



A Time to Change Together

Resourcing Sustainable Church

Report for Diocesan Synod November 2022

GROWTH



Flourishing as a family of churches which grow in number and depth.

PARTNERSHIP



Sharing with others in worship, fellowship and service.

GENEROSITY



Giving our time, talents and resources to build the Body of Christ.

A Letter from Bishop Stephen

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I am pleased to commend this report to Synod of progress made on the commitments of A Time To Change Together. There are continuing challenges which we face in the aftermath of the pandemic as we see patterns of returning to church in person and of remaining online.

We cannot ignore events and challenges in the wider world which affect us like the war in Ukraine and the fuel and cost of living crisis. God teaches us through the facts on the ground. This is a matter for much prayer and mutual support, not least in our Local Mission Partnerships and Deanery Partnerships. I am so looking forward finally to signing off the agreed shape of our Local Mission Partnerships so that we can move on to establish our godly ambitions for ministry in every village, school, chaplaincy and faith network, and identify the opportunities, training needs and snags to overcome.

Some of you may remember bracelets which young Christians were encouraged to wear which had the acrostic WWJD? - What Would Jesus Do? A report to Synod is just a paper unless we inhabit it. Asking ourselves what Jesus would do takes us straightaway into prayer to the Father and to growing in the Spirit. It would encourage us to be the people he sends out, to be people of peace, and those who don't go it alone but who go out in twos and threes to announce the kingdom of God as in Luke 10.

A Time to Change Together is an invitation to be renewed and transformed as the Body of Christ in Greater Lincolnshire, ready to plant congregations through our SDF resource churches but also from within. We are going to address the issue of restricted engagement with children and young people with and beyond our schools so that we can model cross-generational community across the Diocese. I am pleased that the report reflects a deeper commitment to express the language of hope and salvation through the whole life and death of Jesus and his resurrection and his taking his place in glory.

I say, Peace be with you. Let us be wrapped around in the full Shalom of God and walk in that heavenly peace together.

Yours ever in Christ,

+Stephen

Bishop Stephen Conway
Acting Bishop of Lincoln





PROGRESS UPDATE



CHURCH TYPES

All 615 churches prayerfully identified the type of church they felt called to be for their local area over the next five years.

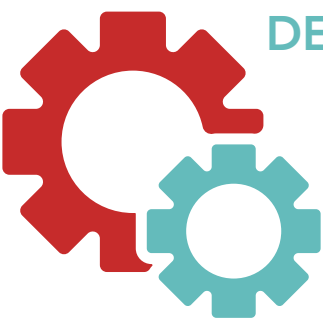
VOCATIONAL CONVERSATIONS

All 224 licensed clergy and readers were invited to a vocational conversation with a member of Bishop's Staff or the Reader's Board last winter, exploring the role they feel called to play. 78% of all invited ministers took part.



DEANERY PARTNERSHIPS

- All DPs have been locally agreed; all boundary issues resolved.
- Deanery Partnership Steering Groups were established in December 2021 and have met regularly across the year.
- Partnership Deans and Lay Co-Leads were appointed this summer to 17/18 of the positions, tasked with driving many of the local processes and plans across DPs.



LOCAL MISSION PARTNERSHIPS

DPs have identified the likely shape of most LMPs. Local conversations, creative planning and consultation continue.



COVENANT GIVING

75% of parishes have submitted a covenant pledge, including 7% that made no parish share payment in 2021, and the rest averaging an 8.9% increase over their 2021 payments. 41 Covenant Pastors have been trained, completing 93% of parish visits.



COLLEGE OF ST HUGH

- A Warden of the College was appointed in January.
- Mission and ministry support are being reframed around a vision for lifelong Christian learning, with several new tools for ministry and mission development in progress.
- Mission Enabler recruitment is underway. They will work with the College to respond to locally discerned needs for training and support.



PROGRESS UPDATE



COMMUNICATIONS

- Posters setting out the vision, progress and local importance of A Time to Change Together have been sent to every church.
- 3 pew sheets have been provided for churches to use, covering: vision and summary, church types, partnerships.
- Webinars have run monthly to support local implementation.



EVALUATION

A first questionnaire has been sent to all parishes, inviting all congregation members to give their feedback on A Time to Change Together. These surveys will allow us to monitor impact and adapt over the coming years.

COSTS

- For 2022, we predict savings in central costs of 20% over 2019.
- The number of Full Time Equivalent central staff posts has reduced from 45 to a budgeted 34 by 2023.



ASSETS

We are succeeding in moving towards higher yielding investments. We sold 27 houses in 2021 and are looking to sell 21 in 2022 and 25 in 2023. A conditional offer has been accepted on Edward King House, the current diocesan offices.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

We are on a journey to financial sustainability, making steady progress on reducing expenditure and increasing income. This journey will continue over the coming years. As of October 2022, parish share is up £200k over October 2021.



TEAM

A Time to Change Together is led by The Acting Bishop of Lincoln, under the Operational Lead of The Venerable Aly Buxton, who was installed as the Archdeacon of Stow and Lindsey in July 2022. An Implementation Team of seconded and volunteer part-time posts was formed in July 2021 and they continue to meet regularly.



Introduction to the Report

'Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith' - Hebrews 12:1-2

In May 2021, Diocesan Synod approved the 15 Recommendations and Commitments of A Time to Change Together: Resourcing Sustainable Church. This was one step in a now almost two-year journey into a new life together as a church - a shared life which is underpinned by principles of growth, partnerships and generosity, as we respond together to God's call on us as the Body of Christ, and seek to become a flourishing church for Him, for his Kingdom, and for our communities across Greater Lincolnshire.

The report to Synod in May 2021 set the momentum for all that has followed. We have made significant progress in some areas. We have made additional progress in areas we didn't plan for back in May last year. Some areas are taking longer than expected. Other areas need reviewing.

We continue to review and revise plans according to need, and in response to all we learn. A Time to Change Together was never a "business plan" for the future of the Church, but a framework for belonging together in Christ, and for flourishing together as a family in new, sustainable ways. Those implementing the programme, locally and centrally, are all engaged in a process of listening, learning and responding.



This report sets out the progress made against the original 15 Recommendations and Commitments over the last 18 months and adds to this 2 new Recommendations. Each Recommendation and Commitment has been summarised and an update has been provided on what has been achieved so far and, where appropriate, what is left to do.

The A Time to Change Together Implementation Team use detailed deliverables and metrics to monitor and feedback on regularly to the Senior Leadership Team.

We started the process with five lever groups looking at: Growth, Deployment, Parish Share, Costs and Assets. Many of the workstreams and associated recommendations have become increasingly integrated. This means there is some repetition in the report, but for consistency we report against the original recommendations. Some workstreams are now complete, or have transitioned into everyday diocesan life, "business as usual", for which there are other reporting mechanisms and governing bodies. This is true of the work with assets, costs and increasingly covenant giving. This report covers all original Recommendations and Commitments. In the future, we will report on only the outstanding and emerging deliverables required for the implementation of A Time to Change Together.



Recommendation 1: Growth

Recommendation 1: We will establish a Working Group including at least 1 Mission Enabler in each Deanery Partnership (DP), to support an Enabling Discipleship Growth Programme across the diocese. The task of the enablers will be to promote the diocesan priority for intentional discipleship and to equip people to communicate the Christian faith in a compelling and plausible way.

Commitment 1: To become a church of missionary disciples, in that each individual Christian should be bringing more than one other person to faith, and to achieve this we must each be more confident disciples ourselves.

Nov 2022 update: The recommendation and commitment stand. The timeline for Mission Enablers was intentionally pushed back to allow for the appointment of Partnership Deans and Lay Co-Leads who are focal to the recruitment process now underway. The role description for Mission Enablers speaks of helping to “equip Christian people throughout the Diocese, in parishes, chaplaincies, schools, homes and workplaces, to live out and communicate their Christian faith in compelling, plausible and contextually responsive ways”. Each enabler will serve 1 of the 9 Deanery Partnerships, mapping and sharing best practice within their area, and identifying where support and training are needed, to be resourced through the College of St Hugh.

A vision and methodology has been agreed for the College of St Hugh, centred on “lifelong Christian learning” for all, tailored to every baptised person’s stage of faith and ministry. From this vision, it follows that no single “Enabling Discipleship Programme” will be adequate to realise the vision. However, Synod has already noted two programmes that are in development – “Rooted and Grounded” and “Ten Top Tips”.



October 2022 Elloe East Deanery Confirmations



“Rooted and Grounded” will be a two-year programme of short, group study courses supporting lay people as they grow in discipleship. Inspired by Ephesians 3.14-21, it will be suitable for any baptised person who wants to learn and grow in their faith. The courses will aim to build confidence and expectation in speaking, learning, sharing, questioning and acting in faith. Designed to be run either in person or online, it will include a mixture of resources for both core and optional modules, and will be available free of charge through the College of St Hugh.

“Ten Top Tips” will be a continual programme of short leaflets on a variety of aspects of the Christian way of life. Sub-divided into themes, these leaflets will provide a quick, confidence-building introduction to the area covered, as well as signposts to a variety of other resources to allow the reader to take things further.

Both “Rooted and Grounded” and “Ten Top Tips” are central initiatives that will also help the College to learn about local needs so that they and other initiatives can become ever more responsive. Alongside these centrally developed programmes and resources, a key task of the College will be to work with Mission Enablers to respond with the necessary support and resources for the varied local contexts, to support the growth of our worshipping communities in number and discipleship.

Recommendation 2: Growth

Recommendation 2: To grow as a Church in Greater Lincolnshire, in numbers, in diversity of worshippers, and in our service to our communities.

Commitment 2: We will commit to 7 strategic directions for Growth:

1. Collaborative working
2. Commitment to young people
3. Disciples who make disciples
4. Help for people to live out their faith at work and in the home: Everyday Faith
5. Support for online presence
6. Encouragement of Fresh Expressions, Pioneering, Church Planting & Revitalisation
7. Monitored local accountability against agreed targets

Nov 2022 update: Recommendation 2 offers a strategic direction for how we as a Church will focus our missional energy towards growth. The early work of the College of St Hugh has developed and extended this direction, identifying its core task as being to help every person to take the next step in their journey of faith. This has led to the formation of a 'matrix of needs' for training and support. Some of the seven commitments from the report pervade every aspect of this work – others pertain to specific ages and stages of faith development.

Pervasive Themes

Collaborative working

The expectation for collaborative working impacts every aspect of mission and ministry across the Diocese. This expectation has been embedded in the work of the Deanery Partnership Steering Groups and the appointment of Partnership Deans and Lay Co-Leads within DPs. Webinars in the early Spring refined this message. The Church Typing and Vocational Conversations processes helped a wide range of lay and ordained people to consider their calling to share in the mission of God and the ministry of the Church. The Gathering of Ministers in June 2022 focused on the theme of 'The Ministry we Share'. Archdeaconry Vision Days with Bishop's Charge in December, January and February will reinforce the expectation for, and give opportunity for creative planning of, what collaborative working across larger areas will look like. Support and training for these new collaborative ways of working within LMPs is a key priority for 2023.



5 new Readers are licensed at Lincoln Cathedral in October 2022

Commitment to young people

The requirement to consider and respond to the needs of the young in their journeys of faith also cuts across every aspect of mission and ministry support. New courses have been introduced in the Lincoln School of Theology (LST) to underline the strategic importance of ministerial competence in this area. The development of an ALM 'Children and Youth' module is in its early stages.

A cross-departmental working group has been meeting since March to generate ideas for increased investment in Children and Youth work across the Diocese. The developing proposal is to appoint nine Children and Youth Enablers, working 1.5 days a week, to support and encourage churches' work with the young across their DP. Job descriptions and a full costing of the plan are underway. This 'direction of travel' was approved by Bishop's Council in September and detailed plans will return to the Trustees later this year.

The Board of Education is running a pilot for School Typing, with 15 Church Schools they have identified as "Key Mission Schools". The schools have begun work with their local church leadership to explore how churches, schools and households (or community) can work together to see the flourishing of all by meeting their practical, emotional and spiritual needs.

Support for online presence

The Transformation Fund has awarded several grants and provided guidance and support to help churches develop their online presence and connectivity. A new diocesan website is planned for 2023 to improve the support and resources available to churches and individuals. We plan to include a digital learning platform in the new website and a resource hub to support people at every stage of the faith journey.

Recommendation 2: Growth

Underpinning prayer and formation

Fr Alan Moses, Warden of Spirituality, has been a member of the Time to Change Together Implementation Team since February. The need for resources to support prayer for and theological reflection on A Time to Change Together within congregations has also been recognised and initial planning is underway.

Specific Areas of Need

Disciples who make disciples

The need for every Christian person to be able to 'do the work of an evangelist' (2 Tim 4:5) is the core competence underlying our work to support those who are 'encountering faith' for the first time. Recognising the need to strengthen our own capacity in this area, we are appointing a Lecturer in Evangelism and Mission.

Progress on the new discipleship course is reported under Recommendation 1, with the explicit goal of building confidence in sharing faith with others. 'To Love and Serve the Lord' continues to see growth in usage as a general discipleship programme as well as a preparation for Authorised Lay Ministry. New applied modules for ALMs are in development. ALMs, Readers and Ordained Ministers can now train as Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends for ministry with people in later life.

Mission Enablers, once in place, will be best placed to communicate the development needs of a church or individual with the College of St Hugh, which will then be able to signpost them to the

appropriate resource, programme, training or support.

Help for people to live out their faith at work and in the home: Everyday Faith

December 2022 sees the launch of Ten Top Tips leaflets supporting 'Faith at Work', 'Daily Devotionals' and 'God is Calling', with a focus on daily discipleship. The 'Rooted and Grounded' programme will link material and theological reflection to everyday contexts. Everyday Faith on-line resources are promoted monthly through the e-bulletins and on the Diocese of Lincoln website. The College of St Hugh Resources Centre includes various Everyday Faith resources for lending.

Encouragement of Fresh Expressions, Pioneering, Church Planting & Revitalisation

LMPs have been encouraged to plan creatively with regards to expressions and locations of churches. Significant diocesan investment continues into the programme of church revitalisation, part-funded by the national Strategic Development Fund (SDF). 3 of the 9 planned SDF plants / revitalisations have launched. A 4th plant is due for summer 2023. Planning is underway for the remaining 5 plants by 2026, with planting curates in place and DPSGs involved in the strategic consideration of locations.

Monitored local accountability against agreed targets

As part of the set-up process for LMPs, a shared vision and set of local qualitative and quantitative objectives will need to be set and then monitored. For each LMP, a process for this will need to be agreed.



Bishop Stephen at a Harvest Festival at Hogsthorpe Primary School



"Worship for Everyone" service at St Faith's Lincoln



"Mossy Church" at Scunthorpe Centre of Mission

Recommendation 3 and 4: Ministry

Recommendation 3: that no minister should be an independent practitioner; that all ministry is an expression of the Body of Christ; and that the ministry of the incumbent ('cure of souls') is always to be exercised relationally, with the bishop, her/his ministerial colleagues and with the people on behalf of whom charge is held.

Commitment 3: is that we will work collaboratively, lay and ordained together; reviewing regularly the way in which ministry is offered and received in each locality; providing the resources necessary to ensure the training, wellbeing and purposeful ongoing support that is required by clergy, ministers, office holders and volunteers.

Nov 2022 update: This recommendation is a principle we commit to: partnership working is a core value of A Time to Change Together and details of what has been achieved so far were noted under recommendation 2 on Growth.

To encourage partnership working, Deanery Synods have been regularly involved in the process so far and joint Deanery Synods within DPs are planned for the New Year. Once LMPs have been described and taken note of by February 2023 by Deanery Synods and by AMPCs, LMPs will begin functioning, with the expectation of partnership working from day 1.

It is recognised that a mechanism for monitoring our success and growth in partnership working will be needed.

Recommendation 4: that all parishes will take part in an assisted process of self-evaluation in order to discern prospects for growth, expectations about parish share and to assist with the deployment of ministers. The result will be a diocesan map of the following types of church: Key Mission; Local Mission; Community; Festival (also known as Celebration). Each of these types has potential strengths and each of these types should be valued - this is not a hierarchy, but a willing partnership in which gifts and resources can be shared and growth better enabled. Parishes and benefices will then be invited to cluster as Local Mission Partnerships (LMP), which will be the primary setting for the delivery of shared planning and ministry.

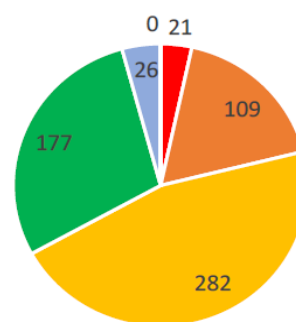
Commitment 4: is that there is to be no 'formula' for how many of each church type there should be in an LMP and there is no expectation of an even distribution of church types across the diocese. The mutual commitment is that all types of church (including those with 'protected characteristics' such as affiliation to the Society of Saint Wilfrid and Saint Hilda) are respected, and that church type will be driven by local context. However, while church types are to be decided locally, this process is to be centrally guided and audited by the DP of which the LMP is part. Moreover, church type is perceived to be aspirational, not static. We commit above all to unity in Christ, and to mutual support, responsibility and accountability.

Nov 2022 update:

Church Types

In September 2021, all churches were invited to pray and reflect on their vocation in the mission and ministry of the wider church in their local area. Through this unique and nationally respected process, in a great act of collaboration and desire to have a realistic stake in the future, every one of our 615 churches made a return and identified as 1 of 5 types, providing with this a more nuanced statement of the resources, ambition and constraints that affected that categorisation. As of October 2022, church types across the diocese are as follows:

Type 1	Key Mission Church	21
Type 2	Local Mission Church	109
Type 3	Community Church	282
Type 4	Festival Church	177
Type 5	Church exploring closure	26



Recommendation 4 and 5: Ministry

Some churches self-identified from a sense of worry about the future, some from an urgent desire to do more. Some set themselves huge tasks and expectations; some tried to make sense of how to serve their existing congregations in the new context. All recognised that categorisation is both aspirational and flexible. The option to recategorise is available on the website and will continue to be so, with several churches changing their type over the last months. In the coming months, we expect more changes in the typing as churches reflect carefully on their specific role within the developing LMPs. Churches will need to be resourced and released into their identified type within their LMP.

Resources and analysis can be found at www.lincoln.anglican.org/churchtypes, including the maps referenced in the Recommendation.

Local Mission Partnerships

Planning for LMPs, led by the Partnership Deans, Lay Co-Leads and Deanery Partnership Steering Groups (DPSGs), is taking the information on Church Types, together with information about available ministry (see Recommendation 5), and much local contextual information, to build collaborative, creative and sustainable new patterns of mission and ministry for an area as a family of churches and ministers. In the majority of cases, DPSGs have identified the likely shape of their LMPs through detailed discussions, local consultations and analysis of both need and resources. These conversations continue.

By February 2023, the aim is for every LMP to be agreed in principle within a Deanery Partnership, with a: set vision, set area, list of churches and their agreed types, list of ministers (lay and ordained), and list of church schools.

To see the impact from A Time to Change Together by 2025, we must move to these new ways of working as soon as possible. Agreement in principle of DPs and LMPs will go through Deanery Synods this winter, to a Joint Deanery Synod by January, and to AMPCs by February 2023 at the latest.

Recommendation 5: that every licensed minister will be invited to take part in a vocational conversation with a member of the Bishop's Staff or

with the Warden of Lay Ministry or Reader's Board colleagues during 2021, to support them in their ministry and to help them to discern their future vocational direction. It is important that we have the right people in the right places at the right time for them in their ministry and for the diocese as a whole. Bishop's Staff members will also be offered parallel vocational conversations.



The installation of the Archdeacon of Stow and Lindsey

Commitment 5: is that ministerial wellbeing is at the heart of these Recommendations. The Bishop and his staff will commit to the pastoral care and supportive development of the clergy and Readers of the diocese, mindful, also, of the contribution of retired clergy and of all other ministers, lay and ordained, and seeking to extend these conversations to them also in 2022 and beyond. In-service training will be provided, according to discerned and agreed need, by a newly founded College of St Hugh, and by external providers where necessary. Everyone should have an opportunity to consider their future role as part of the Lincoln diocesan family. We will also commit to discerning and supporting ministers whose gifts may be helpful to the wider life of the diocese in developing these additional vocations.

Nov 2022 update: All 224 licensed clergy and Readers were invited to take part in a Vocational Conversation last winter, as a space to reflect on how they are being called to exercise their ministry now and into the future. 86% of stipendiary ministers, and 78% of all invited ministers, took part in these conversations. Through the Vocational Conversation process, in a framework of scripture and prayer, and with a real focus on wellbeing, we sought to discover what our licensed clergy and Readers think and feel in respect to A Time to

Recommendation 5 and 6: Ministry

Change Together, how they believe it may impact their vocation and ministry, about their challenges and doubts, of where they see opportunity, or the possibility of reshaping their call, sharing their skills and gifts in different ways, and working in partnership more fruitfully. These conversations were held across 9 locations and facilitated by 13 people: members of the bishop's staff for clergy and the Reader's board for Readers.

The Vocational Conversations for clergy and readers with Permission to Officiate (PTO) will take place within and alongside the setting up of LMPs over the coming months. Whoever is locally responsible for setting up each LMP (in practice, often the current Rural Dean), will invite all PTO colleagues to a meeting at which one of the bishops or archdeacons will be present. The aim of this meeting is to share vision, answer questions and listen to issues. It will provide an opportunity, should a PTO colleague so desire, to have a short 1:1 conversation with a member of the Bishop's Staff during the meeting, or to arrange a future time for a longer conversation. After this, the next step will be for each retired minister's Working Agreement to be drawn up or amended with the relevant priest or priests within the LMP, taking into account the local needs of the particular LMP. This conversation will provide a space in which the more vocational questions can also be addressed and explored.

Recommendation 6: that the Deanery Partnership is to be a facilitating framework, not, in the first instance, a legal structure. Most Partnerships will draw on a number of existing Deaneries, thereby closely imitating the relevant local authority area. This minimises the requirement for lengthy reorganisation and works well within the existing archdeaconry structure. DPs will be able to offer wisdom, guidance and leadership as LMPs are established. They will also have major roles in shaping deployment patterns.

Commitment 6: is that as we work together collaboratively, in LMPs, DPs and as a Diocese, we will grow in mutual support and in shared mission and ministry, recognising the need to shoulder each other's burdens, to support signs of growth and to tend the needy. The intention is for every LMP to be served by a number of stipendiary clergy, who will work collaboratively with each other and with licensed lay ministers, volunteer ministers and other leaders, and for every DP to receive operating and administrative support, in order to release ministers for mission and pastoral care. The commitment is always to work together collaboratively: ministry partnership first, structural change, where necessary, afterwards, with deep respect for the local.

Nov 2022 update: Led by Partnership Deans, Lay Co-Leads and the Deanery Partnership Steering Groups, Deanery Partnerships are formed and functioning, with all boundary issues now resolved such that every parish is a member of a single DP. DPs are not legal structures, though their formation as facilitating frameworks will be described and taken note of by Deanery Synods and AMPCs by February. It is envisioned that Joint Deanery Synods will provide a meeting forum for the DP going forward.

Increasingly, the role of local support for LMP planning will come from the Partnership Deans and Lay Co-Leads who also now chair the DPSGs. 17 out of 18 of these new DP leadership posts have been appointed and we continue recruitment for the final Lay Co-Lead vacancy. In the majority of cases, DPs have identified the likely shape of their LMPs.

The pattern of ministry provision for an LMP within a DP will be informed by: local need, churches and their types, available ministers (including Authorised Lay Ministers, Readers, Self-Supporting Ministers, stipendiary ministers and those with PTO), and the number of stipendiary posts affordable through covenant pledges and LInC funding by 2025.



Recommendation 6 and 7: Ministry

LMPs are asked to consider how to use the resources available in the most creative way possible to serve their local communities together, drawing upon the vocations of individual churches and ministers and thinking beyond existing boundaries to respond to the needs of the whole area. Work has begun on this across all DPs, and some proposals show evidence of some really creative and new thinking. For some DPs however, while the shape of the LMPs is becoming clearer, how ministry within these LMPs will most effectively work is not yet worked out. We cannot pile more work on individual ministers, creating even larger multi-parish benefices for a single priest. We must think creatively about how best to use all the resources available. More central support is needed to guide the discussions and decisions. Creative planning for collaborative ministry within LMPs will be a key element of three archdeaconry A Time to Change Together Vision Days with Bishop's Charge this Winter.

DP administration support plans are in development with considerations relating to employment law, necessary support, a structure for new staff, and ensuring flexibility of role as no two DPs needs will be identical. An equivalent of 9 x 0.5 FTE posts has been put aside in the 2023 budget. The intention is for flexible grant-based funding to be made available for DPs to direct what administrative support they will need for their specific context, within a supportive structure provided by the parish support office. The process for DPs accessing this funding is being set up through the autumn, with the intention that access to the funding will be possible before the end of the year.

Recommendation 7: that the number and location of stipendiary ministers in each DP and LMP is discerned during 2021 and 2022 through a series of conversations beginning in parishes and benefices and taking into account church type, parish share payment history, local circumstances (including the impact of Covid-19), current deployment patterns and what a fair distribution of stipends across the Diocese and DPs according to population and income deprivation might be.

The following rules will govern these conversations:



St Peter's Woodhall Spa Pancake Races 2022

- LMPs are to embody collaboration, including between incumbents and between clergy and lay ministers, to promote ministerial wellbeing and to unlock synergy possible through shared planning and awareness of gifts, charisms and experience.
- In the vast majority of cases, each LMP should aim to have at least 3 stipendiary posts and 1 Local Mission Church.
- Each LMP should be focusing rigorously on growth prospects and on what is necessary to strengthen the witness of its part of the diocesan family of churches.

Commitment 7: is that the process of organising ministry embodies the mutuality that we seek to build across the diocese as a whole. It is to be a conversational and relational process, with different parts of the diocesan family covenanting together with each other. Should disputes occur, these should be resolved through negotiation and mediation.

Nov 2022 update: Within DPSGs, Deanery Synods, Chapters and PCCs there has been much discussion regarding the number of affordable stipends at diocesan, DP and LMP level, and how and where these might be best deployed. The aim is to agree in 2023 an overall number of stipends to commit to for 2025. This commitment will take as its basis the agreed plans for LMPs, which themselves will go through Deanery Synods and AMPCs. The stipendiary ministry proposed within an LMP will need to be afforded through local covenant giving and Lowest Income Communities (LInC) funding. As covenant pledges are made, assessed and added to the LInC Funding received by an area, the picture of available stipendiary ministry will therefore become clearer. Thanks to the parishes that have pledged so far, we have confidence to budget 100 stipendiary posts for 2023. As covenant giving and pledges for 2023-5 come in, we will continue to review the number of budgeted stipends to ensure a sustainable pattern of ministry for all.

Recommendation 8-10: Covenant and Generous Living

Recommendation 8: that all Christians, as part of their personal discipleship, are called to give generously to the mission of God, expressed in giving that enables the work of the local church, the diocesan family and the world-wide Body of Christ. This discipleship giving means that the current formula-based system of parish share allocation will be replaced with an approach that involves Covenant Giving.

Commitment 8: is that in establishing a transparent relationship between money committed by the church at its most local and beneficed stipends underwritten, the Lincoln Diocesan Board of Finance will seek to fund all its other activities (which continue to be refined and refocused as part of the RSC process) through use of historic assets or other income sources. In doing this, the Board will also aim to fund the training of curates without



South Lawres and Barlings Curate & Incumbent, Priesting July 2022

drawing on use of parish share, thereby ensuring a future supply of ministers to the diocese without direct cost to the parishes. This LDTBF commitment enables the request to parishes and LMPs to be set at present at £55,000 per clergy person per year.

Recommendation 9: that a team of Covenant Pastors is trained and commissioned, to begin working with parishes, benefices and LMPs from April 2021, headed by a Covenant Lead, and supported by LDTBF staff. The main focus of their role will be to build a relationship of support with the parishes and to help them discern how they can continue and grow a discipleship of generosity within their own parish as well as supporting other parishes in need.

Commitment 9: is to our unity in Christ: 'For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.' (1 Cor. 12.12). The Covenant Pastors will help parishes own and express their future relationship with the rest of the Diocese within a faith-filled mutuality of flourishing and growth. They will help to build the new diocesan culture of mutual relationship, accountability and support.

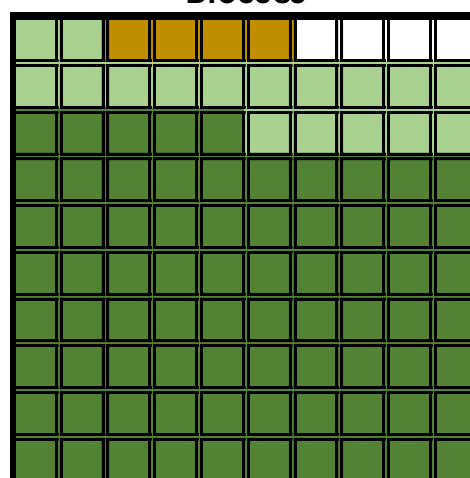
Recommendation 10: that pledges made under the Covenant Scheme, while not 'legally enforceable', must be entered into on the basis of genuine and challenging commitment to sacrificial giving in support of ministry, and be supported by action to ensure their viability.

Commitment 10: is to move away from an understanding of parish share almost as a kind of taxation, understanding of parish share as a stewardship response to God's generosity to us all, and one that enables our life to be enriched through the work of stipendiary ministers, as they themselves seek to equip all of God's people for the work of ministry.

Nov 2022 update: Based on the overlap between the current Recommendations 8-10 and their deliverables, we report against these recommendations together.

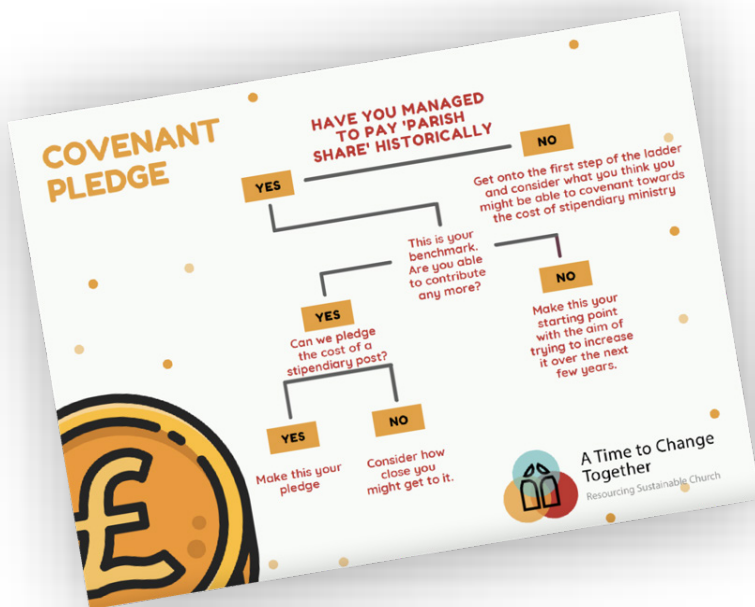
The Covenant Scheme was approved by Synod in November 2020, ahead of the Time to Change Together main report, allowing for a team of 41 trained Covenant Pastors to begin work in 2021. Excellent progress has been made, with 93% of parish visits complete, and 75% of parishes having made pledges towards the cost of stipendiary ministry within the diocese. This includes 7% that made no parish share payment in 2021, and the rest averaging an 8.9% increase over their 2021 payments.

Covenant Scheme Progress Diocese



Parish Packs	96.8%
Pre-Meetings	97.0%
Parish Meetings	92.5%
Parish Pledges	75.2%

Recommendation 8-10: Covenant and Generous Living



Within the pledges received we have seen godly ambition and generosity alongside a realism that reflects the challenges we face at the current time due to the ongoing effects of the COVID pandemic, the developing cost-of living crisis and increased costs of energy. We know this is a challenging time for many and work is in progress to provide advice and support to parishes where possible. Information about this will be made available as soon as possible. However, whilst this is a challenging time, the current crisis is also a time where the church can step up to support the communities we are called to serve and care for.

We would like to thank all those who have made their pledges so far and our 41 Covenant Pastors who have guided parishes through this process. As of October 2022, covenant giving has increased by £200,000 over October 2021. From the covenant pledges received so far and allocated LInC funding, we have confidence to budget for 100 stipendiary posts for 2023 as we continue on our trajectory to financial sustainability. In order for us to develop a more concrete estimate of posts for 2024 2025, and to set the budget for the next few years, we encourage and ask all those who have not yet made their pledges for 2022 - 2025 to do so by the 30th November, contacting Generous Living Advisor Hugo - Hugo.Cobham@lincoln.anglican.org – with any questions.

To continue to grow and flourish together, a challenge to all parishes over the coming years will

not simply be to sustain these first pledges, but to continue growing these commitments as we become an increasingly generous church, so that all LMPs can meet their ministry needs and ambitions, even when a component of that is funded by Lowest Income Community support or an agreed subsidy from the wider diocese.

Earlier this year we were successful in our bid to national church to receive funding for 5 years of a second Generous Living Advisor post for which recruitment is underway. The Generous Living Lead and Advisors will oversee and support the implementation of a Generous Living Strategy in parishes, including appointment of a team of 9 Generous Living Enablers, one for each DP.

It has been recognised that the role of Covenant Pastors and Generous Living Enablers are necessarily different. The Generous Living Enablers will provide local support to encourage giving practice and a culture of generosity.

Achieving a relationship of mutual responsibility and generosity within and between parishes, benefices, LMPs, DPs and the diocese (original Deliverable 8.3) will be the second stage of roll-out for the covenant scheme, supported by Partnership Deans and Lay Co-Leads as partnership working, thinking and belonging, becomes increasingly part of diocesan culture. Indeed, pledges will, in time, move from parish to LMP-level.

Learning from other dioceses, there will need to be continued review of pledges over the years, and work with parishes and LMPs to maintain and grow their commitment to and ability to fulfil their pledges. An outline process for this has been set out within the developing overall strategy for Covenant and Generous Living, whereby every LMP will receive a meeting about generosity, giving and pledges every two years.



St Wulfram's Grantham Choir at Westminster Abbey, July 2022

Recommendation 11-13: LMP Finances

Recommendation 11: that Lowest Income Community Funding (LInC), which is provided currently by the Church Commissioners, be allocated in the form of notional grants to LMPs to supplement their total giving under the Covenant Scheme towards the cost of the ministry they receive. The support is to be utilised within an LMP to support ministry to the most deprived sections of the community. LMPs will receive this support on the basis of parish populations and the level of income deprivation in their parishes in excess of the diocese's population-weighted mean. Though identified at parish level, the notional grants to support ministry costs will be pooled at the LMP level so that they can be used to best effect.

Commitment 11: is to direct resources to the communities that are most in need of support, thereby fulfilling the gospel imperative to care for our neighbour in need, while also encouraging the most challenged of communities to contribute with dignity to the shared life of the body as a whole.

Recommendation 12: that the long-term viability of each LMP, with respect to stipendiary ministry, will best be ensured by mutual care and financial support between parishes, congregations and benefices. Should a parish be unable to honour its covenanted pledge, then it is to be expected that the LMP's other parishes would both collaborate to make good the shortfall and support the under-paying parish, building on our shared understanding that we all belong as members of the diocesan family.

Commitment 12: is to support each other financially, as was the example of the New Testament church in the particular circumstances that they were facing at that time: 'I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. As it is written "The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little."' (2 Cor.8.13-15)

Recommendation 13: that any shortfall in payment from an LMP of the total sum pledged by its parishes in one year will be rolled through for payment

in the following year. If the shortfall continues to accumulate for three successive years, then the viability of the LMP and its constituent parishes will be subject to prayerful review.

Commitment 13: is not to allow parishes, benefices and LMPs to struggle without support. Covenant Scheme pledges must be realistic, circumstances do change, and ministerial provision can be amended also. Debt should not accrue without the possibility of its cancellation (in Scriptural terms 'jubilee'), but every effort must be made by every part of the diocesan family to steward its financial resources well.

Nov 2022 update: Recommendations 11-13 are all linked by the theme of LMP finances and so we report against them together here. All commitments and deliverables stand, but work has not begun for Recommendations 12 and 13 as these have a later target-date and will follow the set-up of LMPs.

For Recommendation 11, a clear policy and methodology is in place for the local distribution of Lowest Income Communities (LInC) Funding within LMPs. This has been part of all DPSG discussions and Covenant Pastor conversations with parishes, meaning that churches fully understand the basis of how LInC funding will be awarded and that this information has informed ministry planning within LMPs.

Allocating LInC funding in this strategic way will allow us to better monitor and evaluate its impact over the coming years. Recommendations 11-13 reflect the principle that LMPs must be financially self-sustaining, that is, by 2025 they must be able to afford the ministry they receive, funded by covenant giving and LInC funding.



St Mark's, Grimsby

Recommendation 14 and 15: Diocesan Finance

Recommendation 14: that the diocesan finance, property, buildings, governance, safeguarding and administrative functions that are located in Diocesan Office should be refocused as a Parish Support Service and that central costs be reduced as far as possible to deliver statutory and strategically essential requirements while ensuring quality service to the parishes. That consideration given to possible geographical dispersal of these functions within the diocese. That a College of St Hugh be established to act as a diocesan training, formation and resourcing organisation for mission and ministry.

Commitment 14: is that diocesan services will offer advice, support, training and administration that will help to lift burdens from clergy, lay ministers, church wardens and other parish officers, and that they will do this by drawing primarily on income from the diocese's asset base. Property owned by the diocese will be maintained, but to a 'moderate' level, with any capital works strictly controlled.

Nov 2022 update A Time to Change Together has led to radical changes to the central operation of the diocese. The move to a new, more streamlined team structure and operation for the parish support office is now complete, supporting predicted savings in central costs of 20% for 2022 compared to 2019. Within the new structure, full time equivalent posts have reduced from 45 to a budgeted 34 by 2023. We would like to thank those members of staff who are no longer working for the diocese for their many years of service. The new structure and role descriptions for the team have been designed to best support A Time to Change Together, with some strategic new support coming alongside ongoing essential statutory duties.

A conditional offer has been accepted on Edward King House, the current diocesan office. The prospective purchasers are working on planning and feasibility before the sale can be confirmed. Options for smaller, lower cost premises with better environmental performance are being actively explored, with the aim to move to new flexible office space in 2023 or 2024.

While cost saving measures have been successful, we are not on track to achieve the total level of cost savings originally projected for 2023, due to a range of unforeseen factors that have increased costs. At present, there is no room to further cut central capacity while providing the necessary services to parishes. This will impact the overall deficit and the time it takes for us as a diocese to become financially sustainable as a whole, though together we continue on this journey to sustainability and are encouraged by the trajectory which sees the deficit substantially reducing annually.

Recommendation 15: to steward our assets so that the return on investments continues to contribute substantially to our annual budget, thereby releasing parishes, benefices and LMPs/DPs to focus on the task of a stewardship response to their local costs and to the parish share, from which the stipendiary ministry of the diocese is supported. In doing this, to rebalance our asset portfolio taking into account our climate change commitments, our responsibility as a long-term landlord, and our changing requirements for clergy housing.

Commitment 15: is to be the best possible stewards of the generosity of the past, using these resources missionally to support the needs of the church today and tomorrow, and to maintain our asset base at a level that will enable us to do this into the future.

Nov 2022 update: During 2021 we disposed of 27 houses, generating £7.7m. We reinvested £6.4m in investments on the stock market to generate additional investment income. This year, further disposals of 12 houses have taken place, generating £3.7m. A further 7 houses are in the process of being sold. Of the £3.7m, £1.5m has been re-invested with the remaining balance being held as cash. The investment portfolio has also been reviewed, with some assets moved to new fund managers to improve the return.



New Recommendation 16: Responsiveness

Recommendation 16: Whilst the expectation that the programme of change envisaged by A Time to Change Together would be shaped by local and contextual prayer, experience and planning, and evolve over time, no specific recommendation to that effect was contained in the paper agreed by Synod. An understanding of this commitment to be responsive has been clear in a number of developments and changes along the way – not a weakness of the proposals but a strength of the methodology. Every aspect of the A Time to Change Together work so far, and clearly now for the coming years, embodies a commitment to guide, enable and resource the shaping of church life and ministry centrally, whilst allowing the actual shape, mission, and life to be locally discerned and owned. Building local partnerships, recognising the resources and vocations of individual church communities, understanding the potential and preferences of all ministers have been an untypical and much-admired characteristic of this diocese's response to the need for change. How our new families of churches and communities and ministers work together, respond to missional opportunities, learn how best to proclaim the Good News, deepen discipleship, encourage generosity, serve the wider community and transform lives, needs to be similarly locally shaped. One size definitely does not fit all.

The recommendation is that the culture of the diocese must embody a commitment to locally and contextually shaped church life and ministry, demonstrated in all decision-making and engagement at local, partnership, archdeaconry and diocesan level, informed by a listening and sharing style, and by specific programmes, to allow opinions, ideas and needs to be heard and progress objectively monitored to fine-tune ongoing work.

Commitment 16:

As far as is affordable, practical and legal, decisions about the life of the local church, ministry, resources and external support will be made locally or locally influenced. The commitment to consultation will be maintained and extended. The listening approach of Church Types, Vocational Conversations and Covenant Pastors which have guided design will also guide implementation and adjustment in future years.

A programme of monitoring and evaluation will allow future steps to be taken with clear and, as far as possible, objective understanding of the effectiveness of work to date and the impact of change on local churches, ministers, churchgoers and communities.

Nov 2022 update:

More of the shaping of future collaboration in mission communities, ministry and governance is being placed in the hands of local A Time to Change Together leadership, lay representatives and ministers. The provisional nature of our collaboration – no pastoral reorganisation or changes in legal structures – will not be forever. A pattern of local discernment and strategic or missional planning will be put in place and resourced, to give purpose and direction to the new mission communities and ministry teams – this needs to be working during 2023. It may allow communities to make more lasting or structural changes by 2025 if they so wish.

A programme of monitoring and evaluation, with published results and materials for local informed decision-making, is being rolled out. Early each year this will allow demonstration of performance against targets for the previous calendar year. Data is already collected and analysed and it will be possible to create a simple data structure allowing year-on-year performance covering implementation of A Time to Change Together steps, covenanting, deployment of all types of ministry, church type development, missional objectives. In a wholly new strand, there will be a programme to understand the softer outputs of the programme, capturing the local response to the changes, theological understanding of the process, doubts and fears, excitement and empowerment, changes in the culture of belonging, collaboration, generosity, missional zeal and well-being. This will be done through questionnaires, qualitative workshops, and open invitations to share experience and ideas.



St Guthlac's, Market Deeping

New Recommendation 17: Theology

Recommendation 17: The basis of the original report and all the good work that has followed was and continues to be rooted and grounded in a commitment to seeking to deliver God's mission for God's world, with us as a diocese walking together with the Lord Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. However, in the original report there was no overtly theological recommendation, and no explicit expression of the missional or distinctively faith-based nature of our objectives or our methodology.

The new recommendation is therefore that the reshaping of our diocesan effort should be more clearly stated as a desire to make the church in Greater Lincolnshire, at every level, a better example of the Body of Christ, built on and encouraging individuals living their lives as fuller embodiments of the model given by Jesus himself, as an institution shaped for mutual encouragement, closer fellowship with the Lord and better service of the wider community by the examples provided in Holy Scripture and the best of 2000 years of experience.

It is good for our church to make better use of resources, to be more effective and more efficient, to be more contextually responsive, to be more appealing and all the things that A Time to Change Together aims to encourage. But if we forget that all we do is for God's glory and so that more people might have a deeper knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, all our enterprise is in vain. The "Together" in A Time to Change Together of course means loving and collaborating with each other, but it also, mostly, means loving and collaborating with Jesus Christ.

Commitment 17: Every step of the way in the shaping and implementation of A Time to Change Together, and every aspect of our work as churches, worshipping communities, ministers and managers, will be taken in the knowledge we do it in the name of Jesus Christ who lived and died and rose for us and our salvation and gave us this church, that we are working on and in right now, to be his body in our world. Whilst we check our plans and our work against human tests – can we afford it? will people accept it? does it make best use of what we have? will it work? is it consistent with church rules? – we will also check them against the requirements that God has of us – is this modelled on Christ and the church he gave us? does it honour God and God's

hopes for God's creation? does it honour the expectation we should do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God? will people recognise the Kingdom and its values in what we are making?. The process of refinement of the proposals, implementation and the new life and belonging in the re-imagined church, will be shaped in prayer, theological awareness, and a desire to know and do God's will.



Nov 2022 update: The meetings at diocese and local level have been surrounded in prayer and much of the material used has been born out of and often shows signs of theological or scriptural reflection. Materials have been provided to support reflection and prayer as a context for decision making, such as the study booklets for churches discerning their vocation and type. The teaching and guidance, especially that from our bishops, has always and obviously begun and continued in prayer and understanding of our faith.

As we move into the implementation phase and begin to work together in new formations, seeking to understand and embody collaborative, missional, generous, creative and empowering Christian life and ministry, prayer and reflection will need to be the basis of all we do, and the belief that a rota is about a pattern of worshipping life, a shared belonging is a creation of the body of Christ, that a meeting is a gathering of the people of the kingdom to know how to serve the Lord, that a budget is an essay in using God's generosity as God would have it used, in love as God loves us.

We will encourage, expect and resource a richer life of prayer, reflection, scriptural understanding and testing against God's requirements in the years to come. Working with the College of St Hugh, we will develop liturgy, study materials, courses, guidance and examples to make the culture of prayerful and attentive sharing a norm of our life as a church. We expect guidance and example from our bishops in this, but recognise that the practice of beginning, continuing and ending all we do in prayer and theological awareness, is a general requirement and expectation for the church. And a gift.

Conclusion

Over the last 18 months we have made huge progress towards the Recommendations and Commitments of A Time to Change Together. From Vocational Conversations to Church Types, Deanery Partnerships to Covenant Pledges, central restructuring to rebalancing assets, we have achieved a great deal in many areas.

Most encouraging has been the consistent local engagement, conversations, consultation and discernment as we search for a better way to be church together. A Time to Change Together is for the local church. To become a flourishing Church, local churches must own the discernment and development of local plans. Agreeing these local plans is the primary focus of the coming months.

By February 2023, all DPs and LMPs will need to have been described and taken note of by Deanery Synods and AMPCs. This will involve the confirmation of available ministry, church types, and total available funding through covenant giving and LInC funding.

The extent of much of the work required for the effective implementation of A Time to Change Together has been greater and more demanding than first expected in the timetable set out in May 2021. We underestimated the timeframe for the thorough, local discernment and involvement that was required for parishes to identify church types,

make covenant pledges, agree boundaries of DPs and plan together creatively for LMPs. We also underestimated the work and capacity required to develop new training pathways and discipleship resources under the College of St Hugh while also running Lincoln School of Theology and continuing the ongoing work of the Ministry and Mission team. Even so, work is underway against every Recommendation and Commitment and the collaborative, iterative approach taken to discerning needs and planning accordingly, though longer, has allowed for increased local engagement, creativity and ownership.

A revised timeframe has been set against certain deliverables. Some deliverables themselves have been revised to better represent the outcomes that will best support us as a diocese in achieving the original 15 Recommendations and Commitments to become a flourishing church. To these, we have added 2 new Recommendations, responding to the observed needs over the last 18 months.

As we look ahead to 2023, we will continue this journey of change together, as a family of churches, as we seek the flourishing of God's church in Greater Lincolnshire, the sharing of the Good News of Christ with all our communities, and the transformation of lives across our diocese.

Priorities for the coming months:

- Creative planning for and consultation of LMPs, including Archdeaconry Vision Days for all ministers.
- Description and taking note of DPs and LMPs by Deanery Synods and AMPCs by February, confirming church types and available ministry for an area.
- Resourcing the growth agenda through the College of St Hugh, including the appointment of Mission Enablers and the offering of new training and discipleship programmes.
- Support for the submission of final covenant pledges.
- Local appointment of DP administrative support through DBF grant funding.

The Team

A Time to Change Together is led by the Acting Bishop of Lincoln. An Implementation Team supports the day-to-day work - contact details: www.lincoln.anglican.org/ttct-team.

The Venerable Aly Buxton – Operational Lead

Richard Crossland - Implementation Lead

Nigel Bacon – Monitoring and Evaluation Lead

Hugh Jones – Warden of the College of St Hugh

Simon Dean – Generous Living Lead

Alan Moses – Theological Reflector and Chaplain

Nicola Snelling – Programme Manager

Over the next year, implementation will become increasingly locally focused and driven, led more and more by the Partnership Deans and Lay Co-Leads.

