to reorientate the deanery through the TW bid by addressing its mission and finances. TW successfully started new missional

activities across the deanery through engaging and training leaders, starting new missional communities and establishing a team benefice. CW's focus on teams, both lay and stipendiary, is an important strategy going forward, not only to provide support, but to identify and train future leaders. TW has also set a precedent for the diocese and beyond in working with external partners, particularly statutory partners, in delivering deanery-wide, coordinated social justice activities. TW has been less effective in engaging some areas of the deanery, particularly with established churches.

The TW bid was ambitious, particularly in its aim to turn around the financial strength of the deanery. The research can only conclude that TW was unable to stop the downward trajectory of the finances. The financial burden of many old buildings remains for CW and will continue for the foreseeable future, even though there is now a buildings review in place. However, now that new structures such as the WDT and Core Services are in place, financial efficiencies have been made and processes to streamline and manage the deanery have been established. CW now has greater autonomy on how funds are spent, and WDT's charitable status provides an opportunity to seek funding from other sources.

The seven year project was significantly interrupted by two years of a pandemic, and continues to experience its ongoing consequences. The pandemic saw a significant drop in attendance and giving, which is still to recover its pre-pandemic numbers. However, the pandemic also illuminated how a Team Benefice was agile, quick to adapt and provide a range of support which other deaneries struggled to do.

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Acronyms

CAP	Christians Against Poverty
CC	Church Commissioners
CW	Church Wigan
FFM	Fit for Mission
FGD	Focus group discussion
GC	Guiding Coalition
LML	Local missional leader
PCC	Parochial church council
SDF	Strategic Development Fund
TW	Transforming Wigan
TWIG	TW Implementation Group
WDT	Wigan Deanery Trust

1. Background

1.1 Introduction

The Church of England continues to observe a steady decline in people attending church. In 2019, prior to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, Church of England statistics showed that attendance was down 2% compared with the previous year. In the Diocese of Liverpool, between 2014 and 2019 average weekly attendance amongst adults had dropped by 14.1% and amongst children by 15.9%.¹³

In 2014 the Church Commissioners (CC) set up the first of their funding streams to support major change projects. The Strategic Development Fund (SDF) was established to enable *significant difference in dioceses' mission and financial strength*.¹⁴ To halt the decline in church numbers and address church finances within Wigan Deanery, the Diocese of Liverpool submitted the Transforming Wigan (TW) bid to the CC. In 2014, a seven-year TW project, for £1.2 million,¹⁵ was one of three successful applications SDF funded. The two broad outcomes were:

- To turn around the mission and financial strength in the strategically most vulnerable part of the Diocese of Liverpool, enabling it to become a missional powerhouse.
- To transfer the learning and good practice to other parts of the diocese (and beyond) so that we can continue to build on strength and mitigate weakness.¹⁶

The TW project started in 2014. A project director was recruited and appointed, and in post at the start of 2015. TW finished at the end of December 2021, and changes implemented incorporated into the Benefice of Church Wigan (CW).

2. Overview

2.1 Objective

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the TW project and provide an evidence-based analysis of how effective the project has been in turning around the missional and financial strength of Wigan Deanery. The TW Terms of Reference seek to evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project, identifying key lessons and recommendations to inform Wigan Deanery and any future initiatives across the Diocese of Liverpool, such as Fit for Mission (FFM), a recent diocese-wide project supported by the CC Strategic Transformation Fund, which started in September 2022.

The primary audience for this report comprises the Strategic Mission & Ministry Investment Board, relevant diocesan staff and Wigan Deanery. The deliverables were developed with a view to providing information beyond the main audience, including to FFM and wider Church of England initiatives on structural change projects. It is anticipated that the report will be made public so that others may learn from the intervention.

2.2 Evaluation questions

The main evaluation questions were designed to draw findings on the effectiveness of turning around the financial and missional strength of Wigan Deanery.

Approach and methodology

The scope of the evaluation was to collect primary data from those involved with the TW project through interviews with key stakeholders and focus group discussions (FGD) with representatives from each of the

¹³ www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/2019StatisticsForMission.pdf

¹⁴ www.churchofengland.org/about/renewal-reform/funding-mission-and-growth/strategic-development-funding

¹⁵ £1.2 million comprised of £900,000 from SDF grant and £300,000 spread over the seven-year period. .

¹⁶ TWIG Bid Document, 2014

seven parishes in Wigan. A SWOT and PESTLE exercise was also conducted with the Clergy Team. The primary data would then be supplemented with secondary data collected from TW project financial data, parish share returns and project outputs.

The evaluation selected a representative sample of stakeholders, including the TW project director, Wigan Deanery Trust (WDT), diocesan staff, clergy and lay leaders. Key informant interviews and two focus groups were conducted by Zoom, recorded and transcribed using Grain software. Six focus groups in person were also recorded and transcribed. Table 1 summarises the evaluation questions.

Table 1: Evaluation questions

Question area ¹⁷	Suggested questions	Sub-questions
<p>Relevance and appropriateness <i>[The extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor.]</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Was the TW project aligned with Diocese of Liverpool priorities? 2. Did the project effectively address the priority needs of Wigan Deanery? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent was TW suited to the priorities and needs of Wigan Deanery? - How were the population’s priority needs determined? - What changes were made during the project? - How well known and accepted were the project priorities?
<p>Effectiveness <i>[A measure of the extent to which an activity attains its objectives.]</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. To what extent were the project’s specific objectives achieved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did the project meet the stated objectives or outcomes? - How effective (or not) was the project in communicating change and engaging with clergy and lay people? - How effective has the project been with mission and justice (incl. establishing new worship communities and lay leaders)? - How effective is the new benefice structure in simplifying governance and fostering unity for mission? - Do new parish hubs have adequate capacity to offer and deliver administrative, financial and spiritual support? - Did the project succeed in making Wigan Deanery less vulnerable to decline? - What were major factors helping or hindering implementation?
<p>Impact <i>[Positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.]</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Did the project achieve the intended results? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What were the project’s actual vs intended results? - What were the unintended results? - How have the main challenges with delivering the TW project in Wigan been addressed? - Has Wigan Deanery experienced numerical growth? - Did Covid-19 affect the success of the project? - What has been the impact on clergy wellbeing?

¹⁷ Definitions from www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

Question area ¹⁷	Suggested questions	Sub-questions
<p>Efficiency <i>[Measures outputs – qualitative and quantitative – in relation to inputs. It is an economic term that signifies that the funding uses the least costly resources possible to achieve the desired results.]</i></p>	<p>5. To what extent did the project represent value for money</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did the project leverage other projects or programmes working in the area? - How has the TW contributed to turn around the financial strength of Wigan Deanery? - Have levels of giving increased (incl. across all age groups)? - What technology and systems did the project use to ensure efficiency? - Has Core Services (the administrative function of CW) brought improved operational efficiency to the parishes
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>6. How sustainable are the results of the project?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did the project help to build the capacity of clergy and lay leaders? - To what extent have project activities continued after the funding period? - What elements of the project have been adapted and replicated across the diocese? - To what extent did the project strengthen local ownership and leadership? - To what extent was an exit strategy developed and implemented?

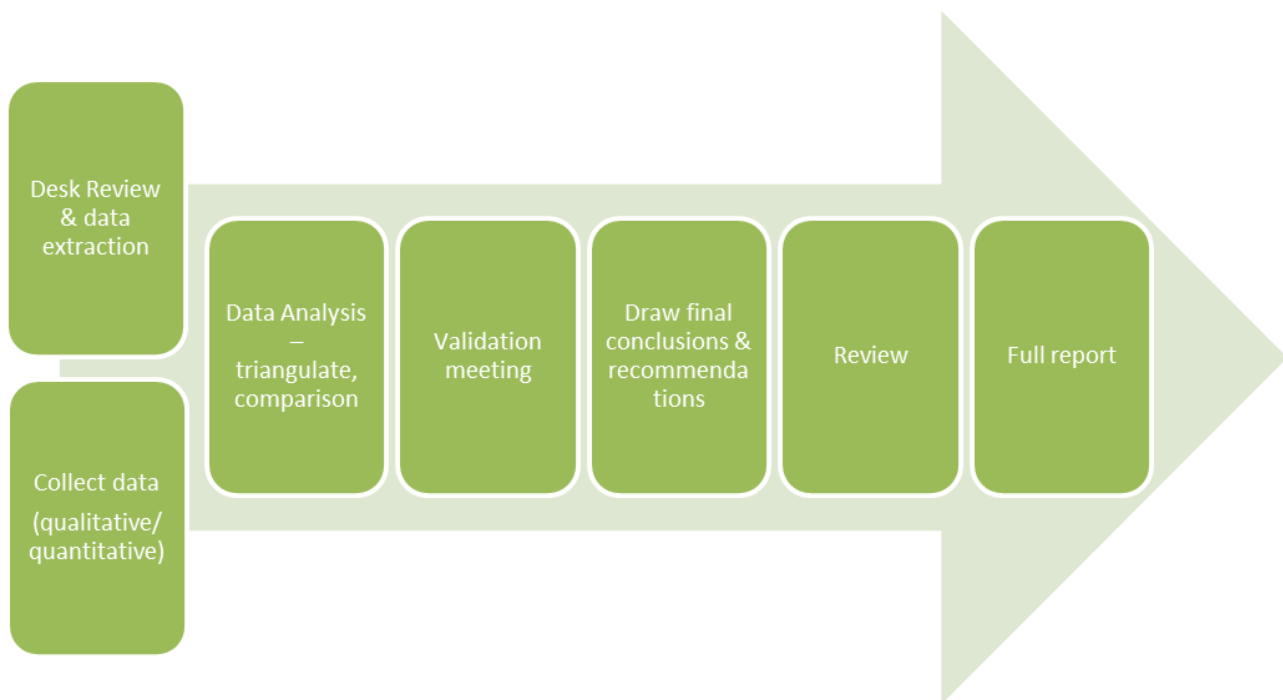
Question area ¹⁷	Suggested questions	Sub-questions
<p>Learning</p>		<p>To help to gain understanding we undertook a SWOT analysis with clergy to establish what the project has achieved compared to initial expectations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent does TW fit with the diocesan FFM strategy? - How can CW work more effectively towards the four FFM priorities? - How can parish hubs' administrative function be further strengthened or streamlined? - Is Wigan Deanery better able to cope and manage shocks (e.g. pandemics, economic uncertainty) compared to before the TW project? - What opportunities are still to be realised or taken forward? - What are the key lessons for the diocese on structural change initiatives? - How do clergy and lay leaders need to be supported going forward?

Summary of data collection methods and tools

Table 2: Summary of data collection methods and tools

Activity	Completed	Data collection tools
Document review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All relevant project documents - External evaluations and reports 	Key findings template
KIIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 20 interviews conducted via Zoom 	Semi-structured interview guidelines
FGDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9 FGDs (7 lay leaders, 1 clergy group, 1 warden/treasurer) Total = 39 	Focus group guidelines
Project Outcomes, TW financial transactions, parish financial data and church attendance data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis 	Received secondary data that was analysed using standard desktop software
SWOT exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clergy Team 	SWOT PESTLE

Figure 1: Integras Consulting evaluation process



Standardised key informant interview and focus group discussion (FGD) guides were developed to capture data systematically. An overall analysis framework was populated for each question to support triangulation of data from different sources.

A large evidence base was used, systematically recording and analysing information across sources. Where possible, information was triangulated with secondary sources to reduce bias and cover gaps. Secondary sources included: TW project outputs (including missional engagement, church planting and leadership training), attendance data and financial data provided by CW and the diocese.

Limitations

The evaluation was primarily qualitative, collecting information on the TW project’s relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Limitations of the evaluation are listed below:

- Although requested, it was not possible to speak to representatives of Wigan Council and some partners outside the deanery.
- Due to the duration of the project, people have moved onto other posts or retired and were therefore not available for the evaluation.
- The project started in 2014 and people's experiences and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic may potentially lead to recall bias.
- Much of the TW project data was collated after the activities (e.g. Alpha, missional groups, youth activities) and in some cases was an estimate based on activity over time, but does not represent data that was recorded at the time of the activity. A CW representative indicated that many of the estimates were deliberately conservative to avoid reporting outcomes that had not been achieved.
- Another limitation of the data used for this analysis is that budget data with costs assigned to specific project objectives was only provided for the years 2018 to 2021. As the ratios of expenditure for this period were extrapolated to the whole project delivery period, if the spending profile for the period 2015 to 2017 was materially different to that of the following four years, the unit cost estimates will not reflect spending for the whole project.
- The financial data used for the evaluation was incomplete for several former parish accounts, so a subset of this data was used, on the basis that it is more representative when excluding those former parishes for which multiple years' worth of data was unavailable. This included all seven former parishes in the Wigan East Hub, two in the Wigan South Hub and one in the Wigan North West Hub, leaving data from 25 out of 35 accounts included in the dataset used for the analysis.
- The attendance data used for the evaluation was incomplete for several former parish returns, so a subset of this data was used, on the basis that it is more representative when excluding those former parishes for which multiple years' worth of data was unavailable. This included all five former parishes in the Wigan North West Hub, three in the Wigan North East Hub, three in the Wigan Central Hub, two in the Wigan Town Centre Hub and one in the Wigan East Hub, leaving attendance data from 20 out of 34 former parish returns included in the dataset used for the analysis.
- There were challenges to gathering key data, especially in the last two years of the project due to Covid-19. As the complete dataset used for these analyses was not complete, nor could the subset of data used be verified as complete, the conclusions drawn should be considered indicative at best and not definitive.

3. Research Findings

3.1 Relevance

Project design and alignment with Diocese of Liverpool priorities

In 2014, Wigan Deanery had an older age profile, with 62% of parishioners over the age of 50. Wigan Deanery had the lowest levels of congregational giving compared with the rest of the diocese – in 2014, average planned giving was £5.40 per person per week compared with the diocesan average of £8.57 a week. However, there was a strong fundraising culture (on average, over 25% of the total offertory).¹⁸ Regular givers were in the older age group, with 75% over the age of 50, of whom 36% were over the age of 70.

At the time of writing the TW bid, there were 33 church buildings, and general recognition that there were too many of them and that they were in a substandard condition. A review of buildings had started within Wigan prior to TW.¹⁹ However, there was no consensus on which buildings should be targeted to close.

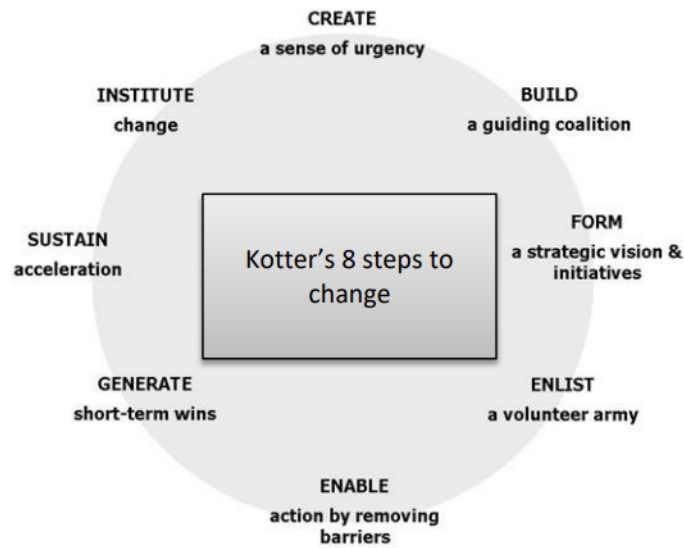
The key focus of TW was to turn around the financial and missional strength of Wigan Deanery. This would be done through improving infrastructure, change management, church planting and developing missional leaders' communities, and training and coaching (Table 3). The bid gave a broad outline on how change would

¹⁸ TWIG Bid Document, 2014

¹⁹ Interview with stakeholder (this may have been an informal review rather than a formal one conducted by the diocese).

be accomplished, but no specific details. The project management team chose to use John Kotter’s eight-step process management model (Figure 2) to help inform the organisational change.

Figure 2: Kotter’s 8-Step Process for Leading Change



The first step outlined by Kotter was to ‘create a sense of urgency to help others see the need for change’. The team firstly sought to change the culture through changing hearts and minds.²⁰ Therefore, TW did not start with a traditional project management framework and agreed milestones or budgets. In 2019, TW delivered a comprehensive document on how structural change would be undertaken, titled *Scoping Document Church Wigan*.²¹

Table 3: TW bid project description

<i>Transforming Wigan – outline of change²²</i>	
Areas to achieve change	How this would be achieved
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buildings rationalisation: A 20% reduction in the number of church buildings by the end of TW - Mission units: larger benefices with a single parochial church council overseeing a number of churches and working through local, flexible leadership teams - Administration: review of wedding and funeral ministries, and if this should be provided at deanery or sub-deanery level or by individual parishes. - Giving: implementation of a comprehensive stewardship programme based on the Giving in Grace website and a concerted approach to legacy promotion, establishing a high level of participation in the Parish Giving Scheme - Deanery structure: no detail given

²⁰ Interview with stakeholders

²¹ Interviews with stakeholders

²² TWIG Bid Document, 2014

Transforming Wigan – outline of change²²

Change management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growth Planning Framework: clarity of vision, mission and purpose - A collaborative approach: based on Inter-Diocesan Learning Communities (through understanding the current realities, a view of what could be and a view of what will be) - Use the Diocese self-facilitated resources: e.g Church Attendance Dashboard Church and Finance Dashboard - Development of learning packages - Interim and transitional ministry: identify and train a small pool of pre-retirement or clergy who have retired early, briefed and supported by the planning for growth consultant, who could help steer churches or congregations through key moments of transition
Church planting and missional leaders' communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Church planting: development of new Christian communities to reach as yet unreached people and communities - Missional leadership: identifying and training a number of missional leaders capable of leading congregations and other missional presences - Vocations and internship: intentional push to identify potential readers and ordinands (within Wigan), supporting them through the discernment process; internships, primarily aimed at younger people; development of a skills audit process that churches can run on a self-facilitated basis to establish a fuller picture of which current under-used skills and gifts could be nurtured and deployed
Training and coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School of Leadership: run 3 Schools of Leadership - Wider training: for all church leaders on core aspects of time, conflict and change management - Supervision and coaching: e.g. job descriptions, annual reviews regular supervision for missional leaders and clergy - Key workers: e.g church planter, deanery buildings manager, specialist change agent

Addressing the needs of Wigan Deanery

Wigan is the largest deanery in the Diocese of Liverpool. Within Wigan Deanery, prior to the TW bid, clergy and parishioners were in general agreement that change needed to happen to address finances and reduced clergy numbers.²³ In 2013, the number of clergy reduced from 24 to 18. Recognising the need to change, Wigan clergy met to discuss the future of Wigan Deanery, and identified the need for an outside assistance in managing change leadership.²⁴ This subsequently led to the TW bid being developed in conjunction with representatives of Wigan clergy, the archdeacon of Warrington, senior diocesan team members and key lay representatives. There was no Wigan-wide consultation with parishioners.

Through an interview and recruitment process a project director was appointed with no links to the deanery. The bid identified that the appointee needed to be a senior ordained person (quasi-archdeacon) who would have to make difficult decisions.²⁵ To help lead the change needed, the project director established two groups: the Project Group and the Clergy Team, with governance by the Deanery Synod. The Guiding Coalition (GC) was formed as a subset of the Clergy Team, which was also developed using Kotter's 8-Step Process for

²³ FGD with parishes

²⁴ Interview with stakeholder

²⁵ TWIG Bid Document, 2014

Leading Change (see Appendix 1).²⁶ The aim of the GC was to provide strategic oversight, lead organisational change and support development of leaders. Other GC members were co-opted on an ad hoc basis according to need and skillset. To help guide the organisational change process, a consultant was brought in to help facilitate and coach key leaders within the GC. The majority of those on the GC and the Project Group shared similar characteristics, coming from a similar background and ecclesiology, and were broadly in agreement regarding the direction of the TW project.²⁷ A small number of lay people, such as the lay chair, had access to the group and were invited to meetings. However, there were no regular lay representatives elected or active within the GC.

*We could have had a better project plan... [and] better consultation. But because it was about changing hearts and minds and people's hearts and minds weren't there, I'm not sure how effective it would have been just to have a stronger plan.*²⁸

*All along battling with people to get through... in business you get people onside, TW was done against a background of resistance*²⁹

The TW project vision and overview were communicated to parishioners using Church of England mechanisms; for example, by Synod members to parochial church councils (PCCs) through various written communications and open meetings across all of the parishes. Whilst there was an opportunity to meet with the project leader, some parishioners who questioned TW, or aspects of the project, expressed that they did not have any formal mechanism to give feedback to the GC. Some felt that their queries and concerns were not listened to or dealt with in an appropriate manner.

*I felt told, rather than worked with*³⁰

Oversight of TW project

Project oversight was to be managed by the TW Implementation Group (TWIG), which would report findings to the CC. Whilst the TW team provided feedback team to the TWIG and CC, change management projects were new to the Church of England, CC and the diocese.³¹ There was a regular programme oversight board, which included a review of both financial assessments and progress implementation, though in the first four years this was not measured against specific project milestones budget plan.³²

Structural changes

An internal scoping document was developed on how structural change would be implemented across Wigan Deanery in 2018. It was a comprehensive document on how the deanery would be restructured, moving to a team ministry benefice called CW with seven new parishes and many worship communities. The old structure of 29 parishes would cease to exist in 2020.³³ In addition, WDT would be established with charitable status. Core Services, which would report to WDT, was created to undertake certain tasks such as administration, finance, buildings management, communications, HR, safeguarding and funerals coordination.³⁴

A Joint Council and seven new parishes would become legal entities at the same time as the 29 PCCs were dissolved, and seven new PCCs established, with new PCC representatives elected from each of the former parishes. The key aim of TW was that the smaller number of larger new parishes would reduce the amount of bureaucracy and free up clergy to focus on their primary responsibilities and calling. Prior to the scoping document being finalised, there was discussion about reducing parish numbers down to one or two larger

²⁶ www.kotterinc.com/methodology/8-steps/

²⁷ Interviews with stakeholders

²⁸ Interview with stakeholder

²⁹ Focus group participant

³⁰ Parish focus group participant

³¹ Interview with stakeholder

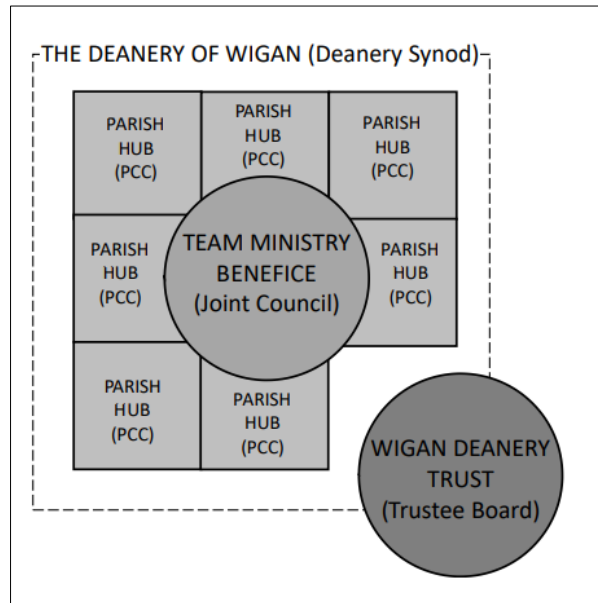
³² Interviews with stakeholders

³³ Scoping Document Church Wigan v03, June 2019

³⁴ Scoping Document Church Wigan v03, June 2019

parishes³⁵ and one governing body, but it was not taken forward as it was perceived to be too radical a change by the CC.³⁶ To pilot the running of the new structure, the Shadow Joint Council ran concurrently for a three-month period, from September to December 2019, prior to official changes in 2020. The challenge was to make the changes in the remaining two-year delivery period in 2020 to 2021.

Figure 3: New structure of Wigan Deanery³⁷



3.2 Effectiveness

Objectives achieved

TW was successful in making a structural change and becoming part of CW. Clergy are now able to work across the seven parishes in CW, enabling greater effectiveness, particularly when working with a reduced number of clergy. However, it is operating with 13 stipendiary clergy, two less than initially planned.

We're on a journey. We're in a much better place than before.

WDT receives the portion of the deanery share allocated to manage Core Services (non-stipends) CW now has autonomy over how this money is collected and spent, though a significant proportion still goes to the diocese to pay for stipends and support costs. WDT was established as an independent charity, allowing opportunities to work with funders to bring in other sources of funding that would not have been possible previously. Core Services has achieved greater economies of scale and efficiencies in the areas of building insurance, safeguarding, health and safety compliance, and managing the Wigan-wide Funerals Service. Missional and social justice activities have been the strongest element that has been nurtured through TW. Learning from TW has been integrated into FFM.

³⁵ Prior to becoming 29 parishes, Wigan Deanery existed as two parishes: Wigan East and Wigan West.

³⁶ Interviews with stakeholders

³⁷ Scoping Document Church Wigan v03, June 2019

Table 4: Objectives achieved

Transforming Wigan project		
Areas to achieve change	What has been achieved	Elements not achieved
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New benefice called CW - Team Ministry Benefice established, led by team rector - Joint Council and 7 parishes now legal entities - Election and appointment of members of 7 PCCs - Established WDT, which has charitable status - Set up Core Services, recruiting and employing staff on a part-time basis. (staff hours limited due to funding available) - Established Wigan-wide Funerals Service - Parish Giving Scheme implemented (payment by card available, but not in all churches) - Only 3 buildings closed, 2 due to safety issues (asbestos) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CW has observed withdrawal of legacies promised prior to TW - Buildings Review only started Jan. 2023
Change management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CW rector and team – greater clarity of vision and support for each other - Greater accountability amongst clergy - Portfolio roles developed for clergy - Learning from TW informed FFM - Greater reliance on self-supporting or retired clergy to support CW³⁸ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of TW clarity and vision amongst wider audience – focus on changing hearts and minds, no formal project management plan and budget at the start of the project
Church planting and missional leaders' communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 29 new worship communities with 750 participants (average of 25 people per group) attended by both church and unchurched people - 31 inherited worship communities - New missional initiatives with 1,510 participants - 106 attend Cultivate training – around two thirds go into ministry - Pais teams³⁹ supported youth work in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenges with the youth ministry

³⁸ Although broadening the base of the ministry and leadership is a deliberate strategy in Wigan and beyond, the reduced number of clergy within Wigan means that there is a reliance on non-stipendiary clergy.

³⁹ Pais provides full-time apprentices or apprentice teams to work in schools, churches: <https://paismovement.com/about-pais/>

Transforming Wigan project

Training and coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultivate developed by TW and now used in FFM to train lay leaders - Using Greenhouse⁴⁰ to discern new mission initiatives and worship communities - Leaders Advance retreat for clergy and lay leaders for vision and encouragement - Bridge Builders conflict resolution attended by clergy and lay leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supervision and coaching of lay leaders was ad hoc, not systematic - Roles of new parish wardens and treasurers becoming a burden on individuals - Learning still to be shared (e.g. cascaded peer-to-peer learning between CW and FFM clergy, lay leaders, administrative posts such as treasurer, warden, etc.)
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The new benefice: Church Wigan

Through TW, the deanery was reconfigured into CW in 2020 when the Joint Council and the seven new larger parishes became legal entities (see Appendix 1). Some new parishes are larger than others; for example, Chapelfields (Wigan East) is made up of six parishes over a large geographical spread, overseen by one paid stipendiary clergy. FGD and KII participants described the division of new parishes as ‘illogical’.⁴¹ One clergy member said that some parish hubs were originally set up on an informal basis just because there were existing relationships between clergy and different parishes. However, these later became new parishes.⁴²

In June 2019, parishioners had an opportunity to share any concerns, and dissatisfaction caused by the implementation of TW, with the CC. The CC compiled the feedback in September 2019, with 113 responses against (around 60%, representing three parishes) and 90 in favour of the changes implemented by TW.⁴³ The key objections focused on restructuring, stress on clergy and laity, mission, finance, consultation, PCCs and churchwardens.⁴⁴ The restructuring of Wigan Deanery with the support of the CC proceeded, with the suffragan bishop of Warrington being appointed to lead a reconciliation process.

The bishop’s approach was to listen to parishioners’ concerns through: (1) arranging to meet with the seven parishes individually; (2) contracting Bridge Builders Mediation Service, a reconciliation charity, to help address the challenges parishioners raised; and (3) planning to train a clergy member and lay person to help in the reconciliation.

Unfortunately, the process also coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic and was initially delayed due to restrictions on meeting in person. Meetings were held a year later remotely via Zoom. It was described as a listening exercise, with parishioners given the opportunity to speak, and clergy to listen. Feedback from the reconciliation highlighted a feeling of loss of identity as churches were to become part of a large parish; and loss of traditions and theology, in particular, Holy Communion and music.⁴⁵ Whilst the bishop was accepted and respected for the work that she undertook, some parishioners felt that the new benefice structure had already been decided, and that there was no option other than to go along with the change.⁴⁶ Consequently, FFM has now given parishes the opportunity to ‘opt out’ of any structural changes.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ A Church of England Fresh Expressions initiative: www.churchofengland.org/about/fresh-expressions/what-greenhouse

⁴¹ Parish FGDs; CC, [Statement of Reasons for Wigan, 2019](#)

⁴² Interview with stakeholder

⁴³ CC, [Statement of Reasons for Wigan, 2019](#)

⁴⁴ CC, [Statement of Reasons for Wigan, 2019](#)

⁴⁵ Wigan Reconciliation, Summary Feedback for PCCs

⁴⁶ Parish FGDs

⁴⁷ Interviews with stakeholders

In 2019, the GC was formally disbanded and the Clergy Team was formed. CW is now led by a team rector working alongside a team of 12 clergy. It was anticipated that there would be two stipendiary clergy per parish. However, in practice not all parishes have the equivalent of two clergy and are reliant on self-supporting or retired ministers. A few clergy noted that if there were two stipendiary clergy per parish, they would have time to do their job more effectively.⁴⁸

*There are times as a hub leader I feel as though I'm managing, not leading.*⁴⁹

New members for each PCC were to be elected, with representatives from each old parish, and new wardens and treasurers appointed. Each of the seven PCCs required their own bank accounts. However, at the time the new structures were being implemented, banks were no longer opening new bank accounts due to the pandemic. As a result, some parishes did not have a bank account at the time of the evaluation.

There have been challenges recruiting the seven wardens and treasurers for the new PCCs. One parish still remains without a treasurer. Wardens and treasurers who were interviewed spoke of the increased burdens of their roles and responsibilities now that they were representing more than one church.

The Joint Council and the new parishes are the governance body for the new benefice, though in practice the new parishes have the authority to make decisions.⁵⁰ As this was new for the Church of England, there was no precedence and therefore little formal guidance on how the Joint Council and WDT, which encompasses Core Services, would work together. However, greater consensus and understanding have developed over the past 12 to 18 months, mainly through regular meetings with the team rector, WDT and CW developing relationships and trust.⁵¹

There has been a mixed response over the effectiveness of the new structure. Some interviewees said that it has simplified governance, as well as making it easier to know who to contact in the different parishes.⁵² However, the majority of feedback from parishioners and clergy alike commented that the new structure added layers of bureaucracy and was more complicated. *The old structure was problematic and needed to change. There are challenges with the new [CW] structure, but it's a step in the right direction – it needed to be more radical with 1 or 2 large parishes rather than the 7 parishes*⁵³

FGD participants identified some of the challenges they were facing with the new structure:

1. PCC meetings were too long and there was only the opportunity to consider administrative and financial issues, leaving no time to discuss vision and mission.
2. Individual churches can only make decisions on finance for goods and services under £500 – one church had been waiting to replace lead that was stolen from its roof, but still needed approval from the PCC before it could go ahead, even though the insurance would cover the costs.⁵⁴
3. The disbanding of the old PCCs resulted in individual churches no longer having any sort of standing committee to discuss practical matters or make decisions, or arrange individual activities. Some churches addressed this by setting up operational groups, to help manage things.⁵⁵
4. There was little feedback from the PCCs to individual churches, and no easy or regular access to PCC minutes of meetings or financial records.⁵⁶
5. Responsibilities of and pressures on the new treasurer and warden roles had increased – some commented that it felt like a *full-time job*.

⁴⁸ Interviews with clergy

⁴⁹ Clergy focus group

⁵⁰ Interview with stakeholder

⁵¹ Interview with stakeholder

⁵² Interviews with stakeholders

⁵³ Interview with stakeholder

⁵⁴ Parish FGDs

⁵⁵ Parish FGD

⁵⁶ Feedback from FGD

6. Concerns were expressed about many of the positions such as readers, treasurers and wardens being held by older, retired people, and who would take over such roles, especially with the increased demands of the roles.

Some forms from the Diocese are no longer relevant to the CW context due to the new parish system and therefore difficult to complete. One stakeholder suggested that financially the new structure should be easier to manage. However, as there is still a strong emotional connection to the old parishes, individuals have elected not to give, or restricted use of the funds to 'the church yard' only, which puts pressure on others within parishes to fund the deficit, ultimately putting the parishes at risk, as well as CW as a whole.⁵⁷ There is also passive resistance, with churches not providing necessary financial and attendance information to the new treasurers and wardens.⁵⁸

Mission and social justice activities

TW was keen to encourage refreshing 34 established communities and developing new worship communities: 31 inherited worship communities remain; three of the established communities no longer have a church building due to closure or being repurposed,⁵⁹ and 29 new worship communities have been established, with 750 participants, averaging 25 people per group. Activities such as the pan-Wigan Alpha course, online meetings, House of Prayer, and provision of food pantries have all contributed to bringing people together across different congregations. On Pentecost Sunday in 2016, all the Church of England churches were closed to attend in the Soul in the Park event in Alexandra Park, attracting over 5,000 people to; it was presided over by the Bishop of Liverpool and widely covered by the local press and radio; feedback was positive.⁶⁰ Alpha started in 2017 and was hosted online during the Covid-19 pandemic. Between 2017 and 2018 there were 370 attendees and 200 team leaders. This supported the refreshing of many existing worship communities.

Our church participated in Alpha as a [parish] hub – I've seen a big difference through people attending Alpha⁶¹

Prior to the start of TW, Wigan Deanery was contributing to both missional and social justice activities, but efforts were ad hoc, in pockets across the deanery and not joined up. At the same time as TW was being implemented, Wigan Council had to make significant cuts to its budget by 2020 and it sought to address the challenges to the cuts through 'The Deal', an initiative to build relationships between public services and citizens, communities and businesses.⁶²

The TW project director was keen to engage with a wide range of agencies, including using the opportunity presented by the council to develop social justice activities. Fur Clemp, a community interest company and part of the Real Junk Food movement, was started prior to TW, led by a local missional leader (LML). Through TW, the LML had a much bigger network of support and was able to share TW's vision with a wider audience.⁶³ Through the change in the benefice structure, it is now significantly easier for the council and other partners to contact a member of the Clergy Team and get a coordinated response, rather than trying to contact individual parish clergy and working across 29 parishes.⁶⁴

[Most of the] missional leaders and licensed lay leaders in the diocese are in Wigan. Most of the new worshipping communities are in Wigan. The social justice such as the pantries... we just outperform every other deanery... And that's not because we're brilliant, but it's because we've done this and we've focused on moving out and we're reaping the benefits now. So it's been utterly brilliant. We're

⁵⁷ Parish FGD; interview with stakeholder

⁵⁸ Parish FGD

⁵⁹ Closure due to cost of repairs, asbestos, etc.

⁶⁰ Stakeholder feedback

⁶¹ Interview with stakeholder

⁶² Hutton, K., Transforming Wigan Baseline Survey, 2018

⁶³ Hutton, K., Transforming Wigan Baseline Survey, 2018

⁶⁴ Interviews with stakeholders

*now recognized by the council – they call us when they've got problems, and they want us as part of coalitions*⁶⁵

At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, it became apparent there was a need for food distribution and support. Through links developed with Wigan Council, the Church became the main distributor of food, as support could be mobilised and distributed quickly by parishioners across Wigan. CW was also able to deliver laptops and tablets to school children during this period. CW now has five food pantries established across the deanery, with around 1,600 members.⁶⁶ A sixth is due to open in 2023, in partnership with the Credit Union and the council.

Evidence shows food pantry membership increased by 60% in October 2022.⁶⁷ The pantries have been good for engaging with community members and bringing parishioners together, as well as developing friendships and breaking down barriers amongst parishioners.⁶⁸ People who do not attend church are also welcome as volunteers, some of whom have gone on to attend church and actively participate in the worship community.⁶⁹

In December 2021, CW established 'Lifted', a coordinated pan-Wigan approach to bring together the network of ministries developed during the pandemic.⁷⁰

*[before TW] we didn't know the church next door, let alone the other side of town*⁷¹

*The food ministry has been a big catalyst in breaking down barriers, giving an opportunity for people from different churches to chat to each other as well as giving a sense of purpose and prayer*⁷²

In 2021, CW identified the need for people to manage increasing levels of personal debt and set out to raise £60,000 to fund a three-year debt management project, including a Christians Against Poverty (CAP) debt manager. By the end of 2021, £20,000 had been raised, with £58,000 plus Gift Aid being raised by December 2022, allowing for a manager to be recruited, trained and operating a debt advice service in early 2023.⁷³

*Wigan really got its act together with some of the social justice elements and are leading the way across the diocese... the Church in Wigan are doing it more joined up than anywhere else I see [in the diocese].*⁷⁴

*The [missional and social justice work] is really significant; we're only just learning how important it is for the future [of the diocese]... We now have a totally different platform to engage and so effective compared to before. The relationship with the Council is an exciting development*⁷⁵

Considerable work has been done on the missional and social justice front. Although, for some parishioners there is a sense that activities which have been ongoing in established churches prior to TW – such as uniformed groups, Mothers' Union and the Memory Group – have been overlooked.

*But don't forget your own... other groups still continuing such as the Memory Group, Mothers' Union – we feel overlooked, maybe we should be shouting more about them?*⁷⁶

⁶⁵ Interview with stakeholder

⁶⁶ Anyone in Wigan is able to join the food pantry; annual membership costs £5, then £3 each shop, for up to two shops per week. Members can attend any of the church-run pantries across Wigan.

⁶⁷ Interview with stakeholder

⁶⁸ Interviews with stakeholders; FGD

⁶⁹ Interview with stakeholder

⁷⁰ <https://transformingwigan.wordpress.com/lifted/>

⁷¹ Interview with stakeholder

⁷² Interview with stakeholder

⁷³ Interview with stakeholder

⁷⁴ Interview with stakeholder

⁷⁵ Interview with stakeholder

⁷⁶ FGD

Table 5: Mission and social justice activities started through the TW project

Activities established	
Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pan-Wigan Alpha course - Prayer coordinator appointed - House of Prayer coordinator appointed and House of prayer established - Prayer spaces and toolkit developed - Cultivate course developed and refined – 107 people attended - Faith Is established - 2016: Soul in the Park - 2017: 40 days of 24/7 prayer – 200 people participated - Thy Kingdom Come – over 200 people participated - Visit by South Korean prayer school - Blessing Course on Zoom - Try Praying – Wigan-wide promotion on buses, free books given out, etc. - Local House of Prayer (Falyd-y-Brenin) – 60 to 70 people participated - Street chaplains - Baptism groups - 2 new pioneer priests to support justice and mission activities
Social justice activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 food pantries and 1 in development - Packed and delivered 1,200 Christmas hampers during Covid-19 - Transforming Lives for Good early intervention - Dementia café - Bereavement support groups - CAP debt centre manager

Communication

One of the major contributing factors that hindered the implementation of TW was communication. There was a significant amount of communication by the GC through face-to-face meetings and literature, including the project leader visiting every church within the deanery. However, for some there was still a lack of clarity on what TW was aiming to achieve, how the change process would occur and when it would happen. Key stakeholders, lay leaders and those closely involved with TW appeared to understand the vision; however, parishioners not directly involved did not – through a mixture of not wanting to engage, but also not understanding what was happening.⁷⁷ In addition the type of language used was a barrier and respondents highlighted that the use of business language and terms such as GC was inappropriate for the community it was targeting. Some clergy, who were not on board with the planned change, actively refused to disseminate any information to their congregations, and eventually chose to leave the deanery.⁷⁸

The communication deficit was in part relational and in part misunderstanding... They [TW] didn't get the tone right, and people felt threatened⁷⁹

[There was a] feeling of being done to, rather than working with us.⁸⁰

By their own admission, FGD participants said that Wiganers are very parochial. Therefore, joining smaller parishes together to make one large parish would be a challenge for many. In addition, not having a project director from Wigan led people to believe that there was a lack of understanding of Wiganers, their culture and history. However, some interviewees said that the change had to be radical enough to reverse the decline

⁷⁷ TW Reconciliation Documents

⁷⁸ Stakeholder interviews; parish FGD

⁷⁹ Stakeholder interview

⁸⁰ Parish FGD

in Wigan and the project director acted as a catalyst, which would not have happened if an internal candidate had been appointed to the role.⁸¹

It takes time, because people have been hurt and it takes time to get over the hurt... but I think there are signs now that people are [getting over it]⁸²

As with any large organisation, communication continues to be an ongoing challenge, particularly when catering to a range of individuals' preferences on how to receive information and their ability to understand it. To address some of the challenges, CW has appointed a part-time communications officer. The CW website is currently being revamped, and information is distributed through various social media platforms, and online and physical newsletters. Some issues remain such as receiving information and getting it in a timely manner, the type of information and access to more detailed information (such as PCC minutes of meetings) if needed. The physical newsletter is distributed through churches. But one clergy member stated that due to GDPR requirements, if individuals have ticked the box not to have their details passed on, then CW is unable to disseminate information on a global level across the deanery (e.g. through monthly email communications).

There is a newsletter, but it doesn't give a lot of information and some of it is out of date when we get it⁸³

Get people on board and to buy into it, share the successes. You know' I've been xx church for 30 years, a PCC member for five years and I know very little of the success of TW. Where are we with tracking ourselves against the one in 10 disciples across Wigan? You know, has there been any growth at all since CW arrived? There doesn't appear to be any analytics or reflection. And I think, you know, even if it's only marginal gain it should be shared, to energise people⁸⁴

Less vulnerable to decline

Whilst acknowledging the challenges and still adjusting to the new structure of CW, clergy and some of the key stakeholders interviewed believed that TW was now in a stronger place due to its wide range of services such as: Alpha; youth work; social justice work; working with external partners; having the ability, through WDT, to bid on alternative funding streams; and bringing in new people through baptisms, new worship communities and so on. However, challenges remain that make it vulnerable, such as reductions in giving by established communities (individuals in new worship communities are likely to take much longer before they are ready to give regularly); and nationally there continues to be a decline in numbers attending Church of England services.

Wigan would have declined and TW may have hastened the decline in some churches in parts of Wigan, but it's also fostered growth in unimagined parts of Wigan... monetisation of that growth is a challenge compared to the regular bedrock of givers⁸⁵

Factors hindering or helping implementation

There have been some key activities that have helped TW and, ultimately, CW, particularly through the training of lay leaders and their initial ongoing monthly support; missional and social justice activities; financial support from the diocese; and support from non-stipendiary and retired clergy. Factors that have hindered the project have mainly been in the areas of: (1) communication – using business-type language, inconsistent messaging, and lack of a feedback mechanism; (2) for some, the change management model of changing hearts and minds lacked sufficient detail in the form of a written project plan with measurable milestones ; (3) a perceived lack of accountability to parishioners (4) ownership – responsibility was limited to a few people and not distributed widely enough, so not enough people were invested in the direction TW was taking; and (5) the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 6: Factors that hindered or helped implementation

⁸¹ Interviews with stakeholders

⁸² Clergy FGD

⁸³ Parish FGD

⁸⁴ Parish FGD

⁸⁵ Interview with stakeholder

Effect	Factors
Hindered implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ineffective communication - Clergy and laity not on board with structural change - Resistance by parishioners to accepting team of clergy - Focus on changing culture (hearts and minds) lacked a formal written plan that could be shared more widely with parishioners, with no determined milestones, and which could not be measured - Perceived lack of accountability to parishioners - Ownership and responsibility – not sufficiently distributed widely enough– across lay leaders and parishes; not enough people invested in the TW vision - Covid-19 (see 3.4 Impact) - Limited reduction in numbers of buildings being closed or repurposed - GC focus on engaging 1-in-10 people on a discipleship journey with Jesus; whilst an aspirational target for leaders, for some parishioners it was not helpful or seemingly realistic
Helped implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training lay leaders who could lead projects or new worship communities - Regular monthly support for lay leaders - Support from diocese, including financial support - Covid-19 (see 3.4 Impact) - Listening exercise/reconciliation process - Stability provided by long-standing clergy - Support from non-stipendiary clergy - Working with external partners such as schools and Wigan Council - Missional and social justice activities - Parishioners working across parish boundaries - Weekly meetings of the GC - Establishing the Order of Prayer - Monthly deanery services ('The Well') - Opportunities to attend 'Deeper Discipleship' events. - Developing and establishing the Cultivate scheme - 2 x consultation sessions in every Hub in 2019 to engage with the change

3.3 Efficiency

Deanery finance

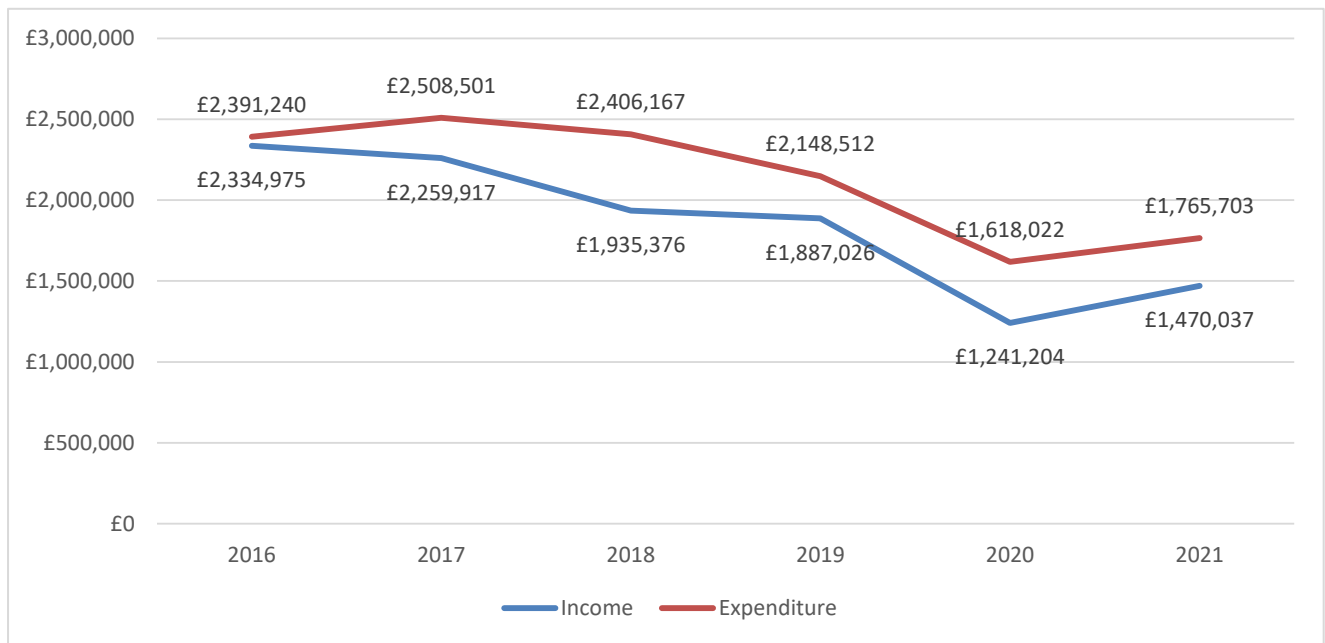
The financial assets of the 29 parishes became the financial assets of the 7 new parishes. Restricted funds remained restricted to the purposes that they were given (see Appendix 2).⁸⁶ Overall giving within the deanery has gone down, falling to 88.6% of 2014 values in 2019. Since CW was established in 2020, only one parish has paid its parish share in full.

The incomes and expenditures of churches and new parishes in Wigan Deanery were reviewed to calculate their net cost (income less expenditure). Largely complete accounting information was provided for 2016 to 2021, representing 24 former parishes in Wigan Deanery and the CW Joint Council. Income and expenditure relating to the CW Joint Council was included in the totals for Wigan Deanery. For these calculations, the parish share charged to churches in Wigan Deanery (including debt write-offs and parish share credits) was assumed to be the cost to the diocese of employing all clergy and providing other necessary support to ministry in the deanery.

⁸⁶ TWIG Scoping Document, 2019

Figure 4 shows the trend of income and expenditure for CW for the period analysed, including the widening gap between income and expenditure from 2016 to 2021. The main cause of this increase in the financial deficit is loss of income being greater than the reduction in costs.

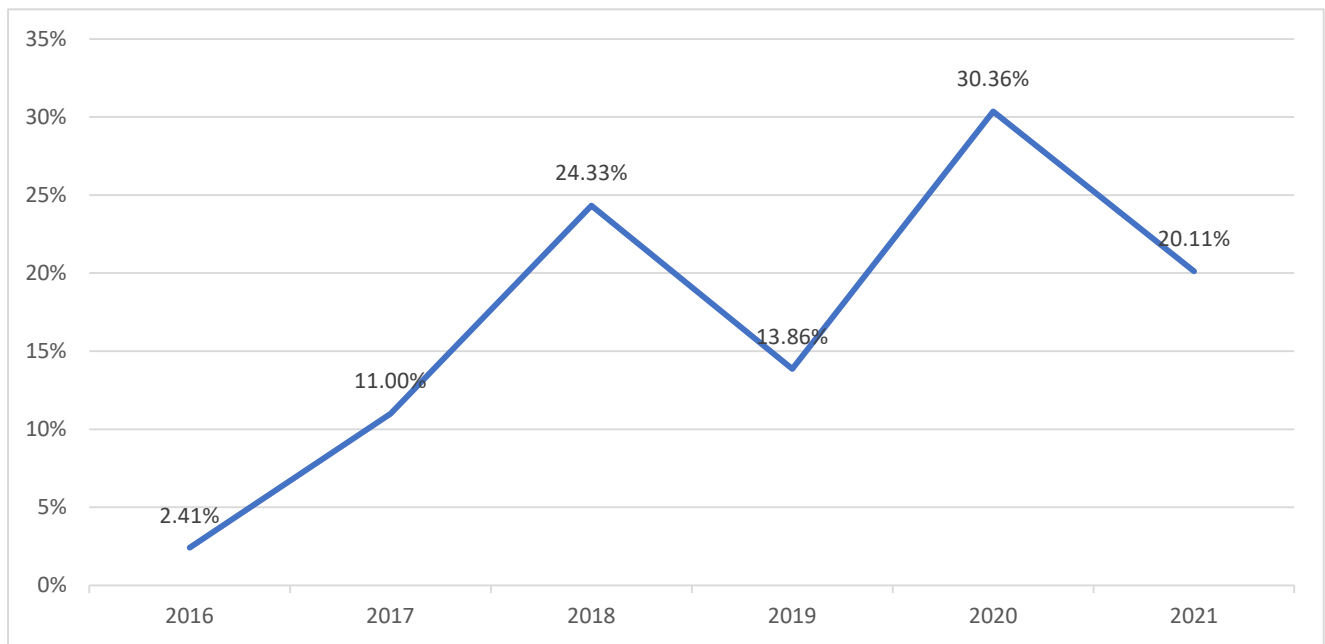
Figure 4: Income and expenditure of reported parishes in Wigan Deanery (2016 to 2021)



Sources: Wigan parish accounts and Parish Share diocesan transactions

Figure 5 shows the reported operating deficit as a percentage of annual income for 2016 to 2021, demonstrating that the deficit between income and expenditure, as a percentage of annual income, in the deanery increased from **2.41%** in 2016 to **20.11%** in 2021, a factor of 8.3.

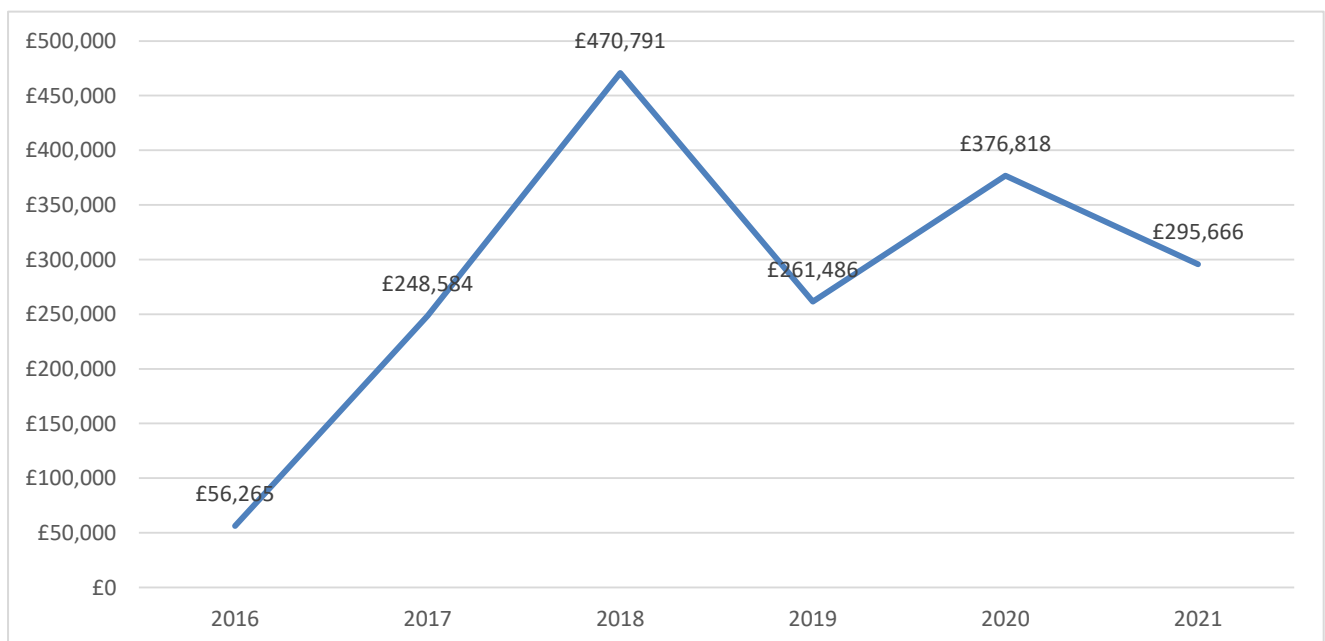
Figure 5: Operating deficit as a percentage of annual income for reported parishes in Wigan Deanery (2016 to 2021)



Sources: Wigan parish accounts and Parish Share diocesan transactions

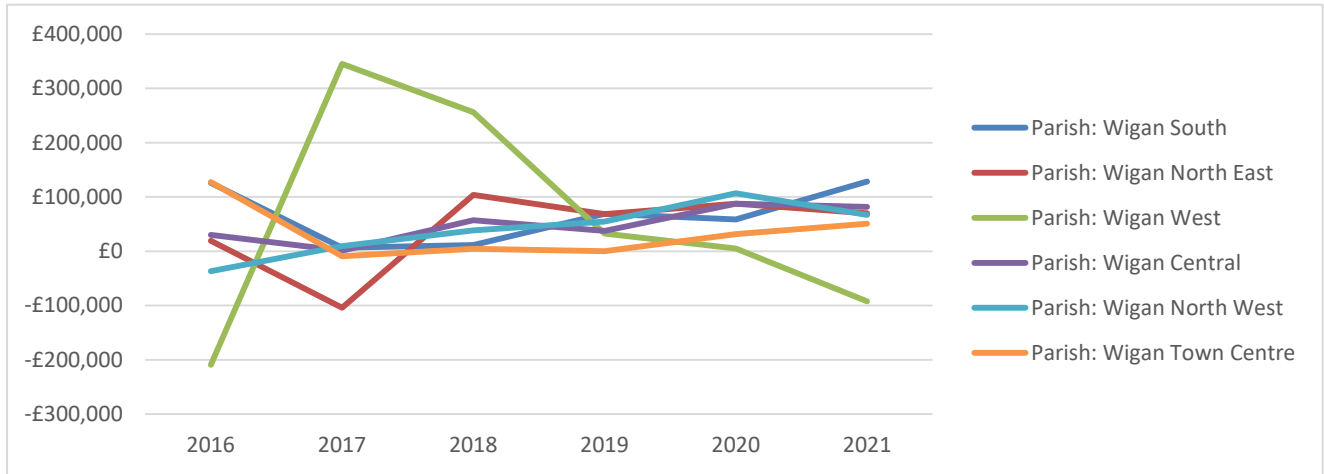
Figure 6 shows the operating deficit of Wigan Deanery from 2016 to 2021. Whilst some financial progress seems to have been made in 2019, the overall position of the deanery worsened in 2020 and only marginally recovered in 2021. This indicates that the deanery might have been on track to significantly reduce its operating deficit until the impact of the pandemic in 2020. The net cost or operating financial deficit rose by a factor of 5.25, despite actual costs falling by 26%.

Figure 6: Operating deficit of reported new parishes in Wigan Deanery (2016 to 2021)



Sources: Wigan parish accounts and Parish Share diocesan transactions shows the trends in the operating deficits of the seven new parishes from 2016 to 2021.

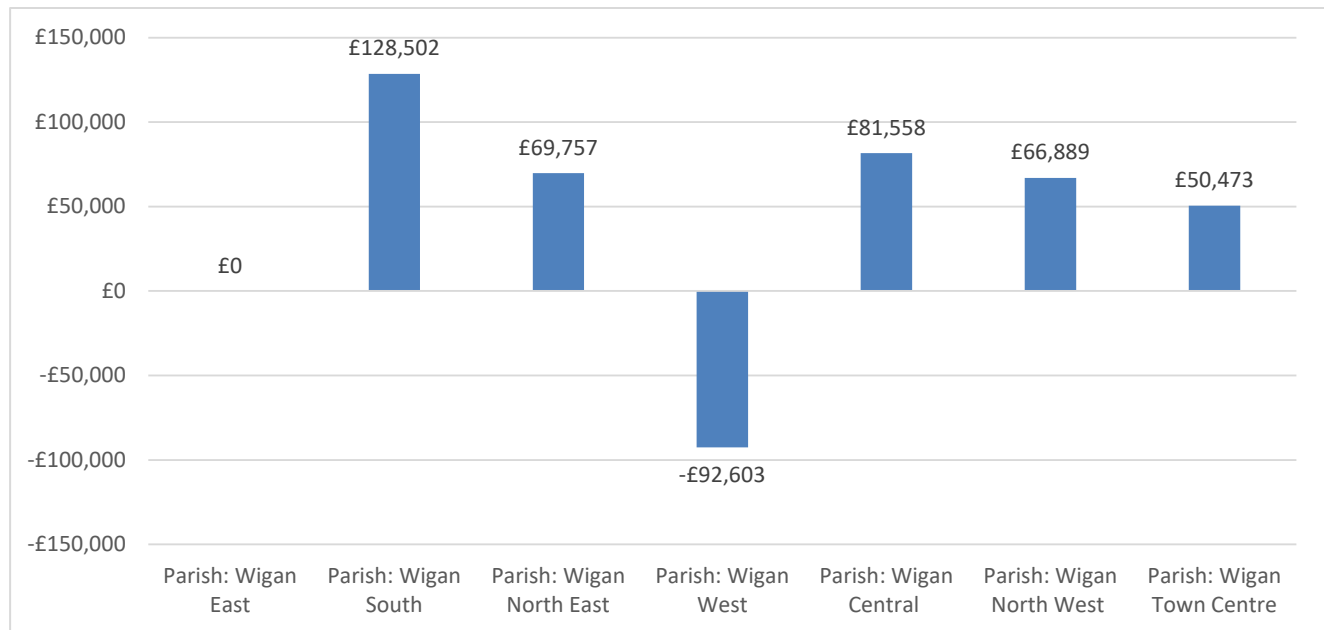
Figure 7: Operating deficit of the six reported new parishes in Wigan Deanery (2016 to 2021)



Sources: Wigan parish accounts and Parish Share Diocesan transactions

Figure 8 shows the net operating deficit of the six reported new parish areas in 2021. Only one new parish area of the seven, Wigan West, had an operating surplus in 2021, as it had in 2016, though it did have net operating deficits in the intervening years, largely due to high expenditure in 2017 and 2018.

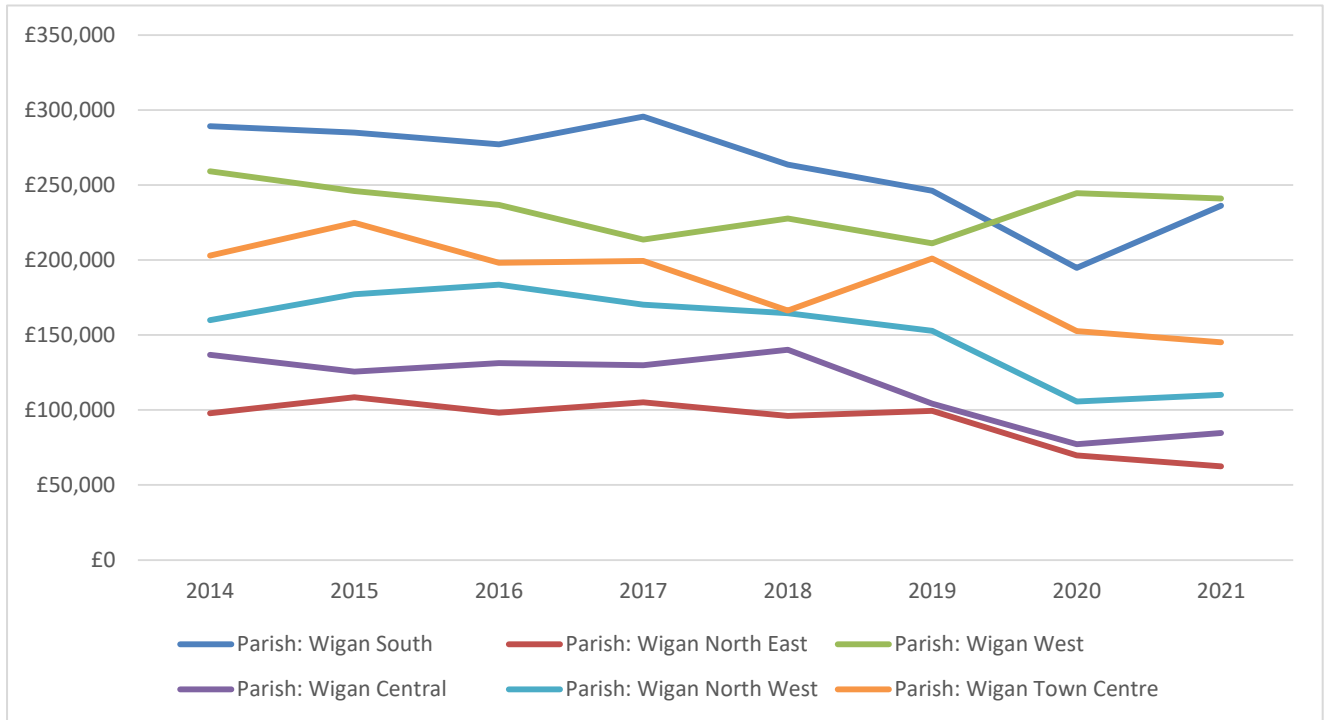
Figure 8: Net operating deficit of new parishes (2021)



Sources: Wigan parish accounts and Parish Share diocesan transactions

Figure 9 shows giving income for the six new parish areas reported on from 2014 to 2021. There was an overall decline in income over the reporting period for each new parish area.

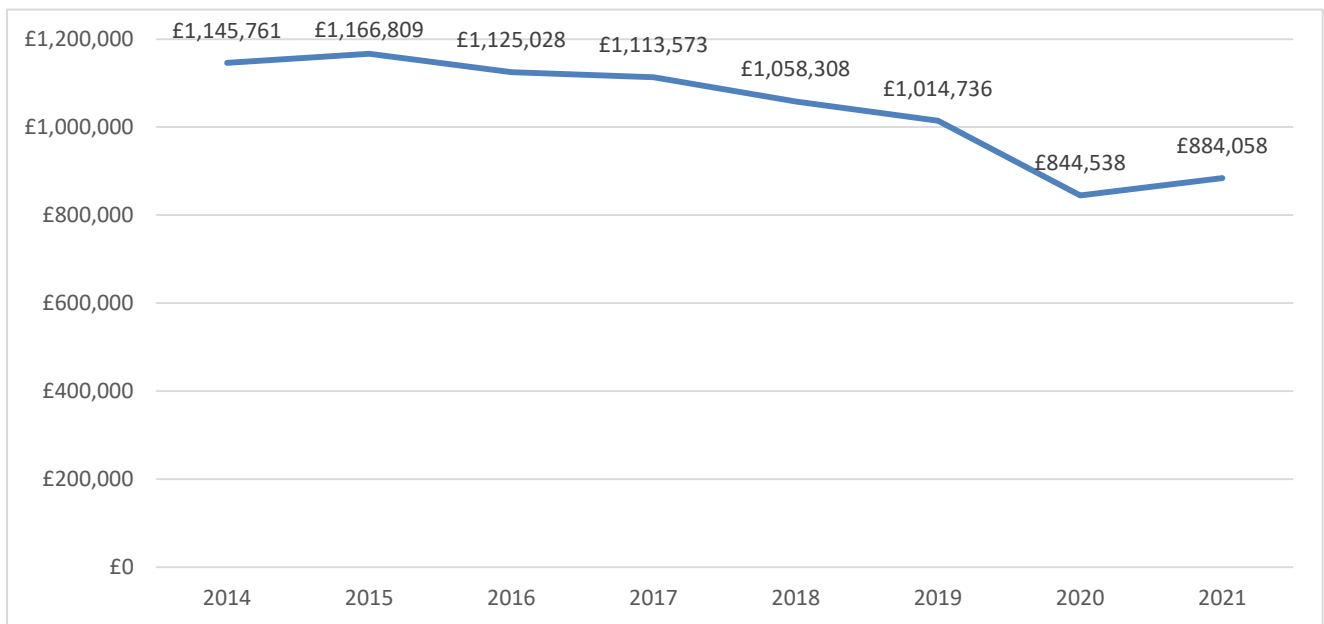
Figure 9: Total annual giving in each of the six reported new parishes in Wigan Deanery (2014 to 2021)



Source: Wigan parish accounts

Figure 10 shows the trend in total giving in the six reported new parishes in Wigan Deanery from 2014 to 2021. There was a decline of around 3.26% per year from 2015 to 2019; giving then fell more sharply, by 16.7%, from 2019 to 2020, with only a modest recovery of 4.68% in 2021. It is difficult to rule out the impact of the global pandemic on giving in 2020 and thereafter. However, the downward trend in giving from 2014 to 2019 indicates that the addition of people to worship communities did not lead to a corresponding increase in giving. It is also difficult to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the TW project in reversing the historical decline in giving, other than if the intent was to reverse this trend by 2019, the project did not achieve this.

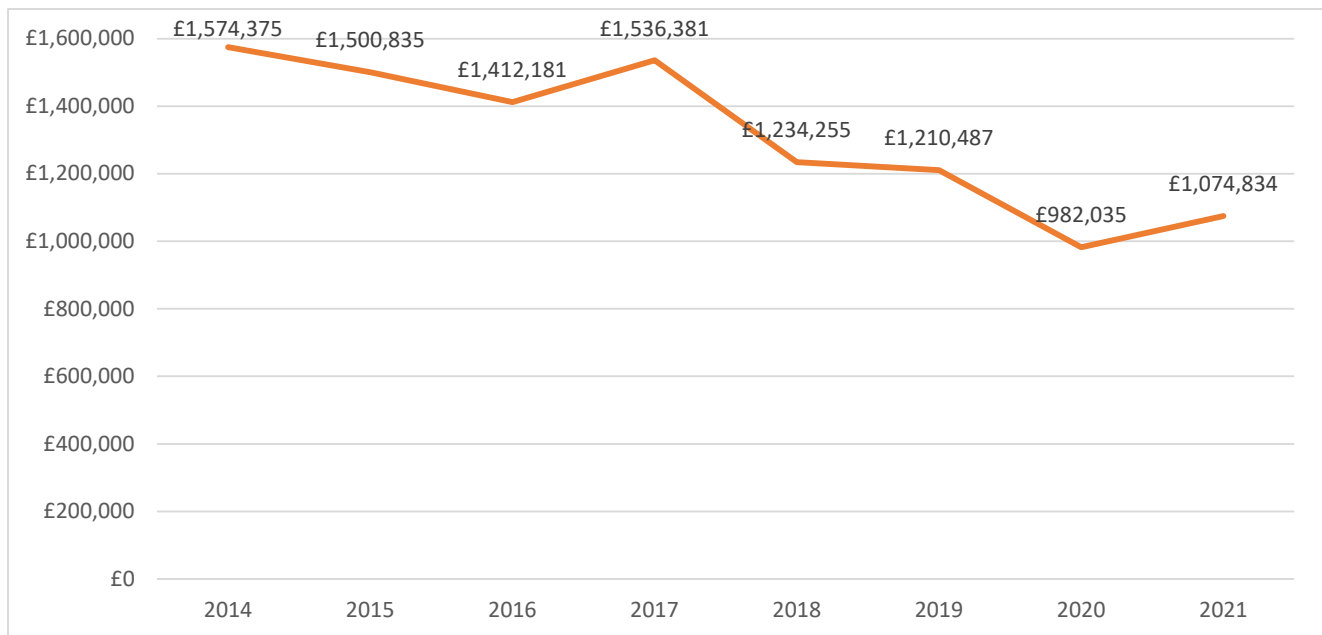
Figure 10: Annual giving for the six reported new parish areas in Wigan Deanery (2014 to 2021)



Source: Wigan parish accounts

Figure 11 shows the trend in total giving and fundraising for the reported new parishes in Wigan Deanery for 2014 to 2021. This shows a similar pattern to giving, indicating that the same underlying factors that affected giving over the project period also affected fundraising. This indicates that the TW project was not successful in establishing a sustainable financial position in Wigan Deanery by 2019.

Figure 11: Total annual giving and fundraising for reported new parishes in Wigan Deanery (2014 to 2021)



Sources: Wigan parish accounts and Parish Share diocesan transactions

Some respondents, including stakeholders from the diocese, have said that it was unrealistic to expect TW to turn around the financial strength of the deanery. However, TW has enabled CW to be in a better place to address the challenges faced as a result of decreasing funds.

It hasn't turned around the financial strength... but it is in a better position to be able to self-determine according to whatever money it has got⁸⁷

Not paying the parish share in full continues to have consequences for CW, with clergy vacancies remaining unfilled, no funding provided by the Mission and Growth Fund and CW having to commit to a parish share payment plan.

People give to what they believe in⁸⁸

People don't get sight of church finances now so they don't know if the church is in credit or not⁸⁹

The diocese has been generous in providing financial support to CW, without which it would be in significant debt and stipendiary clergy would be down to only eight people.

Leveraging other programmes or projects

Prior to TW, there was a lack of coordination across the 29 parishes, making it difficult for outside agencies to engage with the deanery. Through the active engagement of the TW project director and the CW team's approach, communication with outside agencies has been simplified. As a result, CW has developed relationships with Wigan Council, and is helping to deliver food provision and warm spaces across the deanery. Examples of partnership working are highlighted below:

⁸⁷ Interview with stakeholder

⁸⁸ Interview with stakeholder

⁸⁹ Feedback from FGD

- Good working relationships have developed with Wigan Council. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the council approached CW to help distribute food and laptops. This opportunity has led to five pantries being established across Wigan
- The team rector was asked to participate in the council's environmental committee.
- CW engages with agencies regarding food provision and the social justice agenda: (1) attending a food poverty meeting with Lisa Nandy MP; and (2) working with other agencies to lobby Wigan Council to reverse a decision it had made regarding Universal Credit.
- In 2019, a new headteacher was appointed at The Deanery Church of England High School and Sixth Form College. The headteacher was keen to establish good links with the Church and clergy. Whilst there had been formal links prior to TW, there is now active engagement with CW and clergy. For example, throughout the Covid-19 pandemic it was identified by the school that there was a need to support young people with their mental health. CW and the deanery were able to fund a three-year counsellor post.
- Having TW funding, CW was able to put forward a case to join the CC SDF Missing Generations bid. The project is now active, targeting 11 to 29 year olds across the Diocese of Liverpool, including CW.⁹⁰
- Piloting an early intervention project of charity Transforming Lives for Good⁹¹ in three primary schools in one parish.
- Working with charity CAP, CW has set up a CAP debt centre and is employing a CAP debt manager for three years. The project has been funded through £58,000 in donations from parishioners across CW.
- CW has strengthened working relationships with The Brick, a homeless charity based at St George's, a Church of England property in Wigan.
- The Funerals Service is now working closely with funeral directors across Wigan.

Core Services

Core Services is the administrative function of CW. It was established to enable the benefice to operate more effectively and efficiently. Core Services posts were established to undertake key activities for the benefit of CW. Staff are employed by WDT, though due to funding constraints all appointments are part-time. Core Services also provides support to wardens and treasurers; in addition to regular meetings, there is a WhatsApp support group. Core Services is funded by CW, and costs around 13% of total income.

*I love Core Services. If I'm stuck on anything I go to them. They also keep check on maintenance checks. There's a wardens' group and we have a WhatsApp Group.*⁹²

Core Services appointments

- Core Services manager
- Finance officer
- Property manager
- Communications officer
- Funerals coordinator
- Church administrators
- Data officer
- Fundraising officer – role identified, but not yet a funded post

Core Services has provided efficiencies in several areas:

- Establishing the Funerals Service and centralising administration of funerals. A coordinator was appointed to manage funerals and to be the point of contact for funeral directors, liaising with clergy and church wardens. In 2020, the initial plan was to launch a pilot in a small area. However, due to the demand created for funerals during the Covid-19 pandemic, the service was rolled out across Wigan.

⁹⁰ The CC in June 2020 agreed to fund £4.6m to reach 11- to 29-year-olds in Liverpool and Wigan.

⁹¹ A project that works with churches to provide coaches for school children. The coaches work with a designated child for one hour a week, helping with reading and confidence building: www.tlg.org.uk/your-church

⁹² Treasurer/warden FGD

The Funerals Service has significantly reduced the time clergy spend on arranging funerals, made practices more legally compliant and simplified communication for funeral directors.⁹³

- Economies of scale gained on building insurance have saved around £58,000 across CW. Although it has been less successful in gaining similar savings for utilities.
- The property officer has increased churches' health and safety compliance from 25% to 75%.
- Core Services has improved safeguarding practice, through identifying leads and ensuring all are trained appropriately.
- Employment contracts are now legal.
- Core Services provides administrative support for clergy, allowing them to focus on priestly work.

Due to funding challenges, Core Services is only able to plan for the immediate future (i.e. 12 months), rather than being able to have a five-year financial planning process. There is considerably more work to do than fits into the funded person hours and Core Services is therefore reliant on the goodwill of staff and the trustees.⁹⁴

3.4 Impact

The two key aims of the TW project were to turn around the mission and financial strength of Wigan Deanery, 'and become a missional powerhouse.'⁹⁵ TW's focus on evangelism through training lay leaders, and missional activities such as the House of Prayer and Alpha course, encouraging new worship communities and becoming a team benefice, has increased the missional strength of the deanery. It has also enabled Wigan Council to engage and invest financially in CW to deliver social justice activities such as providing food and setting up warm spaces across Wigan.

Some lay leaders have felt empowered to develop their skills and expertise in leading, not only through training and opportunity, but because TW is seen as a *permission-giving* environment, encouraging them to set up and lead activities such as bereavement courses, faith cafes and, dementia cafés, a chaplaincy team and baptism support, as well as running food pantries. It was also observed that some of the *trail blazers* are the older generations.⁹⁶ Although for some people within the established churches, there is a sense that missional activities have been at the expense of their own communities.

TW empowered lay leaders and gave permission to do things outside of the box... it's given the green light⁹⁷

There was acknowledgement in parish FGDs that some people will not change. However, a strong feeling remained that older people and traditionalists had faithfully contributed over the years, through service and financial contributions, but had been neglected.⁹⁸ Although clergy led services are still delivered in all of the parish churches.

The TW project developed a set of outputs in addition to those outlined in the original TW bid.

Table 7 outlines achievement from the initial bid, and Table 8 outlines outputs developed by the TW project. Further analysis of the data used the TW project outputs.

⁹³ Interviews with stakeholders

⁹⁴ Interviews with stakeholders

⁹⁵ TWIG Bid Document, 2014

⁹⁶ Interviews with stakeholder

⁹⁷ Parish FGDs

⁹⁸ Parish FGDs

Table 7: Outputs as outlined in the initial TW bid⁹⁹

Outputs as outline in initial bid	Results	Achieved
<p>A 500% increase in the number of young people involved in church (as reflected in average weekly attendance figures)</p> <p><i>[Amended by agreement in 2017 from 'A 500% increase in the number of young people involved in church.']</i></p>	<p>The measurement at the start from returns was 449 under 16s attending church services (weekly average). A 500% increase would mean engaging 2,250 young people in a discipleship growth activity during the period. The outcome measurement was 8,635 young people (5-18-year-olds) engaged in a discipleship activity.</p>	✓
<p>5 established new significant expressions of church (i.e. each containing at least 50 hitherto unchurched or de-churched people)</p>	–	–
<p>5 emerging new significant expressions of church</p>	<p>29 established and growing new worship communities engaging 750 new people</p>	✓
<p>30 clergy having completed the School of Leadership</p>	<p>100% outcome</p>	✓
<p>Settle the historic debt of the deanery with the diocese and establish an annual balanced budget that is fully funded by the deanery through a revised deanery-share scheme</p> <p><i>[Amended by agreement in 2017 from 'A real-terms increase in annual giving by £500,000 underpinning further investment in mission and growth.']</i></p>	<p>Whilst the outcome was achieved it cannot be seen as a success as CW is in a precarious financial position. CW had a zero balance at its start-up, with no debt through contributions from old parish reserves and the diocese writing off the remainder of the debt. There was a budget to meet mission-ministry costs in 2020–23. The unsettling nature of the new structure, combined with the devastating effect of the Covid-19 pandemic, meant that on average only 60% of budgeted income was received in 2020–22. This remains critical in 2023.</p>	–
<p>A step change increase in legacy commitments in favour of churches</p>	<p>Evidence shows a drop in legacies committed to the new CW.</p>	✗
<p>A significant increase in investment returns on cash, equity and other assets</p>	<p>CW had low levels of equity investments (lower than the bid had assumed). The assumed buildings assessment did not take place, so other possible assets were not identified (see <i>establishment of a deanery building development fund</i> below).</p>	✗
<p>The establishment of a deanery building development fund</p>	<p>The buildings objective was left to the new CW to address from a technically easier position in the</p>	✗

⁹⁹ TWIG Bid Document, 2014

	new structure.	
The establishment of a deanery mission development fund <i>[Amended by agreement in 2017 from 'The establishment of a deanery mission development fund.']</i>	The new 'Wigan Deanery Trust' was set up to manage core-services and raise funds for the new mission and growth of the new CW. This is currently proving successful	✓
A missional leaders' community totalling over 50 recognised missional leaders, the then bedrock of emerging forms of church	Engaging 200+ lay and clergy leaders	✓
An average of 3 interns per year by year 7	Achieved through the Pais scheme	✓
An average of 3 people per year seriously exploring ordination (i.e. beyond the Examining Chaplains stage of the process)	-	-
A pool of 5 trained interim ministers	<i>[Deleted by agreement in 2017 as interim ministers is held in diocese not deanery.]</i>	-
The closure of and/or clear partnership/sharing agreements for at least 20% of the current church buildings	The buildings objective was left to the new CW to address from a technically easier position in the new structure.	✗
The halving (at least) of the number of PCCs/DCCs amid a much more streamlined governance structure	Reduced from 29 parishes down to 7.	✓
A pool of up to 10 change management coaches <i>[Amended by agreement in 2017 to 'Establish ongoing coaching for all key leaders and teams in the deanery.']</i>	Coaching provided by diocese as part of the FFM programme.	✓
A pool of up to 10 people able to offer supervision and/or key coaching interventions for clergy and senior missional leaders <i>[Amended by agreement in 2017 To 'Establish ongoing coaching for all key leaders and teams in the deanery.']</i>	Coaching provided by diocese as part of the FFM programme	✓

Table 8 is based on objectives set by TW project, which can be described as stretch goals set in 2017/18. They are deliberately more challenging goals than that set out in the project bid.

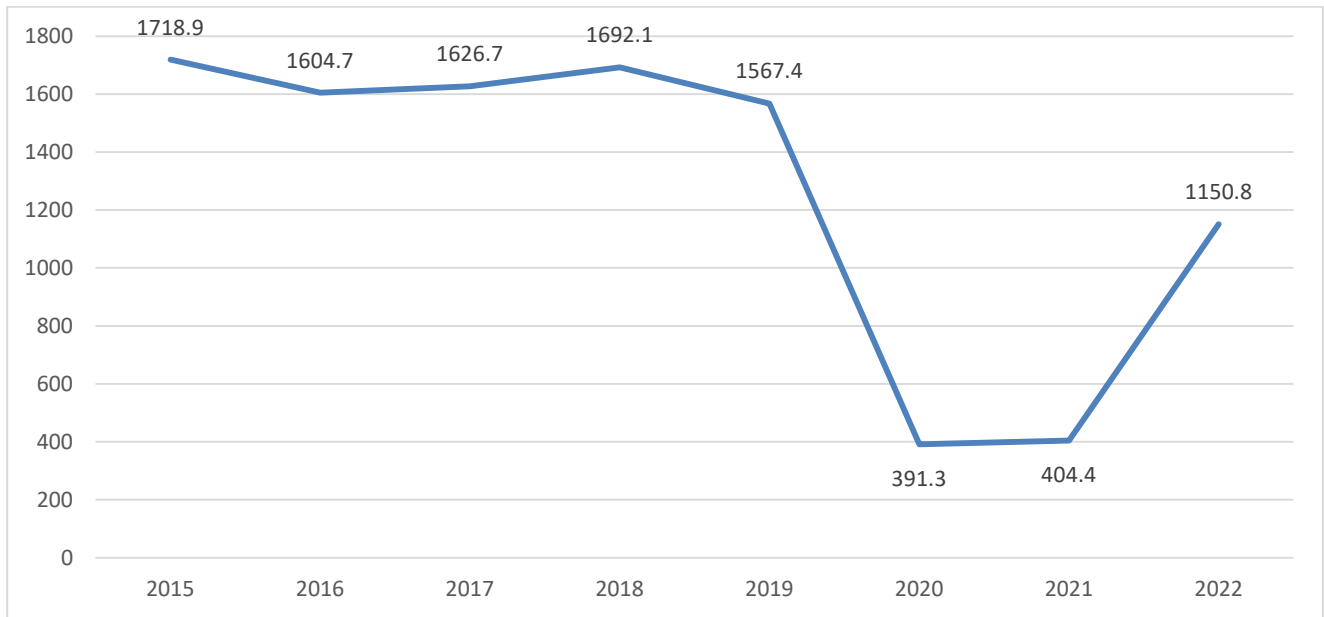
Table 8: Achieving objectives

Area	Most/l – east Success	Results
Exploring	Most successful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TW engaged with more than twice the target number of adults in a missional activity (4,021; 201%), 170% of the target number of primary school-age children (3,400) and just over the target number of secondary school-age children (5,235; 105%) - A TW missional initiative engaged a total of 12,656 people, going beyond its target of 9,000, which is 141% of the target engagement
	Less successful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 749 (75%) people engaged with a worship community compared to a target of 1,000 – this might have been driven in part by the lower number of new worship communities that were established
Engaging	Least successful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 63 worship communities were established (including schools), which was less than a third (32%) of the target of 200
	More successful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project was more successful at refreshing, merging or closing existing worship communities, with only 4 out of 34 not engaging with this process, meaning 85% of established worship communities benefitted from the project in this way
Active in ministry	Less successful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project did not achieve its target of 300 leaders to be trained via Cultivate; however, if the 114 lay leaders and teams who completed Greenhouse training are added to the total number of leaders who received training, the total rises to 200 (73% of the target) - An additional 80 lay leaders attended the Leaders Advance retreat; therefore, a total of 300 people received leadership training or support through TW and CW – this may represent a change in approach to supporting leaders with the introduction of Greenhouse training after the pandemic, rather than a failure to achieve the objective in this area; all worship communities in Wigan Deanery engaged in community action during the TW project
Estimated cost	<i>The estimated unit cost per person engaged in a missional initiative was £27.30, compared to the estimated unit cost of £274.33 of engaging a person in a worship community, a ten-fold difference (see Appendix 4)</i>	

Impact on established worship community attendance

There has been a negative impact on church attendance figures, both pre-Covid-19 and during the pandemic, which has ultimately impacted financial giving. Analysis from available data shows that whilst the pandemic is likely to have contributed to lower than usual church attendance in 2020, 2021 and 2022, average weekly adult church attendance reported at former parishes in Wigan Deanery shows a steady decline, falling from 1,718.9 in 2015 to 1,567.4 in 2019, before the pandemic – a fall of 8.8% (see Figure 12). This indicates that TW had not turned around the steady decline in church attendance by the end of 2019. It is difficult to draw conclusions about attendance from 2020 to 2022 because of the impact of the pandemic on church attendance. It is important to note here that there was a general downward trajectory for attendance and giving prior to the TW intervention – the research is only able to establish that there has been a decline in attendance and giving, not if TW was directly responsible for this decline.

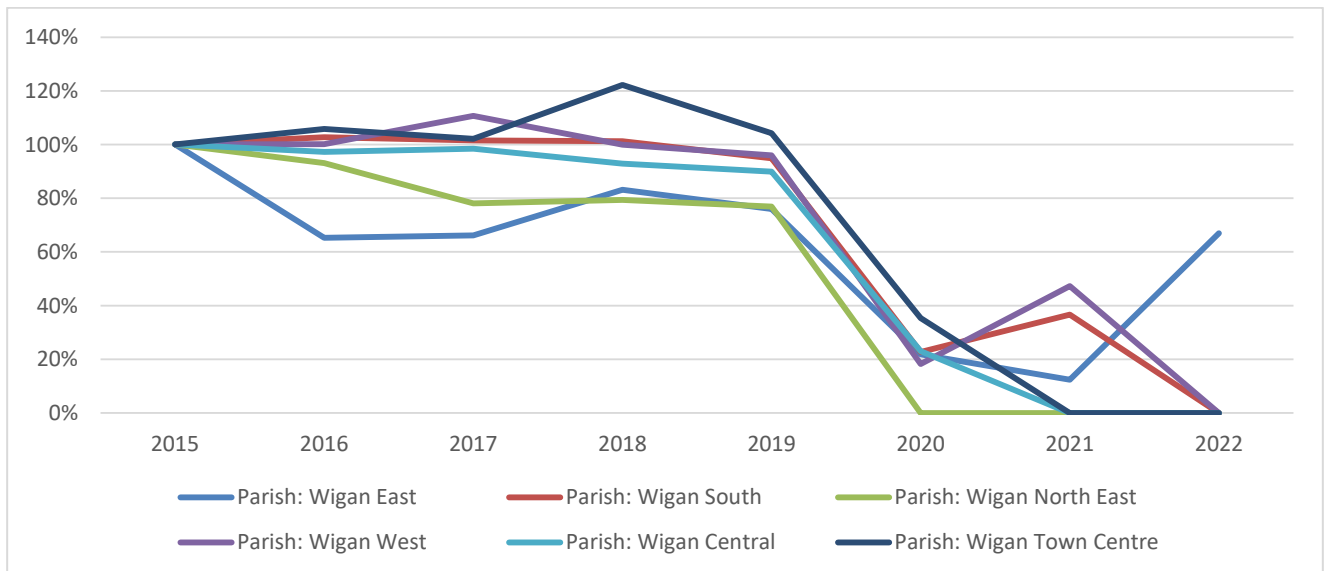
Figure 12: Established average weekly adult worship community attendance in Wigan Deanery (2015 to 2022)



Source: Parish attendance statistics

Only one of the six reported new parishes, Wigan Town Centre, experienced any growth in attendance between 2015 and 2019; however, although this new parish saw an increase in adult church attendance of 22.2% from 2015 to 2018, average weekly attendance fell by 18% of the 2015 average from 2018 to 2019, so this could not be considered an upward trend in adult church attendance over the period (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Average weekly adult attendance as % of 2015 value in new parishes in Wigan Deanery (2015 to 2022)



Source: Parish attendance statistics

Turning around the financial strength of the deanery was an ambitious aim, especially given the number of parishes across a large geographical area and the age demographic. There was also acknowledgement from key stakeholders that the £1.2 million project budget was small given the duration and size of the project. The

average amount of CC funding for a project of this size today would be around £4 million.¹⁰⁰ In some of the FGDs with parishioners, the TW was not perceived as being value for money, although this is not the case for those who have worked closely with the TW/CW project and able to see the finances detail and benefits. In general, those who have given the most money to the Church have typically been the older generation, but some do not feel they have seen the benefits at the grassroots level. In addition, it was anticipated that there would be a 20% reduction in the number of buildings, which would not only reduce ongoing costs to the deanery, but also pressures on clergy. Nevertheless, a buildings review, which had a lot of support from FGD participants, is only recently being undertaken. Participants expressed concern that the issue has still not been addressed, which will continue to cause anxiety amongst parishioners.

It's going to all start again. There's going to be a lot of upset – a lot of animosity. You're dealing with a fragile and hurt community. It [the buildings review] could have been done at the beginning. There's been seven years of change and still not enough money or clergy.¹⁰¹

Amongst those who have engaged with TW, people have said that it has made a difference, building friendships with people in other parishes, encouraging peer-to-peer learning, sharing good practice through implementing activities and providing personal support. However, some felt that it had come at a cost to their own church communities.

I think the mission piece has been pretty successful from Church Wigan. They developed new worship communities, which is good. I would say it feels to me at the expense of existing, established worshipping communities. There's little energy put into those in my view and all the energy is put into what might be new, which I get I totally get, but for me [there] should be a better balance struck between the two.¹⁰²

Clergy wellbeing

Traditionally ordained Church of England clergy are responsible for and to their parish and parishioners – those attending a church, as well as those outside of the church building. Their pastoral function is referred to as the 'cure (care) of souls'. Typically, parish clergy have a great degree of autonomy in running the parish and work independently of other clergy in surrounding parishes. In general, working across parish boundaries with other clergy members only tends to occur if there is a good relationship between fellow clergy members.

The traditional role of clergy is a multifaceted one, having to be a teacher and leader, providing pastoral support and administering the sacrament, as well as managing administration, and overseeing finances and buildings. By becoming a team benefice, clergy within CW are now accountable to each other. Whilst some have readily embraced this and adapted well to the team structure, for others it has been more of a challenge. The majority of clergy who did not want to work within the new structures have subsequently left or retired.

CW started to work together as a team in 2019, managed by the team rector. The team meet weekly, which is made a priority in the week. The team is working well; team members support one another, and there is a lot of respect amongst the team for the team rector.

[The team rector] is a good leader, but that is not a given – there needs to be succession planning.

At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Clergy Team (including stipendiary, and self-supporting and retired vicars, as well as curates) mobilised quickly on Zoom and met daily as a team. In addition, the clergy coordinated daily prayer times and services for the wider church community, through online channels and by telephone to those who did not have online access. They provided a coordinated response that would not have been possible prior to becoming a team benefice. This approach inadvertently broke down barriers between parishioners and clergy as it was Wigan-wide and brought people together, whilst providing for their spiritual needs in a time of much anxiety.

¹⁰⁰ Stakeholder

¹⁰¹ Parish FGD

¹⁰² Parish FGD

Whilst a recent report demonstrated that 42% of clergy reported worse mental wellbeing and 44% felt more isolated in their ministry since the pandemic,¹⁰³ overall this was not the case for clergy in Wigan. For those who want to work in a team benefice, Wigan is now seen by some clergy as an attractive place to work, four curates appointed in 2020 have applied for jobs in Wigan.¹⁰⁴

Support that the Clergy Team have for one another is second to none... there also isn't the competitiveness between parishes as seen in other Deaneries¹⁰⁵

However, the pressure of reduced clergy numbers continues to be a challenge for the Clergy Team: the stipendiary clergy would have been reduced to eight people if the diocese had not helped financially. There is an acknowledgment that clergy are *thinly spread*.¹⁰⁶ Two clergy mentioned the impact on their family lives as they are unable to worship with their family on a Sunday or family members have to travel around to different services each Sunday if they want to be together.¹⁰⁷

We're a brilliant team... So even though in some ways we're under the cosh and we are thinly spread... actually people who come in [curates] don't want to go. I've been here since 2008 and I've chosen to stay. I think the team's really good. I think we're really supportive. I think we work. When I look across the diocese, I know that we work closer than any other team of clergy because we make our team the priority.¹⁰⁸

The majority of respondents were appreciative of the clergy and overall had found them helpful and supportive. However, genuine concern was expressed by FGD participants for the clergy and their health and wellbeing – they were perceived as being overstretched and parishioners therefore did not want to burden them with extra concerns.¹⁰⁹

Covid-19

Starting in March 2020, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic led to the first of a series of national lockdowns across the UK, resulting in all non-essential contact amongst groups and individuals being stopped. Understandably, this had a significant impact on the implementation of the TW project, though not all of it was negative. The challenge for TW team was in trying to implement a new structure (1) with limited time remaining on the project timeframe; and (2) navigating through lockdown measures, which made recruiting staff for Core Services, setting up new bank accounts, and continuing to deliver services and pastoral care a significant challenge. Conversely, the pandemic gave clergy, parishioners and communities the opportunity to be united in a way they had not been before.

Table 9: Impact of Covid-19 on TW

Effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on TW	
Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clergy Team mobilised and supported one another - Clergy mobilised quickly in a coordinated manner to support parishioners via online means - Lockdown focused CW on food security projects, becoming a key partner of Wigan Council - Online Wigan-wide activities, such as prayer groups and Alpha, gave parishioners across CW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Slowed down implementation of structural change across CW (e.g. bank accounts, employing staff) - Volunteers retired or stood down during pandemic - Those not using or unable to access online activities potentially felt isolated - Reduction in giving, as significant numbers of those who usually gave did so in 'envelopes on plates' - Numbers of parishioners have not returned to pre-

¹⁰³ Living Ministry W3 Panel Survey Report, *Clergy in a Time of Covid*, January 2022

¹⁰⁴ Interviews with stakeholders

¹⁰⁵ Interview with stakeholder

¹⁰⁶ Interview with stakeholder

¹⁰⁷ Clergy FGD

¹⁰⁸ Interview with stakeholder

¹⁰⁹ Parish FGDs

<p>opportunities to meet each other, breaking down barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funeral services established - Identified new lay leaders - Gave parishioners opportunity to experience benefits of Clergy Team working together 	<p>pandemic numbers</p>
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Unintended outcomes

- Overestimated buy-in from clergy and parishioners for the TW project, leading to resistance and, ultimately, the reconciliation process.
- Reduced giving significantly directly impacted the number of clergy and staff who could be employed.
- For some, '1 in 10' was perceived as a meaningless target as it was– too aspirational when only a small proportion of the Wigan population were attending church.
- Covid-19 resulted in a lot of volunteers stepping down.
- At the start of the pandemic, the Clergy Team were agile and able to work immediately as a team, coordinating online prayer and meetings, for both the Clergy Team and parishioners.
- Social justice activities increased during Covid-19 with greater coordination and purpose.
- Greater collaboration with external partners such as Wigan Council and funeral directors.
- Reducing the number of buildings or repurposing them was not addressed – this still needs to be addressed, potentially causing continued upset over building closures.
- Established leaders such as readers were unsure of their role and felt sidelined.
- Reduction in contributions from parish shares and legacies.
- Reduction in numbers attending established churches.
- Some parishioners from established churches continue to feel sidelined in favour of the new worship communities.
- Established church communities expressed the loss of pastoral support that could be provided due to reduced numbers of clergy.
- The new benefice structure has created unexpected layers of bureaucracy.
- Significant Wigan Deanery debts were written off by the contribution of current reserves of the old parishes and Diocese of Liverpool, enabling the new benefice to start with a zero balance.

3.5 Sustainability

Lay leaders and clergy

Local Missional Leadership is a Diocese of Liverpool initiative to release and equip local lay leadership in churches and worship communities. It was established to encourage lay people to use their God-given leadership gifts to help with developing and growing more disciples.^{110, 111} During TW, the person responsible for LMLs within the diocese left for another role and was not replaced. Therefore, 'the diocese no longer pushed for the creation of LMLs'. LML training focused on individuals rather than a team.¹¹²

LMLs work differently in each [parish] hub. In some hubs, LMLs don't organise church services, in St xx, it's mainly led by LMLs/readers, etc. I feel very supported by other LMLs, and [our] vicar – he will challenge me in what I'm doing. But I'm not sure anyone would take on the role of an LML – my daughter goes to church, she's on the PCC, Girls' Brigade, and works full-time – how could she be asked to take on a[n] LML role?¹¹³

Cultivate, a new lay leaders training pathway was developed through the TW project. This was offered to lay leaders involved in leading, or exploring starting, a missional initiative or potential worshipping community. Cultivate was not formally evaluated, but did seek feedback from participants after each cohort had been

¹¹⁰ www.liverpool.anglican.org/lmls

¹¹¹ Transforming Wigan: Local Missional Leaders in the Transforming Wigan movement

¹¹² Interviews with stakeholders

¹¹³ Focus group participant

trained. In total, 107 people attended the five Cultivate courses, with around two thirds going onto participate in some kind of leadership position after the course.¹¹⁴

Overall, there was positive feedback from participants, with the main highlight being *valuing meeting with other lay leaders*. Cultivate is now being rolled out across the diocese through FFM. However, CW is now aiming to focus training on the development of lay teams, rather than individuals, through Greenhouse.¹¹⁵ In 2022, 144 lay leaders participated in Greenhouse and a further 80 lay leaders attended the Leaders Advance retreat. However, when speaking to parish FGDs, not all participants had heard of Greenhouse and some felt as though their training as an LML had not been used to full effect.

At the start of TW, there was a regular monthly meeting for lay leaders. Leaders Advance ran until November 2019, after which funding was no longer available. In addition, there was a weekend away attended by both clergy and lay leaders. Some parishes were more systematic in their support for their LMLs, compared to parishes where there was more resistance to TW. Management and support of lay leaders remains at parish level, and therefore there are differences remain in coordination and engagement; and there is a lack of clarity on how to apply the training that they have already had.

*I feel redundant as an LML*¹¹⁶

*I went on the Cultivate course – it was good, but I haven't gone on to use it, so I'm not sure if it was useful or not*¹¹⁷

Lay leaders have been significant in enabling and strengthening missional and social justice activities across Wigan, as well as supporting clergy with delivering services and establishing missional communities, helping with funerals, and providing ongoing visits to parishioners. However, some lay leaders state that they felt overstretched, and were concerned with the lack of people to step up and take over various roles.¹¹⁸

Readers continued to be trained through the established structures of the diocese during TW. During parish FGDs it was apparent that some individuals who held these roles speculated how their roles differed from newly trained lay leaders, and to some extent initially felt sidelined.

*Readers were put aside, no support or meetings. That hurt a lot. Things have now been addressed and improved*¹¹⁹

Whilst clergy are working within a supportive environment, pressures on them will continue given the reduction in giving and potential loss of funding for existing clergy roles, and the challenge of leading new worship communities alongside established ones. There is obvious tension between addressing the needs of established churches and new worship communities, as well as tending to all those who live within the parish and do not attend church services. To fill some of the gaps, the Clergy Team has identified portfolio roles that work to the strengths of individual clergy, such as social justice activities or working with young people. It is a new way of working and still to be fully put into operation – though for some clergy it appears to be working well. The challenge will be for clergy to manage additional portfolio roles alongside their existing responsibilities.

TW has been able to grow and strengthen clergy and lay leadership, which in turn has created a sense of local ownership, though this is not the case across all of CW. It is dependent on individuals who have bought into the vision of CW and is predominantly related to lay leaders and parishioners who are actively involved in missional and social justice activities.

Fit for Mission

¹¹⁴ Information provided by Cultivate lead

¹¹⁵ Interview with stakeholder

¹¹⁶ Focus group participant

¹¹⁷ Focus group participant

¹¹⁸ Parish FGDs

¹¹⁹ Parish focus group participant

Much of the learning from the TW project has gone on to inform the FFM bid and is currently being piloted in two parishes of West Derby and St Helens (see Appendix 3). A key learning is that FFM will allow parishes to opt out of the new parish structure, which was not an option in TW. Cultivate is being delivered across the diocese, though CW has focused on the development of teams rather than individuals through Greenhouse. CW is still in development, with challenges remaining to be negotiated, and will therefore need continued support through FFM. FFM and those who manage it need to ensure that CW is actively engaged in and involved with the FFM process. In addition, there is much learning that could be shared in areas such as development of the Clergy Team, missional work developed with and by lay leaders, engaging with external partners, social justice activities and addressing conflict.

There are things we would do differently, but I'm not sure I would have given the opportunity [for churches] to opt out. Some people are still hurting now, it's been difficult¹²⁰

It is clear that the leadership role is key to developing teams and it is essential to have the right person in place to manage them, without which the teams may become dysfunctional. There also needs to be sufficient succession planning to train up future team rectors, lay leaders and key volunteers.

4. Conclusions

Relevance

At the time of writing the TW bid, Wigan was the largest deanery in the Diocese of Liverpool, with 33 buildings, many of which were old and not fit for purpose, and an ageing population; and on average had the lowest levels of congregational giving compared to the rest of the diocese, which had reduced the number of clergy employed from 24 to 18 in 2013. The Diocese of Liverpool submitted the TW bid in 2014 with the aim of turning around the financial and missional strength of Wigan Deanery. This was to be achieved through changes in infrastructure, change management, planting new churches, and raising up leaders through training and development.

Although there was an acceptance from clergy and parishioners that change needed to happen, the bid submitted to the CC had limited input from a wide range of stakeholders.

The vision for TW was disseminated through meetings, literature and the TW website. The project started enthusiastically, with a focus on a strategy to change culture and develop lay leaders, organise missional activities and encourage the development of new worship communities. Initially, TW did not have a formal planning framework with a budget and milestones on how and when structural change would be implemented, including the closure or repurposing of buildings. In 2018, a plan was drafted on how the deanery would become a team benefice, and the number of parishes reduced from 29 to seven.

Recruiting a project director, external to Wigan Deanery, enabled a new approach to be instigated. The TW project teams could have been strengthened and enhanced, with a greater variety of individuals including those of a different ecclesiology and gender, as well as the inclusion of lay leaders. Large-scale change management projects were new to the diocese and the CC. A written plan may have created greater accountability on more detailed aspects of the project, which may have mitigated some of the challenges of the reconciliation process.

Effectiveness

In 2020, CW was formed. The new team benefice had changed its structures and established a Joint Council, reduced the number of parishes from 29 to seven, and created the WDT and Core Services to help support the administrative function of the deanery. CW is now led by a team of 13 clergy: a team rector and 12 clergy to manage the seven parishes. This was two less than anticipated at the start of TW.

Although missional and social justice activities were in existence prior to 2014, TW, as well as the project leader, acted as a catalyst and was successful in bringing together these activities and on a much larger scale across Wigan. The early focus on developing lay leaders and missional activities led to the House of Prayer

¹²⁰ Interview with stakeholder

being established, the pan-Wigan Alpha course and street chaplains, as well as using Zoom to continue some activities during the various Covid-19 lockdowns.

Engaging with lay leaders and external partners, in particular Wigan Council, was an effective strategy in taking CW forward, with activities such as the food pantries, setting up warm spaces and a CAP debt centre. As a result, 'Lifted' – a CW-wide initiative – was established in 2022 to coordinate and bring a consistent approach to social justice activities, to avoid duplication and the waste of valuable time and resources. The focusing on a common cause or activity outside of an individual church has brought people together and broken down barriers. People are now willing to share information and learn from one another.

An unintended consequence was that the reconfiguration of CW caused considerable upset and dissatisfaction amongst some parishioners and clergy, leading to a reconciliation process, which was delayed due to Covid-19. However, to some extent the delay gave the Clergy Team and lay leaders an opportunity to demonstrate how CW could work to benefit all worship communities – both established and new.

The setting up of the new benefice aimed to streamline the governance structure to make it more efficient and effective. There has been a mixed response as to whether it has simplified governance structures. For those who are engaged and understand the new system it is manageable; for some PCC members, church wardens and treasurers it appears to be more complicated, has added layers of bureaucracy and is less time efficient.

Although there are fewer PCC meetings for clergy to attend, due to time constraints, the new focus of meetings is on the administration and finances of the group of churches that they represent, leaving little time to discuss the mission and vision of the parish. With the removal of a formal body, such as an elected PCC within individual churches, there is no longer a formal mechanism to discuss internal practical matters relating to their church or church building; therefore, some churches have set up operational groups to coordinate on some of the issues. For others, the governance structure, whilst an improvement on the old structure, continues to be a drain on energy, resources and time and this will continue until it is simplified into a benefice with one or two parishes.

Communication had a significant impact on the effectiveness of TW. For those closely involved with the project, there was general agreement that the TW vision was clear; but for many parishioners, it was not. The less formal approach adopted of changing hearts and minds through culture change could have been strengthened by a communication strategy, a skilled communications officer and an identified feedback mechanism. Consequently, TW lost buy-in from some people who were initially on board

Given all the changes – both planned and unplanned – , for some – notably clergy and diocese administration – there is a sense that CW is still a work in progress, but that it is less vulnerable to decline as there are now structures in place with a clear missional and social justice outlook, led by a strong Clergy Team, and supported by Core Services and the PCCs.

Efficiency

The TW project has not been successful in establishing a financially sustainable position for the Church in Wigan Deanery. It is likely that action to rejuvenate the church in Wigan through TW came too late for it to move the deanery to a sustainable financial position within the project delivery period. Giving was significantly impacted by Covid-19 and it has not returned to its pre-pandemic levels. If the project has had a positive effect on the deanery's finances, this has been negated by other factors that have led to a worsening financial position over the project period.

TW did not lead to a net increase in giving to the church in Wigan Deanery over the project delivery period, despite additional people becoming involved in worship communities through church-planting activities – most money continues to come from established churches, with new worship communities contributing little to the parish share. It is likely that the timescale of the TW project was not long enough to realise a net financial benefit from church-planting initiatives, possibly because it takes longer than the chosen project delivery period of seven years for new worship communities to become financially sustainable.

Whilst reducing the number of clergy in Wigan Deanery will have reduced the overall cost of ministry in the deanery, it may also have had a negative impact on overall church attendance, so may have had a net negative impact on the Church in Wigan Deanery.

Core Services has helped the deanery to become more professional and compliant with statutory requirements, reducing the administrative workload for clergy. It has also demonstrated that it is able to achieve economies of scale through bulk buying of insurance. Limited funding restricts the recruitment of full-time staff and prevents long-term planning of Core Services and WDT.

Impact

TW has been most successful in getting people of all ages to explore faith, and has created the conditions to achieve the intended results of turning around the missional and financial strength of CW. However, it is still in development, and will need continued nurturing and support.

Through the Covid-19 pandemic, CW showed that it was agile enough to adapt to changing circumstances, through strong relationships developed and established across the Clergy Team, as well as lay leaders, support staff and other volunteers. Areas that are thriving are the new worship communities and social justice activities, where parishioners have worked together beyond the confines of an individual, established church.

Clergy wellbeing has been improved by working in a supportive team environment and new curates are choosing to remain in Wigan. Team development is an ongoing process, and it will be important to continue and develop succession planning to identify future leaders. The burden of the parish share remains; if giving does not increase, attendance continues to fall and if buildings do not close in a timely manner, then the number of clergy will inevitably have to decrease, potentially impacting their wellbeing and effectiveness in their priestly duties, including attending services and delivering the sacrament.

There is an ongoing tension that needs to be addressed, balancing between the old and the new – between the needs of established churches and new worship communities, and between traditionalists, different age groups and those of a different ecclesiology – and with limited time and resources.

Sustainability

TW has been successful in identifying and training lay leaders, many of whom have thrived in a permission-giving environment. A significant number of volunteers stepped down during the pandemic, and current lay leaders, many of whom are retired, will want to step down at some point in the foreseeable future. Overall, training was well received, but some are unclear how to take it forward. CW needs to re-engage with those who have been trained; and identify, train and provide ongoing intentional support to ensure a pipeline of lay leaders within CW. In addition, the wellbeing of lay leaders could be helped through regular support groups and working in teams to reduce the burden on individual leaders.

FFM still has much to learn from the experiences of TW and CW. Sharing of learning should be actively encouraged through peer-to-peer support with clergy and lay leaders, in particular around mission, social justice, clergy teams and engaging with external partners.

The diocese has been generous in supporting CW financially, and may need to continue to do so in the future. CW is a new organisation and still developing, both structurally and relationally, and needs time to embed learning and practice. In time, CW would benefit from reviewing the performance of the new structure, with engagement from all involved.

5. Learning and Recommendations

Areas of learning	Key learning	Recommendations
Structural change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buildings review and subsequent repurposing and closure will continue to cause upset and disruption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transparency on decision making - Have regular (e.g. monthly/bi-monthly updates) – even if no change has occurred.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Payment by card/Parish Giving Scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Card payments to be made available in all church buildings - Further promotion of Parish Giving Scheme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administration and communication of 7 PCCs appears to create layers of bureaucracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review how administration and communication could be improved with a range of stakeholders (clergy, lay people, Core Services, WDT etc) - Involve discussion of Parishes prior to any changes - Any change should be communicated clearly, with lay input, through a wide range of communication channels.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Core Services has provided economies of scale both in time and financial savings; some people are unaware of the benefits, including the financial cost of funding Core Services as a service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicate cost of Core Services as a proportion of PS - Promote the benefits of Core Services including savings - Testimonies of how Core Services has helped Clergy Team, Wardens, Treasurers etc - Interviews with WDT chair, trustees etc
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Treasurers and wardens mentioned the significant burden of holding these posts and work related to the job, including wardens being contacted at all hours; they valued the support of Core Services - There was also a concern of succession planning and who will take over their roles when they retire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To review job roles and ascertain how roles could be simplified or how job roles could be shared with more people. - Provide a dedicated mobile phone to Wardens so that they are able to answer within identified working hours. - Identify and start to train up potential treasurers/wardens - Continue to provide support through Core Services and peer to peer support
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual churches still need a committee to ensure the smooth running of the church, discuss practical matters, plan individual events and disseminate information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish guidelines for Operational Committees to replace the former PCCs, including election of representatives

Areas of learning	Key learning	Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditionalists and older people feel sidelined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify lead person or portfolio lead for older people who has a vision of how they can be supported and encouraged, and how to coordinate a team to engage them - Hold joint services for established and new worship communities - Intergenerational activities/services with older and young people (e.g. technology sessions, ballroom dancing, handicrafts), jointly with The Deanery School and Next Generation
Change management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large change management projects require clarity from those that are leading them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A clearly written and well disseminated plan that is reviewed regularly and shared widely, so everyone can look to this as a future vision
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CW is still in development and needs continued support from the FFM project - CW has much learning still to share through clergy and lay leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diocese to ensure that CW is systematically included in the FFM project - Diocese to actively encourage opportunities to share learning from CW across diocese to lay leaders and clergy.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any change will produce conflict; people need to be prepared for that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure conflict resolution resources such as Bridge Builders are available to clergy and lay leaders, including FFM
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication is still a challenge; disseminating information to a wide range of people with different preferences will continue to be an ongoing issue - GDPR can hamper the dissemination of information if parishioners unwittingly select the option not to share their details - People want to hear about some of the details and successes of TW/CW, including statistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Range of communications will still need to be employed - Allow people to sign up online and receive regular communications (e.g. newsletters, updates) via email, or notification of meetings via SMS/WhatsApp - Team rector and/Clergy Team should Zoom/video key messages to show across all church services to ensure consistency of message to all parishes - Provide regular statistical updates (e.g. on percentages of parish shares paid, number of people using food pantries, numbers of young people engaged in activities, etc.) and cost savings through combined building insurance in quarterly newsletters, on website, etc. - Provide easy access to PCC minutes and financial data of each parish
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data needs to be collected and reported on in a systematic and timely manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All large projects should have: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Communication lead appointed, with relevant skills and experience 2) Data analyst/researcher to manage, collate and produce qualitative/quantitative reports

Areas of learning	Key learning	Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There continues to be a sense of hurt and frustration amongst parishioners, lay leaders and clergy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use 5th Sunday services/celebration meetings in each parish to observe a time of reflecting, repenting and celebrating
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership groups should be representative and inclusive, allowing challenging questions to be asked, and answered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure any strategy group is representative of those they are working for (e.g. in terms of ecclesiology, gender, lay leaders, ethnicity, etc.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Clergy Team are invested in each other; For example the weekly teams are prioritised, which paid dividends during the Covid-19 pandemic and they were agile and able to mobilise quickly, supporting each other as well as parishioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good teams are not a given; they need to be worked at and to have the right leadership - Learning to be shared wider throughout the diocese
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Succession planning is needed for key roles amongst clergy and lay leaders (e.g. team rectors, readers, treasurers, wardens) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Start to identify and train clergy and lay leaders
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lay leaders who have thrived are those who have been trained and supported, and got involved with team activities - There is a cohort of trained lay leaders who are currently not involved with leading and would potentially like to be involved - Wellbeing of lay leaders also needs to be acknowledged – not doing so will lead to burn-out or volunteers resigning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring together lay leaders within as well as across parishes, to share learning, support one another, identify training needs, and identify and encourage new lay leaders (e.g. quarterly basis) - Provide regular planned training and support groups/sessions for lay leaders - Provide a clear outline of opportunities to volunteer – both short-term and longer-term opportunities - To engage those who are in full-time employment or in education, provide evening or weekend opportunities to meet in person or online
Church planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is likely that the time required to establish a financially sustainable new worship community is longer than the TW project delivery period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Future initiatives that intend to establish new worship communities should have a long-term plan to provide these communities with ongoing financial support before they are expected to be financially sustainable
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The cost of engaging an individual in a new worship community is considerably higher than the cost of engaging an individual in a missional initiative by a factor of about 10 to 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Future projects that aim to rejuvenate the Church and its mission should expect to spend ten times more on establishing new worship communities than they do on engaging individuals in missional initiatives

Appendices

Appendix 1: Kotter's 8-Step Process for Leading Change

Steps	Brief definition
1. Create a sense of urgency	Help others see the need for change through a bold, aspirational opportunity statement that communicates the importance of acting immediately
2. Build a guiding coalition	A volunteer army needs a coalition of effective people – born of its own ranks – to guide it, coordinate it and communicate its activities
3. Form a strategic vision and initiatives	Clarify how the future will be different from the past and how you can make that future a reality through initiatives linked directly to the vision
4. Enlist a volunteer army	Large-scale change can only occur when massive numbers of people rally around a common opportunity; they must be bought-in and urgent to drive change – moving in the same direction
5. Enable action by removing barriers	Removing barriers such as inefficient processes and hierarchies provides the freedom necessary to work across silos and generate real impact
6. Generate short-term wins	Wins are the molecules of results: they must be recognised, collected and communicated – early and often – to track progress and energise volunteers to persist
7. Sustain acceleration	Press harder after the first successes – your increasing credibility can improve systems, structures and policies; be relentless with initiating change after change until the vision is a reality
8. Institute change	Articulate the connections between new behaviours and organisational success, making sure they continue until they become strong enough to replace old habits

Source: Adapted from Kotter Inc.¹²¹

¹²¹ www.kotterinc.com/8-steps-process-for-leading-change

Appendix 2: Working structure of Wigan Deanery36

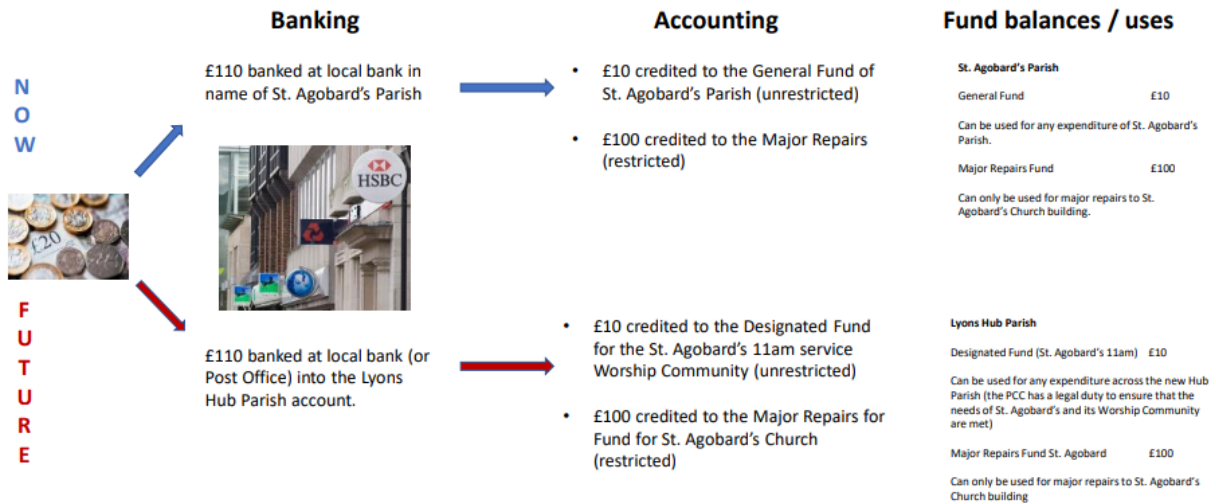
SYNODICAL STRUCTURE	DEANERY STRUCTURE	BENEFICE STRUCTURE	PARISH LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE	WIGAN DEANERY TRUST
Area Dean and Lay Chair	Team Ministry Benefice	Joint Council + CW Leadership Team + Finance sub-committee + Churchwarden sub-committee	<u>Team Rector</u>	Board of Trustees
Standing Committee	Parish (Hub) 1	PCC 1 + Hub Leadership Team	Team Vicar + Team Vicar	Employees (non stipendiary)
Deanery Synod	Parish (Hub) 2	PCC 2 + Hub Leadership Team	Team Vicar + Team Vicar	
Diocesan Synod	Parish (Hub) 3	PCC 3 + Hub Leadership Team	Team Vicar + Team Vicar	
General Synod	Parish (Hub) 4	PCC 4 + Hub Leadership Team	Team Vicar + Team Vicar	
	Parish (Hub) 5	PCC 5 + Hub Leadership Team	Team Vicar + Team Vicar	
	Parish (Hub) 6	PCC 6 + Hub Leadership Team	Team Vicar + Team Vicar	
	Parish (Hub) 7	PCC 7 + Hub Leadership Team	Team Vicar + Team Vicar	

Source: Scoping Document Church Wigan v03, June 2019

Appendix 3: Explanation of how donations are allocated in the new benefice

Where does my money go?

- We are currently members of St. Agobard's Parish and attend the 11am Sunday service (worship community) regularly.
- We give through the envelope scheme £10 per week and today have also made a one-off donation of £100 to the church building major repairs fund.



Source: Scoping Document Church Wigan v03, June 2019

Appendix 4: Fit for Mission

Fit for Mission aims to support every deanery in the Diocese of Liverpool to create their own future. There are six elements to this, and for each of them, the programme will make available help and specialist resource.

- **A focus on developing our discipleship culture through training and support,**
This will include delivering 'Cultivate', a successful Local Missional Leadership programme. This will enable the mission capacity and skills for local churches to plant new worship communities and justice initiatives.
- **Creating missional leadership teams of lay and ordained people**
These teams will work over larger areas with members taking responsibility for specific mission and worship communities.
- **Developing agreed mutual support and accountability structures for all leaders**
- **Work towards each deanery having one or two larger Parishes**
Fewer parishes, but more worship communities and more justice initiatives. Less bureaucracy, more mission. With a local strategic approach, more diversity of worship will be possible.
- **Making sure buildings are fit for purpose**
We will have buildings expertise available to assist in making good decisions on use, investment, or closure.
- **Creating administrative services in deaneries to support and resource your mission**

Source: Diocese of Liverpool¹²²

¹²² www.liverpool.anglican.org/fitformission

Appendix 5: Project performance and unit costs

Project outcome data and church planting was received CW which was used to analyse the performance of the TW project against its objectives and targets. The TW budget information for 2018 to 2021 was received from the diocesan programme manager and transaction data relating to TW was received from the resources officer and financial systems and data officer.

Target and actual unit costs for each project objective were estimated by assessing how much of the budget was assigned to each objective from 2018 to 2021, and assigning project management and other central project costs over this period to each objective based on the ratios of actual funds assigned to them.

These ratios were then applied to the total project expenditure, based on project transaction data received from the resources officer and financial systems and data officer with any income removed, taken to be the actual cost of the TW project (£1,847,923).

Target unit costs were calculated by dividing the estimated project spend on each objective by the target number associated with it. Estimated unit costs were calculated by dividing the estimated project spend on each objective by the actual number of outputs/outcomes achieved against the objective.

Table 10: TW Project performance and unit costs

Ref.	Objective	%	Achieved	Estimated cost	Target unit cost	Estimated unit cost
1.1. Exploring						
1.1.1	2,000 adults engage with a missional initiative (e.g. Alpha) – a missional initiative is defined as anything that engages non-Christians in a relationship with Christians who talk about Jesus	201%	4,021	£205,471	£102.74	£51.10
1.1.2	2,000 children of primary school age engage with a missional initiative	170%	3,400	£20,087	£10.04	£5.91
1.1.3	5,000 children of secondary school age engage with a missional initiative	105%	5,235	£20,087	£4.02	£3.84
1.1.4	1,000 people in a worship community are on the fringe and visible to the leader [The fringe is defined as people who would not be missed if, without any notice, they did not attend.]	75%	749	£205,471	£205.47	£274.33
1.2. Engaging						
1.2.1	200 worship communities, each with 30 to 50 people – these include worship communities in schools	32%	63	£205,471	£1,027	£3,261
1.2.2	100% of worship communities which existed at the start of the project refreshed, merged or closed	85%	29	£372,568	£10,958	£12,847
1.3. Active in ministry						

Ref.	Objective	%	Achieved	Estimated cost	Target unit cost	Estimated unit cost
1.3.1	300 leaders trained on Cultivate [Measurement: individuals in a leadership position who have completed the Cultivate training.]	36%	107	£616,096	£2,054	£5,812
1.3.2	100% of worship communities engaged in community action [A regular activity which addresses a non-faith need of the community.]	100%	34	£202,672	£5,961	£5,961