

# Deployment Group Report

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April 2020

“ Give us courage, rigour, imagination and generosity  
in order that your kingdom may come  
and your abundant life be known by all. Amen ”

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## Executive Summary

The Deployment Group was set the task by Bishop's Council of making general recommendations around deployment and devising a deployment strategy for the Diocese. This report proposes a way forward and calls for its initial work to be taken forward with detailed planning and implementation.

Against a background of constrained diocesan finances, high parochial stipendiary vacancies and pressures on clergy and laity, the report seeks to celebrate and enable the huge variety of ministries offered by God's people across the Diocese in living and telling the story of Jesus.

Taking account of the three discerned diocesan strategic priorities for action:

- placing mission and evangelism at the heart of all that we do
- aligning our (ministry) resources towards mission
- identifying, developing and releasing the gifts of all our people

the report makes 39 recommendations.

In taking forward a deployment strategy, decisions should be based on an holistic approach with consideration of employed and office holder posts, lay and ordained, paid and voluntary, full and part time. There needs to be a clear structure of responsibilities at deanery, archdeaconry and diocesan levels and also, guidelines for reviewing and realigning resources when a vacancy arises.

The heart of the report advocates a direction of travel for future ministry based on a focal ministry approach. Focal ministry may not be a title used explicitly but the approach is congruent with the understanding of the vocation of the Church of England to be a Christian presence in all communities.

With recognition that one size does not fit all, this approach will require a wholesale review of how people are deployed across Somerset. An appendix offers some initial thoughts in this area. It is proposed that this work is taken forward with some urgency and considered alongside Common Fund and DBF budget/planning work. In addition, Ministry for Mission will need to focus and align its work to provide support for deaneries, parishes and individuals in embracing and navigating change.

This report was completed just as the country entered lockdown due to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. The general principles behind this report will, we believe, remain valid but it is clear that one of the effects of the current crisis has been to generate some radical thinking as to how we do church. Church will be different when the current crisis comes to an end and there will need to be an assessment of what this means for deployment.

Financially the impact of coronavirus on a national, diocesan and parish level could be profound and may leave stark choices around deployment that were not envisaged at the time this report was compiled. The issue of viability for many sectors has been highlighted and church is no exception.

Future deployment decisions will need to be made in the light of all these factors, some of which were not apparent when the Deployment Group compiled this report. The current crisis has forced some stark choices but also some imaginative responses in mission and evangelism for living out the Gospel. The importance of locality, neighbourhood and community are even more evident in this time of crisis. A love of neighbour has in many places engendered a sort of focal ministry and this is something to be built upon as we seek to release God's people for God's mission across Somerset.

## **1 Introduction**

The Deployment Group met eight times from September 2019 to March 2020 with a brief from Bishop's Council to:

- a) consider how people can best be deployed and devise a deployment strategy (see section 5)
- b) make policy recommendations in specific areas relating to deployment, in pursuit of the Diocesan vision. (see Section 6)

The time frame was in order to inform and be informed by work on Common Fund so that respective areas of work could mutually feed into preparation for the 2021 budget. It was recognised that in such a short timescale there would not be a completed and agreed deployment strategy. It was hoped, having considered 'what is' and 'what might be', that the group could give consideration to 'what will be' and propose a direction of travel and make some specific policy recommendations aware that, as Bishop Peter said at the July Diocesan Synod, "... as we look to the future it is clear that the Church's ministry will continue to need to change and adapt if it is to be faithful in bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation."

## 2 Group Membership and Consultation

### Membership of the group comprised:

Helen Barnes	Lay Dean Chew Magna
Jane Chamberlain	Head of Ministry for Mission
Peter Evans	Assistant Diocesan Secretary
Jane Haslam	Clergy Chair of Diocesan Synod
Joy Hawes	Self Supporting Minister at St Michael and All Angels, Yeovil, formerly chaplain at the Blue School, Wells
Simon Hill	Archdeacon of Taunton (Chair of Group)
Mary Masters	Lay Chair of Diocesan Synod
Nick May	Diocesan Secretary
Charlie Peer	Head of Strategic Programme
Chris Stock	Reader in the Ham Hill Villages and Ivelchester Deanery Reader Warden

The group worked together on theology, principles, data and future patterns of ministry. It sought to learn from other dioceses and denominations as well as listening to voices around Bath and Wells. An article in November Connect encouraged anyone who wished to feed in comments to do so; Diocesan Synod members were invited to give input at the October Synod; area and lay deans have been asked to feedback from their deaneries; the group consulted with people representing the Flourishing Rural Church Group, the larger churches in the Diocese and the Magnificat parishes; an 'Away Day' for Ministry for Mission Team Leaders was used to look at shapes of future ministry, there were meetings with the Education Department<sup>1</sup>, Chaplaincy Adviser and various others and feedback came from Somerset Church leaders.

Previous diocesan reports were considered, and it was recognised that it would appear that we have sometimes been better at words than implementation. The last piece of work regarding deployment in 2012 appeared to move on little after its presentation to Bishop's Council and Diocesan Synod. This may have been due to the lack of an implementation plan and to changes in key implementation personnel.

- 1 It is recommended that Bishop's Council receives the report and authorises a Working Group and Programme Leader to oversee the planning and implementation of deployment work, in line with the approved recommendations. The Group should regularly report on progress to Bishop's Council.**

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<sup>1</sup> Discussions with the Diocesan Education team have highlighted how recent changes in education, including around Multi Academy Trusts, will give useful insights for future deployment planning.

The work of other dioceses was considered. No one model was seen to be THE answer. It was abundantly apparent that, depending on who was asked, the “success” or not of a Diocesan strategy on deployment is viewed very differently in a diocese, although there did appear to be a common finding on the importance of piloting new models of deployment.

- 2 It is recommended that the parishes, deaneries and archdeaconries are actively encouraged in the creation of reconfigured posts and that methods are in place to share good practice.**

### 3 Context

a) The report is written at a specific point in time and in a specific context which will inform the church of the future. The following observations capture our current context:

- Longer vacancies with some places needing several rounds of advertising before an appointment can be made.
- The difficulty of finding people to take on roles as church officers in some places.
- Concern for the upkeep of buildings.
- Pressures on the Common Fund notably (a) benefices in different contexts (b) a change in the ratio of supporting and supported parishes. In 2020 61.8% of churches are supported and 38.2% supporting. Previous figures are 2015 58% and 42% and 2013 53 % and 47%.
- It would appear that we may have a generous allocation of stipendiary clergy across the Diocese compared with other dioceses, where there have been substantial cuts in clergy numbers.<sup>2</sup>
- A significant number of churches with very small congregations where questions are being asked about viability.
- Greater appreciation of the role of the laity.
- Greater appreciation of chaplaincy.
- Greater appreciation of the place of pioneering and fresh expressions combined with a recognition that some deanery mission posts have not been as fruitful as may have been hoped.

b) The context of this piece of work is within the strategy of the Diocese: deployment should serve the diocesan vision that “In response to God’s immense love for us we seek to be God’s people living and telling the story of Jesus.” Deployment should be evaluated through the lens of the vision of the Diocese and its three strategic priorities:

Mission and evangelism is at heart of decisions  
Deployment aligns resources for mission  
Deployment serves to release the gifts of all people

Deployment should reflect other areas highlighted in the evolving strategy:

Commitment to Magnificat parishes  
Working for a flourishing rural church  
Development of church plants

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<sup>2</sup> One member of clergy moving to a similar diocese noted that he is moving from a benefice where there is one incumbent and an associate House for Duty post (5 churches, membership 105, common fund 2020 £52,820) to a benefice where there is simply a .6 post (4 churches, membership 101, common fund 2020 £54,845)



c) It is important that there is recognition of different contexts within the Diocese. The group was very aware of the warning for planners by the words 'culture eats strategy for breakfast'. The differences between rural and urban environments are well documented. The situation is far more nuanced than there being a simple divide.

Different understandings of church impact on views about deployment. For instance, the work of Alice Mann<sup>3</sup> highlights the need for resourcing of leadership in churches of different sizes citing Family Size (0-50), Pastoral Size (51-150), Program Size (151-400) and Corporate Size (401 – 1000). From another angle the work of David Walker<sup>4</sup> highlights that there are different ways of belonging to church through, for example, activities, events, people and places and the need for ministry to embrace the full 5 marks of mission.

The bringing together of representatives from rural churches, Magnificat parishes and larger churches helped in highlighting some of these differences. What came across was, in the larger churches, an emphasis on growing the specific church and potentially planting from it, in the Magnificat churches, an emphasis on linking to and partnering with the local community and in the rural churches, an emphasis on working with other churches in the deanery.

**3 It is recommended that across the Diocese and within deaneries people are helped to appreciate the way ministry is lived out in the different places and contexts of Somerset and that understanding is deepened and learning shared.**

Feedback from deaneries suggested a difference in attitude between those who would like to have responsibility for their local deployment questions and those who believed that it should not be their responsibility.

Decisions on how stipendiary clergy are deployed in a way that sets mission and evangelism at the heart of all we do cannot be made in a way that keeps everyone happy. Nearly every constituency would appear to want more resources, or at least stay the same. It is important that it is recognised that deployment is about more than the placing of stipendiary clergy. It is also important that opportunities are taken to build up understanding and respect between very different contexts and recognise that within the variety of the county we are one body with different giftings.

It is clear that one size will not fit all, it would only fit some. A recognition of difference and mutual respect is important and within our Anglican ecclesiology it should be possible to resource different needs in different ways.

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<sup>3</sup> Alice Mann *Raising the Roof - The Pastoral To Program Size Transition*

<sup>4</sup> David Walker *God's Belongers*

## 4 Theology

The church does not exist for itself but to serve the world. As a diocese we are committed to placing mission and evangelism at the heart of all we do. How can deployment support this?

Our work is based predominantly on two theological principles: firstly that God constantly calls us from where we are to a new place or state of being, and secondly that we are the Body of Christ by which we understand that God calls everybody -ordained and lay- to a wide range of complementary ministries.

### **God calls us to new things**

In considering deployment, there is a temptation to focus on 'who gets what' in terms of stipendiary ministry. As this report is being written in this season of Lent, we remember that this temptation could blind us to the vision that God is giving us at this time. The reality is that, almost without exception, every parish and benefice wants 'more stipendiary ministry' or 'more resources' and not to have any reduction in allocation. This is happening in a time when people and parishes feel ever more constrained by the pressures of keeping the show on the road and reaching out in mission. Perhaps a more enlivening and creative approach to these pressures might be for us to ask in relation to deployment 'What is God saying to us about the shape of future ministry in this place through the pressures and constraints that we are experiencing?' We know from the Bible that God speaks through circumstances that can sometimes feel scary. He called the Israelites out of enslavement to a new freedom in a new land (and they struggled and grumbled along the way!), Jesus called his disciples out of their comfortable, routine lives on an unknown journey that brought them life in all its fullness, and in the crucible of the early church new communities and ways of being were forged that no one could have imagined when they first heard of Jesus. Consistently God calls his people out to a new place, new life, new opportunities 'See, I am doing a new thing, do you not perceive it?' (Isaiah 43.19 NIV). If we are not bold and courageous in our listening to God and discerning God's vision for our future, then we risk missing out on the new life that God calls us into.

### **We are the Body of Christ**

The church is encouraged to both rediscover and reimagine what ministries can look like. *Setting God's People Free*<sup>5</sup> emphasises the place of the laity, the ministry of all the baptised. It is crucial that alongside laity, including readers, being able to use their gifts and fulfil their calling, that bishops, priests and deacons are also encouraged to be set free to pursue their respective callings.

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<sup>5</sup> Initiative across the Church of England to enable the whole people of God to live out the Good News of Jesus confidently in all of life, Sunday to Saturday, following report to General Synod in 2017

In this respect following Gibson and Griffin<sup>6</sup>, we believe that it is vital:

...to revitalise our understanding of ordained ministry. To gently tug at the functional and instrumentalist understandings which come to dominate when clergy are faced with the endless administrative and executive tasks of diocesan or parish leadership. To re-narrate our understanding of these three vocations, which each participate in the building up of the whole body as the three *personae* of the Trinity reveal to us God's essence.<sup>7</sup>

Such a revitalisation in the theology of ordained ministry (and, by implication, lay ministry) may lead us to ask searching (and theologically shaped) questions about the ways in which God's people are called, asked by the church, to minister.

Turning to lay ministry we see the strides that have been made in affirming lay ministries. There has been over 150 years of reader ministry but only significantly in recent decades have opportunities sprung up for other lay ministries. New possibilities in training and new initiatives such as the Diocesan emphasis on Everyday Faith have, at their heart, the aim of Setting God's People Free, of enabling the whole people of God to live out the Good News of Jesus confidently. All God's people are called and baptism, with its call to "shine as a light in the world", lies at the heart of deployment.

The church is called to be a worshipping community and a sign to the world with a mandate to be a sign through action and word bearing witness to God's saving love. In other words, its concern is to live and tell the story and its structure and use of resources should be in line with that aspiration.

The image of the Body of Christ and recognising different gifts and callings to be used in the service of God, church and community, offers a challenge to Christians and the church: in a spirit of faith and trust, how can I use my gifts and time for God's kingdom?

The rediscovery in recent theology of the richness of a trinitarian model, in which there is a complementary and dynamic relationship between the persons of the Trinity, calls us in turn to inform our understanding of ministry within this fundamentally complementary paradigm. Here, all are called not simply to be saints – but to also be servants. Where varied vocations are affirmed, and enabled and where all the baptised are drawn by the love of God to respond with their own offering to God in church, work and community, then Christian communities, large or small, will find a deep and abiding confidence and by the grace of God, be transformed and renewed and become a renewing and transforming presence themselves.

**4 It is recommended that the aspiration that all are set free and equipped to live out their distinctive vocation is central to deployment decisions. In this way bishops can be bishops, priests can be priests, deacons can be deacons, readers can be**

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<sup>6</sup> Paper written by Tim Gibson and Nick Griffin to inform the Deployment Group

<sup>7</sup> Gibson and Griffin

**readers, administrators can be administrators, churchwardens can be churchwardens, lay worship assistants can be lay worship assistants, pioneers can be pioneers etc... - that all God's people can be set free and equipped to live out their distinctive callings.**

## 5 Ethos, Values and Principles

Decisions made in respect of deployment are as part of the Church of England and Anglican Communion and informed by its ecclesiology. The distinctive nature of the Church of England is valued, and deployment serves the aim of a Christian presence in every community.

Deployment decisions should be made in the light of the diocesan strategy (see 3b) and recognise the variety of contexts across Somerset (see 3c). Posts should be considered in the light of the relevant deanery plan.

General Principles for deployment decisions

1. Mutuality of ordained and lay undergirds all deployment. Lay and ordained vocations may be lived out in a variety of ways.
  2. Different needs and responses in different contexts should be recognised. Churches of different membership sizes require different types of leadership and inherited church, fresh expressions, chaplaincy and pioneering should all be valued.
  3. The principle of 'No one alone' for both clergy and laity is essential. Mutual care and support in leadership is important and the building and sustaining of teams is imperative.
  4. Each ministerial post should be one where it is possible to 'serve with joy'.
  5. There is a commitment to learn from experimentation and put this learning into practice. The fear of failure should not inhibit experimentation.
  6. Deployment decisions will contain an element of being responsive and flexible and are not excessively constrained by guidelines.
  7. Support will be provided to help people inhabit new focused roles and there is attentiveness to safeguarding. There will be help with change management.
- 5 It is recommended that deployment decisions at all levels are made in the light of these principles.**

## 6 A Diocesan Strategy

At its heart we believe that the key to deployment is having the right people (who are appropriately trained and supported) in the right places (reflecting the needs of different contexts) doing the right thing (living out their callings in the service of the Gospel and the world living and telling the story).

The deployment strategy here responds to the different contexts within the Diocese, draws upon the theology of this paper, is true to the ethos, values and principles above and endeavours to ensure that the right people are in the right place now and into the future.

The strategy is not limited to where stipendiary clergy are placed. It seeks to ensure a Christian presence in line with Anglican ecclesiology and to ensure that every person is equipped for the ministry and mission to which God is calling them, regardless of whether they are lay, ordained, paid, voluntary part time or full time<sup>8</sup>.

**6 It is recommended that deployment decisions are based on an holistic consideration of and value for the full range of employed and office holder posts, lay and ordained, paid and voluntary and full time and part time.**

Building on the work of Ministry for Mission<sup>9</sup> we propose a strategic model that is based on the principles of focal ministry. Focal ministry is a role and not an ecclesial status and can be undertaken by somebody suitable whatever their ecclesiastical designation. Suitable role descriptions, training and accountability are necessary and there is good practice that can be drawn on in these areas from other dioceses.

Many roles may well have different public titles, but strategic diocesan thinking would be on the basis of posts being around a focal structure with implicit or explicit focal ministers or preferably focal teams.

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<sup>8</sup> Speaking of the Diocese having 179 clergy and seeing that number in isolation does not do justice to the situation for a number of reasons. It does not include House for Duty or roles where a "clergy" parish post is used for other purposes e.g. chaplain, pioneer posts, DBF employed posts in parishes and deaneries or any non-paid roles such as readers.

<sup>9</sup> Ministry for Mission was asked to look at what ministry might look like in 5 years and in 25 years. Its work forms the background to the way forward proposed here. In looking at what a Christian presence in every community might look like in 25 years, MfM highlighted seven characteristics (some already present to differing degrees) : Relational; Contextual; Joyous; Fluid; Mobile; Diverse; Democratic. Planning in the light of this, MfM looked at what things might look like in 5 years and how to move there, basing its work on a model of focal ministry.

Two types of focal ministry (which may come in different shapes and sizes) are identified:

a) **Focal Ministers (FM):**

A visible presence in a community (which could be a church, school, village, chaplaincy, university, new housing....).

- A member of the local church, willing to be seen as a person of faith. They could be a churchwarden, farmer, hairdresser, reader, pioneer, vicar/house for duty priest, etc (or a combination of these or other roles).

b) **Co-ordinating Focal Minister (CFM):**

- Would be all of the above for one community and would oversee and support a group of focal ministers.
- Have a key oversight role. In traditional terms oversight may be as an area dean or team rector or incumbent of a large benefice or a church with a large congregation overseeing an associate and other staff.
- Would offer a particular, defined skill or gift (the plus ministry) to the wider deanery – e.g. area dean, youth/children’s ministry, funeral ministry, lay training, pioneer supervisor, discipleship, buildings, admin....whatever is discerned and needed by the deanery and described in the deanery plan.

In a single parish larger church, it is envisioned that the incumbent would be the CFM and the various ministries that they oversee within the church and community would be the focal ministries. In a larger church there is the scope for the incumbent to be a co-ordinating focal minister and an associate priest with a defined role to be a focal minister. Such a model could be scaled for large, small, urban and rural churches. It would allow chaplaincy work to be far more integrated and where need is recognised, for focal ministry to embrace a specific ministry, including work that may not be geographically based.

The model recognises that communities come in different shapes and sizes and therefore FMs will be varied and reflect this. It starts with community and identifying focal minister(s) from the community(ies). The role itself may be carried out in different ways. One diocese has the following understanding of the post: being present and contributing to main church services and events; ensuring pastoral care; praying for the church; helping each church member grow as a Christian disciple; leading the mission of the local church; helping develop mission and strategy; encouraging the church to work with other churches.<sup>10</sup>

Whilst this report speaks of a focal minister, it is envisaged that there will be places where there are sufficient people to have a focal ministry team. Within each group of focal ministries, the qualities, skills and capacities of spiritual leadership, people management and administration are essential to enable the model to function. This model moves away from the assumption that one person has the capacity and skills to offer all three. The co-ordinating elements of co-ordinating focal minister specialisms need to be complementary

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<sup>10</sup> St David’s cited by Jackson p26. Various dioceses have Focal Minister Role Descriptions

across the deanery over time and discerned and regularly reviewed by the DMPG – e.g. area deanship, lay development, youth ministry, funeral ministry, administration, people management, buildings expertise.... Area deans are one form of co-ordinating focal minister.

This model encourages the sharing of resources and assumes a realigning of resources e.g. readers (where they are not focal ministers) and administrators could be deployable across deaneries. It could liberate people to respond to God's immense love for us by enabling them to discern and respond to God's call and vision in a particular context. It celebrates and releases the diversity of gifting among God's people and removes the overwhelming burdens of multi-parish ministry. The current incumbency model may need to be deconstructed in order to be reconstructed.

The work of the Deployment Group has been to be in line with the diocesan vision of placing mission and evangelism at the heart of all we do. This is a way of being church that focusses on communities and should enable church leaders to have roles that reflect their calling and gifts, rather than overburden them with tasks that were not necessarily part of their calling. Evidence from where it has been tried is of church growth and it is in this spirit that this report is offered. The group echoes the words of Bob Jackson, one of the leading advocates of focal ministry:

“We should look at focal ministry not as a lower cost way of limping on and making do as the supply of stipendiaries and money shrinks, but as part of a better church-growth strategy”<sup>11</sup>

### **How could we take the first steps in this direction?**

One of the attractions of the model is that various types and models are possible but at the centre is the irreducible core of local leaders being entrusted with the responsibility of leading one church or having responsibility for one area of ministry.

The model requires the following move:

**From:** An expectation of one vicar – one benefice.  
**Towards:** One focal minister to one community (eg school/town centre/village/leisure centre/new housing estate/church or a nongeographic community) with appropriate licensing and commissioning.

As Jackson notes:

“The diocese's role in focal ministry is not to appoint professional ministers to fill vacancies but to find, train, authorize and support local people into overall leadership, and whole church congregations to become missionary communities.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Bob Jackson Leading One Church at a Time p7

<sup>12</sup> Jackson p3



This model could be introduced incrementally from today as vacancies arise and the shape of ministry is reassessed in each community. Further thinking will be necessary in some areas, including the provision of baptisms, marriages and the Eucharist. To some degree, we will 'make the road by walking it':

- Discerning what God is 'up to' in the community and the associated ministry requirements
- Creating pilots/test modelling
- Generating new learning and feeding it into the next phase
- Developing learning communities

Successful implementation of the model depends on a five-year project management plan and an associated investment of resource and financial planning that is both fixed enough to give rigour, pace and accountability and flexible enough to respond to events on the ground and to ongoing learning.

The model will have implications for the work of all office holders and for Diocesan Support Services in working through the legalities and necessary structures and support, and for resourcing in various areas through training and development for new roles and ways of working.

Since this model aims to enable a widely shared mission and ministry to flourish, it will require growing levels of self-awareness, interpersonal skills, understanding of group dynamics, and processes for enabling reflective dialogue and reconciliation in all ministers. We envisage induction procedures for new teams and individuals being given high priority in time, development and human resource.

Our current ministry model often conflates spiritual leadership, leadership, management, administration and people management skills. This causes stress both in terms of capacity and people's ability to exercise their calling. Partnership for Missional Church<sup>13</sup> demonstrates the power of releasing spiritual leaders to be just that and releasing others to exercise their gifts alongside the Spiritual Leader. By putting more capacity into the system at a local level, we can release more people to exercise their different callings and so reduce the overload and conflict that are often the result of people operating outside their skills, calling and capacity.

These changes reflect the diocesan vision of placing mission and evangelism at the heart of all we do because it is responsive to context and intrinsically invites us to discern what God is doing in a focal community and join in (Missio Dei). The model requires us to align resources for mission – people will be encouraged to offer their gifts more widely and this will mean fewer requirements for leaders to be able to do everything and spread themselves too thinly. It would allow the whole people of God to be released to be the

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<sup>13</sup> PMC is a 3-year process from CMS. It helps churches discern "God's promised and preferred future" through engaging with spiritual practices and practical tasks that help them listen to God, each other and their community. Seven benefices in Bath and Wells are currently in the PMC process.

people God is calling them to be. Callings would be affirmed that were both church centred and centred on the world encouraging an outward looking mission ready to engage in public theology.

The implications of these proposals have been discussed with the Registry and it should be possible to work within the existing law. Some types of focal ministry may require Bishop's Mission Orders. Whilst there will be significant work in moving to a new system, it is believed that everything proposed is legally possible.

- 7 It is recommended that a clear direction of travel is set with an emphasis on focal ministry, as outlined in this report.**
- 8 It is recommended that worked examples showing how focal ministry could work in the Diocese are used to help in the process of people understanding the proposal, and its practical out working, and to assist deaneries in planning.**
- 9 It is recommended that, in the first instance, impending vacancies are looked at in the light of these proposals and that a spirit of experimentation is fostered.**
- 10 It is recommended that work is done to (a) develop and embed this strategic thinking and (b) link it with other areas of diocesan work such as Common Fund, buildings and education.**
- 11 It is recommended that the work of Ministry for Mission is focused so as to provide support for deaneries, parishes and individuals in embracing and navigating change.**

## 7 Where and how are Decisions made?

### Where should decisions be made?

Allocation decisions are the responsibility of Bishop's Council, but Council rarely discusses these in any depth. The work is delegated to Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Groups and Council briefly takes note. The overall feedback from deaneries reflected a desire to be involved in decision making but not to be ultimately responsible.

In practice Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Groups (AMPGs) are the place where decisions are made but this work could be done in a more focussed way. If we are to have considerable restructuring, then space on the agenda of AMPGs needs to be made for serious deliberation and decision making based on the recommendations of Deanery Mission and Pastoral Groups, taking into account their Deanery Mission Plans. We believe that the archdeaconry groups working with new and clearly defined principles and limits is the place to make key decisions. Work would be within certain parameters but allow for transparent decisions to be made in the light of specific contexts.

In addition to archdeaconry meetings during the year, meetings on a diocesan level should review what is happening, check that decisions are integrated and play a part in strategic planning. One size fits all will not work, decisions will need to be made for different settings in a spirit of generosity and mutual trust, in difference and diversity. These meetings could be a separate meeting or a distinct part of Bishop's Council or Bishop's Staff: they should include relevant stakeholders.

**12 It is recommended that deployment is carried out within a clear structure of responsibility and decision-making authority at deanery, archdeaconry and diocesan levels.**

### What is the basis for making decisions?

Bath and Wells currently assigns clergy on the following criteria:

- 50% Church membership
- 35% Population
- 15% Number of churches

Other dioceses use different formula. For example, following its recent deployment review, Exeter put forward the following weightings:<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Words defined as follows:

Population (Recognition that clergy have the cure of souls for everyone in their parishes. Mission is to the whole community),

Participants (Recognition of the work clergy do to nurture their congregations in prayer, mission and service)

Area (Recognition of time spent travelling)

Number of churches (Recognition of the demands of administration and maintenance.)

Number of church schools (Recognition of outreach to and service of our church schools)

Deprivation (Recognition of the wealth and resources across the Diocese).

27%	Population	27%	Participants
10%	Area	20%	Number of churches
10%	Number of church schools	6%	Deprivation

As at 31 December 2019, there were 179 total parochial stipendiary posts in the Diocese of Bath and Wells, of which 143.5 were filled (20% vacancy rate). 151 filled posts are currently being assumed for forward planning purposes with a lower level of vacancies. The actual Archdeaconry allocations from the 179 total were as follows (compared in brackets with the figures based upon Exeter’s criteria): Wells 53 (56.2); Bath 70.5 (64.5); Taunton 55.5 (58.3).<sup>15</sup>

Other percentage weightings could be used which, depending on the emphasis given, would give small or significant differences from these figures. It cannot not be assumed that it is possible to maintain such a high figure of stipendiary clergy with strains on budget and Common Fund. With this model, should there be a decision to reduce numbers of stipendiary clergy, the percentages would remain the same as to how clergy are allocated.

The above percentage models have the disadvantages of inflexibility, removing the chance to deploy in response to local need or opportunity and the tendency to force a whole diocese into a one size fits all model, and therefore it an alternative method of allocation was considered.

The group did some initial work on an alternative model, aiming to:

1. Work with the focal ministry approach.
2. Avoid using a percentage formula which is based on a clergy workload calculation and does not take account of focal ministry.
3. Ensure a robust framework for deployment of ministry resource (allowing financial planning) without losing the creativity and theological vision implicit in the focal ministry approach.
4. Provide a rigorous framework for deployment decisions, ensuring consistency across the Diocese.

The model<sup>16</sup> uses a series of thresholds for population and congregation size, with a minimum level of deployment at each threshold. Account is also taken of Magnificat parishes, schools, rurality and the possibility of additional mission focused posts.

Whilst some initial scoping has been done, the next stage in developing this methodology is to work in further detail with a few deaneries to assess more clearly the impact of such a model.

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<sup>15</sup> The last time there was a major review (2004) in line with the Sheffield target of 176, allocated by Archdeaconry as follows: Wells (53); Bath (68.5); Taunton (54.5). It took until 2012 to reach these figures. There has been an increase of 3 posts.

<sup>16</sup> See Appendix

- 13 It is recommended that with immediate effect priority is given to devising a revised model for deployment that can be aligned with work on Common Fund and budget.**

There is currently no clear policy for what happens when a post comes to an end: some may argue this is a way of making savings and cutting the budget; some may argue that this is a deanery post and for it to be for the deanery to suggest a realignment within the deanery; some may argue that it is a diocesan post and that the post should be realigned within the archdeaconry or the Diocese as a whole.

- 14 It is recommended that immediate consideration is given to the devising and introduction of clear guidelines for realigning when a post comes to an end or becomes vacant.**

## 8 Specific Ministry Areas

### i. Interim Ministry

Interim Ministry is used in a number of dioceses including Lichfield Diocese where they have around half a dozen permanent interim ministers who go into parishes for a period of c.9 months to 2 years. In this time issues are addressed, and an advertised role is therefore hoped to be more attractive.

The provision of an interim minister is clearly defined in national guidance. An interim ministry post is considered to be for a maximum of three years and to serve the following purposes:

- a) Helping a parish come to terms with its history
- b) Enabling it to explore its identity and future direction
- c) Bringing about necessary changes in leadership, roles and structures
- d) Helping a parish renew links
- e) Committing the parish to looking in a new direction<sup>17</sup>

Points b) and c) could be very significant in transitioning to operating in a new way as outlined in Section 6 above. It is recognised that the time limited nature of such posts and the large area the Diocese covers (meaning that it is difficult to think of a “permanent interim” postholder being able to easily move from one parish to another) means that they have limited appeal and where dioceses have set up formal schemes they have often found it very difficult to recruit. Whilst resourcing in this way cannot be ruled out, it may be that there are opportunities for SSMs and PTOs to take on such roles, near to where they live. This has been tried successfully in other dioceses e.g. Exeter. The support already offered here by some clergy in a vacancy has been akin to interim ministry and the ministry offered could be made more explicit and offered more support.

**15 It is recommended that formal interim ministry is trialled as soon as is feasible.**

### ii. Reader Ministry

There are approximately 250 active readers in the Diocese. Readers have a distinctive role in being licensed by the Bishop, having had an academic theological education as part of their reader training. They have a distinctive liturgical role and many provide valued pastoral care as well as having distinct roles within the life of the church and the community. Some have a real calling to where they worship and live whilst others have gifts that may be offered more widely. Nationally, the Central Readers’ Council has looked at how reader ministry may be renewed for the 21st century recognising “the urgent need within the church for skilled teachers who can take us all deeper in faith, enable us to live this faith in the everyday circumstances of life, and so give a lead in church and society.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Supplementary advice issued by the Archbishops’ Council in December 2017 - on Interim Posts

<sup>18</sup> Central Readers’ Council *Resourcing Sunday to Saturday Faith*

Some readers feel underused<sup>19</sup> and there would appear to be hesitancy in places of taking advantage of the fact that their diocesan licence specifically authorises readers to exercise their ministry within a named benefice “as well as in any other benefice in the Diocese with the consent of the incumbent of that benefice”. The 2017 survey indicated that 97% are “prepared to minister as a reader” within the benefice, 77% within the deanery and 52% within the Diocese.

The national three-fold emphasis for readers is that they are people who teach the faith, are enablers of mission and are leaders in church and society. The call to be a leader in church and society is a reminder that there is the potential for some readers to be the person who offers an effective Christian presence in a community. There are examples in this diocese of where readers are effectively focal ministers or have creatively operated as such during a period of prolonged vacancy.

**16 It is recommended that readers are strategically deployed, as appropriate, to serve the church in providing Christian leadership in communities, including as focal ministers.**

### **iii. Self Supporting Ministers**

Self Supporting Ministers (SSMs) are deemed to be those clergy, who do not receive a stipend, house for duty or other benefit in kind from the Diocese, and who are not employed as clergy by another organisation. Future planning regarding SSMs would benefit from an integrated approach that incorporates vocation, ministerial skills and more geographical mobility than is often recognised.

For some, the call to ordained ministry comes alongside another perceived vocation in ‘secular’ work, home/family responsibilities or charitable work. This together with ordained ministry is seen as an outworking of a particular Christian life and call of God, where the priestly or diaconal role is exercised both in the church and another context. This should be welcomed as a gift to the church as it enriches the deacon/priest’s role within the Body of Christ and is a visible witness of Christ’s presence in the minister’s other context, often being the place of a primary ministry. This is most obviously the case for full-time ministers in secular employment (MSEs). SSMs are able to bring a wealth of gifts and experience, gifts which, it is felt, the church has often not used effectively.

New national selection process and the qualities to be discerned offer a more positive way forward. It is hoped that SSM candidates will be considered for ministry at ‘incumbent level’ as the default position, and that the discernment process will provide the opportunity to ascertain if this is not the case or if the individual thinks associate level suits their circumstances better.

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<sup>19</sup> 2017 Bath & Wells Reader Survey Report - scoring 3.09 on a 0-5 range

**17 It is recommended that (a) vocations to SSM are encouraged (b) the Diocese offers more integrated thinking in the deployment of SSMs (c) the results of a survey of SSMs are used to inform decisions about future SSM deployment.**

**iv. Ordained Local Ministry**

The group has heard many calls for something akin to an OLM scheme. This call has been particularly loud from the Magnificat parishes. In reality this effectively exists already in the category of Locally Deployed Ordained Ministry, which the Diocese has embraced. There are a number of people training on this track and one ordained, having been selected under national criteria which include: being embedded in their local Anglican parish church; having a disposition to grow in Christ and help others to do likewise; and be outward facing, flexible and adaptable to lead the church into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**18 It is recommended that the Diocese actively promotes vocations in, and supports, Locally Deployed Ordained Ministers.**

**v. Diversity**

It is heartening to hear of work being done on a national level (including new national criteria around selection) and on a diocesan level to challenge narrow academic barriers that have been in place for reader and clergy training. Pathways that increase diversity and prevent people from being funnelled in a specific direction are to be encouraged. In this way the formation of potential leaders from and for communities that have been harder to reach will be more likely. Such pathways could serve to encourage vocations from and deployment within Magnificat parishes.

**19 It is recommended that the Vocations Team continues to work with the national church to open up training pathways for people from varied backgrounds and with different educational backgrounds.**

**vi. Current stipendiary clergy posts vacancy rate**

Like many dioceses we are currently running with a high vacancy rate across the Diocese, with vacancies in excess of 30 and quite likely to continue as such. Vacancies are at a higher level than budgeted for and this can be positively recognised by using some of the savings to support new initiatives in deployment and/or meet some of the demand for additional resource.

**20 It is recommended that the savings made through higher vacancy rates are strategically deployed, in line with the recommendations of this report and that applications can be made by deaneries for additional resource for posts from this pot.**



## **vii. Deaneries**

Deaneries have been an engine of change for the Diocese, although there have been limitations on their resourcing, notably the time that can be given to the roles of area dean by a full time incumbent and to lay dean by busy volunteers.

In terms of leadership for this model, the key element is the relationship between diocese, archdeacons and deanery. All three would need to be involved and all would bring relevant knowledge and skills to support the model. There needs to be a clear framework of responsibilities and processes which each would abide by/fulfil. This framework should be so designed to be robust yet responsive to local needs. To some extent, the leadership element of the model already exists, and it may be that it needs modifying rather than wholesale redesign. At deanery level, it is envisaged that the DMPG will be the leadership body led by the area and lay deans. This group, through its membership, is ideally placed to be aware of and ensure responsiveness to, local needs.

Consideration was given to each archdeaconry being divided up into two deaneries with full time area dean and administrative support. This is along the lines of the model being adopted by the Diocese of Birmingham. Elements of this are attractive, but it was acknowledged that (a) the major changes have been possible in part through financing through national Strategic Development Fund money (b) the model works best in an urban setting and is more problematic for the more rural parts of Birmingham (c) such a change would break the highly valued local relationships which currently exist.

At the same time, it was acknowledged that there are some very small deaneries and there may be instances where deaneries unite or at least work more closely together.

The role of area dean is one that requires an increasing amount of time. It may be considered a c.5 post and provision for this is given in the overall proposal outlined in the strategy section of this report – such posts would be a form of co-ordinating focal ministry. Should the overall direction of this report not be taken, it would still be wise to seriously consider the area dean role being a .5 post. It may be that the post of area dean can be advertised as part of a package with a .5 parochial role. Work should also be done on effective resourcing for the role of lay dean.

Provision for these options would have implications for realigning from other posts.

**21 It is recommended that the options for more time to be given to the work of area dean and deanery leadership are pursued further, in line with the focal ministry model proposed in this report.**

A number of posts, notably for mission enabling, have been created in recent years, be it fulltime, .5 or .2. These have often been highly creative people, but in many cases, enablers have found parishes reluctant to engage with them and therefore impact has been limited. Some deaneries have a much stronger concept of working across the deanery than others.

Different contexts mean there are places where cross parish working in a deanery is effective and others where there is no buy-in and the value added of a post is far less than it could be. One deanery noted how a deanery mission enabler role was negatively affected by not being embedded in a parish. Where there is cross-deanery working it would better for that post to be more focussed with clear terms of reference and scope. Should there be deployment of an associate post to a larger church in a deanery, a defined amount of time to be given in supporting other parishes could be considered.

**22 It is recommended that any deanery-type posts have a clear and focused area of work and description of role, discerned by the DMPG, integral to the Deanery Plan and scrutinised on an archdeaconry and diocesan level.**

**23 It is recommended that where associate priests are appointed to larger churches, they are encouraged to offer support to other churches in the deanery.**

#### **viii. Chaplaincy**

Chaplaincy is a rapidly growing part of the mission of the church. There are over 300 chaplains serving across the Diocese and that number continues to increase. Community secondary schools, sports clubs and industry are just three examples of organisations who have recently appointed Christian chaplains for the first time. Once there, they meet the 95% who don't regularly [monthly] attend church and live and tell the story of God with them.

Chaplaincy has recently been designated as a strategic resourcing priority for the Diocese and is wholly in line with the diocesan vision and strategic priorities. The work of the Chaplaincy Strategy Group will develop the detailed implications of this over the next two years.

Chaplaincy is also a remarkably cost-efficient source of ministry for the Diocese. Of the 100+ chaplains who are paid, only 2.3% are paid out of core diocesan funding [parish share]. The rest are paid by a wide range of organisations, trusts and partnerships of churches. A comparatively small redeployment of resources could therefore make a huge difference for chaplaincy. One recent example of this is in Bruton and Cary Deanery, when the funds from a house for duty post have been re-deployed to appoint a school chaplain. We have also seen the importance of a diocesan chaplaincy advisory post to enable chaplaincy growth and development.

**24 It is recommended that chaplaincy provision is integral to deployment planning and decisions, and that the Chaplaincy Strategy Group is asked to feed into the implementation phase of the deployment work.**

## ix. Pioneering

Underlying pioneering is the principle that pioneers 'emerge' more often than they are 'deployed'. The project has highlighted and reinforced how the church's approach to people, their vocations and gifts and how they are brought to exercise them in ministry and mission needs to embody the fluidity of a changing culture. In times of complexity and change, solutions *emerge*, and if we want to know what shape the emerging church might be we only have to look and see what self-identity, vocation and gifts the people of God are being given by the Spirit of God, and do everything in our power to join in the flow of God's purpose and direction. This will uncover the shape of the future church over the course of a generation and the church can flex its structures and processes to accommodate it within the necessary constraints.

In the light of this, the 'deployment' question for pioneering is: how do we create the conditions in which pioneers can emerge, be identified, encouraged and equipped in this vocation? 75% of pioneers are female, lay and unpaid<sup>20</sup>. More and more pioneers will emerge in the context where they live with a unique and bespoke vocation for their locality. For this, it will be more important to deploy people who can play the role of pioneer advocates and accommodators (i.e. those who can foster understanding and protect spaces for pioneers to thrive in the institutional church) than to recruit and deploy pioneers in a strategic way (although there is a place for this, particularly at the early stages in new housing developments).

This policy of concentrating on identifying and fostering indigenous vocations will be equally valid for other ministries (e.g. chaplains) and fit with the principle of identifying the gifts of all God's people.

**25 It is recommended that deployment decisions play their part in fostering a culture of innovation and pioneering and enable pioneers to emerge.**

## x. House for Duty<sup>21</sup>

A post should be considered on the basis of the ministry deemed necessary rather than there being a property and the title of any role should reflect the role, rather than any provision of housing. A substantial percentage of the time of house for duty clergy is taken up with taking services. Is this the best use of resources for mission and evangelism? Recent

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<sup>20</sup> Figures from Church Army. Examples in this diocese include Lindsay Smith with The Garden, Portishead and Fiona Mayne with Tea and Toast Church, Haywood Village

<sup>21</sup> There are currently 35 House for Duty posts or places where a housing allowance is paid. Of these, 7 are vacant and in a further 3 cases money is reallocated through a grant for other purposes e.g. chaplaincy or administration. Many of the post holders work well above the set number of hours expected and provide excellent ministry in and beyond their parishes. However such over commitment cannot and should not be expected, filling such posts is not always easy and house for duty (with the provision of a property and accompanying costs) is not good value for money when it is set up to provide 6 sessions. Such posts have often helped to keep the old system going rather than transition to something new.

legislation<sup>22</sup> that no longer requires a communion in every church every Sunday changes the landscape. Rather than tie up a house and costs in a clergy post offering limited time finances could be realigned. A clergy person may be deployed with a housing allowance instead, or resources could be realigned to support other ministries. Such moves have already taken place in some deaneries with funding being realigned for administrative and chaplaincy posts. A deanery would be able to make clear proposals for what lay or ordained ministry is most needed locally. Such posts have often helped to keep an old and faltering system going rather than transition to something new.

The deanery will need clear guidance as to what is possible and there will need to be clear guidelines on various issues e.g. Where do the proceeds of the house sale go? What sum is available for realigning for different ministry? How is it decided whether this is for a different form of ministry in the Benefice, for something else in the deanery-or in the archdeaconry where a distinct ministerial need is recognised, or anywhere in the wider Diocese?

**26 It is recommended that the term House for Duty is no longer used and the provision of House for Duty posts in their current form is phased out over time as such posts become vacant.**

**27 It is recommended that clear guidelines and policies are drawn up to clarify what is possible when a House for Duty post is realigned (as per recommendation 12).**

#### **xi. Permission To Officiate (PTO) Clergy**

It has often been the case that PTO clergy move from church to church to fill rotas as needed. There are some PTO clergy who are willing to offer a more focussed ministry and to have more of a focus in a particular parish or benefice. Such an intentional use of PTO clergy could greatly assist deaneries in taking forward their Mission Action Plans. An experienced, recently retired clergy person acting as an interim minister may be ideal in helping a parish move forward. The recent House of Bishops 'Policy on Granting Permission to Officiate' guidance on drawing up a PTO and having a designated person responsible for someone with PTO should help in facilitating a move to more strategic deployment of PTO clergy.

**28 It is recommended that, where appropriate, PTO clergy are deployed more strategically.**

#### **xii. Administration**

The burden of administration hampering other work of leaders is very apparent. Support for administration and management has been heard from many places. This has successfully happened on Exmoor where resources for an associate post were realigned in order to

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<sup>22</sup> Amending Canon No.39

provide administrative support. Effective administration enables mission and is a ministry in itself where people can use their God given gifts. Suitable allocation of resources would enable administrators to be administrators and priests to be priests.

**29 It is recommended that where appropriate there is realignment of resources to enable ministries of administration in support of mission and evangelism.**

### **xiii. Ecumenical**

We were made aware of similar concerns around deployment in feedback from Somerset church leaders. The group recognised that Somerset churches had come together in setting up the chaplaincy at Hinkley Point and other ecumenical initiatives, but it did not detect huge energy from leaders to push forward with large ecumenical strategic initiatives around deployment. Where initiatives are successful it is generally from the bottom up.

Anglican congregations are encouraged to work with other denominations as works for their context. It may well be that there are focal ministries that are effected on an ecumenical basis.

### **xiv. Focal Ministry**

The group recognised (a) the potential of focal ministry and (b) the fact that several dioceses are developing forms of focal ministry. Focal ministry forms a large part of the strategic recommendations in this report and therefore it is not considered here beyond a recognition of its potential significance.

### **xv. Distinctive Deacons**

There are a small number of distinctive deacons who have been or are in the process of being trained. They have a distinct calling which may be lived out in different ways. A calling to such a vocation can be honoured by the Diocese and there may be self-supporting distinctive deacons and permanent deacons who take on pioneering or other roles, but it is not envisaged that the Diocese will deploy stipendiary permanent deacons.

### **xvi. Different Contexts**

#### **Magnificat parishes**

Diocesan Synod has affirmed the place of Magnificat parishes in the vision of the Diocese. Deaneries are encouraged to recognise this in their planning and aligning of resources. There are examples where deaneries have done this and where provision has been made for stipendiary clergy in a post based on the specific need of that context.

It is believed that a number of points highlighted in this report will benefit Magnificat parishes including the introduction of locally deployed ordained ministers, training that is less book-based for lay posts, a more flexible use of SSMs and readers and the possibility of administrative support across parishes that would enable clergy to do the outward facing and pioneering work that many have expressed that they wish to do.

In recognition of the tendency to partner with groups and organisations in the wider community, it may be necessary to have a greater number of focal ministers within Magnificat parishes so that there is a tangible link with the local church community and a real sense of flow between different ‘interest groups’, together with pro-active bridge building between groups that may otherwise remain separate from each other.

**30 It is recommended that methods of deployment that support Magnificat parishes are developed and that an appropriate group is in place to “Magnificat proof” strategic thinking around deployment.**

### **Larger Churches**

In recent years (as highlighted in section 3) the numbers of parishes supporting Common Fund has reduced and the number being supported increased to a level that is increasingly seen as unsustainable. Larger churches have specific resource needs. The 12 largest churches in the Diocese (form where a large number of ordained vocations originate) currently pay significantly more than the provision of stipendiary ministry that the system gives them.

**31 It is recommended that guidelines for realigning resources for associate ministry in larger churches, in line with the principles of this report, are devised to assist deanery, archdeaconry and diocesan planning.**

### **Rural**

Somerset is one of the most rural counties in England. Somerset West and Taunton Council’s density is one of the five lowest of any English local authority<sup>23</sup>. In many communities, churches which are now seen from the outside as ‘fragile’, may actually never have had large congregations, appearing on the edge of extinction for many years; some may well be able to continue in the same state of many years to come. However, trying to maintain the current system is leading to emotional, physical and spiritual weariness in clergy and laity and the shape of ministry and methods of deployment may look different in years to come. Sooner or later, the sustainability of a significant number of rural churches will need to be addressed which could help to provide a more realistic base for mission. Cooperation across boundaries is important and an augmented role for deaneries in rural settings could help build blocks to foster, support and nurture ministry.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Population density figures – England (average) 4.1 per hectare; Somerset 1.5 per hectare; West Somerset 0.5 per hectare

<sup>24</sup> A number of these points were ones made to the group in a presentation by rural practitioners.

**32 It is recommended that the Flourishing Rural Church Group has an active part in planning, implementation and support around the provision of focal ministers in particular and this strategy in general in the rural areas of Somerset.**

#### **xvii. Emerging Lay Ministries**

Both locally and nationally, extensive work is being done on both the emerging understanding of the potential range and variety of lay ministries and on the encouragement of all God's people to engage with what it means to live out their faith day by day. In line with an asset-based approach, God is already present and at work in the people of God and it is the work of the church to recognise that and enable God's people to use the gifts that they have been given. There has been an encouragingly high level of engagement with 'Everyday Faith' across the Diocese over the last 18 months and learning from other dioceses has enabled the development of such resources as 'Growing with God' and 'How can I participate?'<sup>25</sup> which will hopefully help lay people across the Diocese to consider their faith and how they are called to live it out, which in some cases might be a call to focal ministries.

**33 It is recommended that the variety of emerging ministries are encouraged, and appropriately resourced, and their part in an overall economy of ministry recognised.**

#### **xviii. Church planting**

A diocesan church planting policy is in the process of being drawn up by a small working group and this is likely to affirm the growth of a mixed economy of newly planted churches which will be suitable to their context and determined through prayer and the discernment of individuals, church leadership teams, deaneries, archdeacons and the diocesan support staff (as applicable).

This is likely to embrace a diverse ecology of new Christian communities including: those that emerge over time under the careful noticing and responding of someone like a pioneer missionary; intentional church plants - those that are envisaged as worshipping communities from the start, with teams sent out from a parent church following the prayerful discernment of an opportunity and availability of human and financial resources to make it possible - most prevalent in areas of high population density, large university towns and cities; groups of disciples living out an intentionally incarnational missional lifestyle in community, embedded in the local context, connected to the parent church (small missional communities); established models of Fresh Expressions of church (i.e. Messy, Café, Forest,

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<sup>25</sup> These are a local development of Personal Discipleship Plans. Similarly, 'Encouraging one another in Faith' leaflets have been developed from a Cursillo resource.

Wild); groups of people connected to each other through a rhythm of prayer and rule of life, including regular gatherings (new monastic communities).

Most of these ways of cultivating new churches come about organically under the direction of the Holy Spirit over time. Thus, deployment may not be primarily about providing additional human resource at the beginning of an initiative or strategy, but rather about having some resource in reserve to follow the growth when it happens.

**34 It is recommended that further work on deployment is informed by the Diocesan Church Planting guidelines that are in the process of being drawn up.**

**xix. Authorised Lay Ministers (ALMs)**

A new policy in respect of ALMs is currently being prepared by the Education Department. This is set to give a new direction to this area of ministry. Any proposals made should be evaluated in the light of the principles contained in this report.

**35 It is recommended that the future of ALMs is assessed in light of the principles in this report.**

**xx. Diocesan Support Staff**

Consideration of deployment in the Diocese should address all aspects of deployment including Support Services. The Diocese needs to be sure that staffing is aligned to strategic aims - notably in the light of this report aligning ministry resources towards mission. Consideration should be given to what Diocesan Support Services need to support in the future and how that support is delivered. Support Services will have a different shape in the light of new / changed priorities demanded by the Diocesan Strategy and the possibility of different ways of working as a result of moving to Flourish House. Ministry for Mission in particular will need to give consideration as to how its posts are aligned for the next stage of the Diocesan Strategy. The 2021 Budget and future budgets will need to establish the overall requirements for Support Services going forward, continuing to take particular account of challenges faced by parishes in relation to Parish Share.

**36 It is recommended that the work of Diocesan Support Services is reviewed in the light of the need for taking forward a deployment strategy.**



## 9 What is already happening?

For steps forward to be made in a new deployment strategy, it will be necessary to learn from what is working and share good practice. We are aware of a number of places around the Diocese that give hints of what future deployment could look like.

e.g.

Realigning resource to support administration - Exmoor Benefice

Deanery committed to support of Magnificat parish All Saints Halcon in Taunton

Resource used for Church planting Locking Deanery

Reader taking on oversight ministry traditionally associated with incumbent at Six Pilgrims Benefice in Wells Archdeaconry during vacancy

Priesting of first Locally Deployed Minister at Dulverton in January 2020

- 37 It is recommended that current examples and good practice and in due course new ideas from around the Diocese (and other dioceses) are centrally collated for diocesan learning and for sharing with deaneries and parishes for both the devising and implementation of strategy.**

## 10 Risks and Mitigations

The group did some initial work on risks and mitigation and the following were recognised:

Risk	Mitigation
a) Detailed plan not fully in place in designated time frame	Planning group assigns necessary time for work
b) Deployment is treated in isolation from other key issues such as Common Fund and budget	Bishop's Council 'Away Day' used to look at links Continued oversight from Bishop's Council and Bishop's Staff
c) Limited 'buy-in' from some existing leaders and consequent limits on others' growth and development	Clear communications plan in place Bishop's Staff committed Opportunities for area and lay deans to critique and inform policy Time spent to critique with groups from different contexts Provision of confident, well informed speakers for deanery synods, PCC meetings, even preaching. Information sharing and decision making needs to be from grassroots, not top-down Good communication of examples where focal ministry is seen to be working
d) Work is not seen through	Deployment Implementation Group that includes at least some of the existing Deployment Group Consideration of appointment of Project / Change Manager Specific recommendations in Part 2 assigned to named people or groups or specific overall deployment project manager Standing item on Bishop's Council Agenda
e) Resistance to change in patterns of ministry	Good communication about the consequences of maintaining the status quo and sufficient support to aid transition

f) Not enough people come forward to take the FM roles &/or there are periods of time where FM roles are not filled	'Market testing' to assess recruitment feasibility in both rural and urban deaneries  Training and support need to be provided for those in co-ordinating/management roles to help them with this crucial element of their role - that of encouraging, developing and sustaining FMs
g) Sudden, significant requirement to train lay pastoral assistants, lay worship assistants, chaplains etc., exceeding capacity of local resources for training	Audit of existing people across Diocese who can deliver such training; assess availability; offer expenses for travel and some recompense for time
h) The possibility that the vocation of focal ministers (who do not hold the Bishop's licence) is not fully tested/discerned, and/or the potential for ministers to be too autonomous/independent and lack true accountability	Vocation discerned both locally and through an independent party. Scrupulous safer recruitment process and safeguarding training. Accountability of oversight minister to ensure that supervision and oversight of focal ministers etc. is actually undertaken
i) Stress, worry and diminished wellbeing for those who feel overwhelmed at prospect of the changes	Excellent pastoral care; consider involvement from Wellbeing Service, spiritual directors and others who can offer coaching/mentoring; support and good communication from area/lay deans and archdeacons

**38 It is recommended that Bishop's Council should refer this report to the Audit and Risk Management Group for it to consider in depth the risks and mitigations of the proposals in this-report.**

This report, with its proposal of a specific way forward and the highlighting of some key recommendations, acknowledges that there have been many words spoken about deployment which have, however, resulted in limited action and therefore includes a final recommendation:

**39 It is recommended that there is planning for each recommendation taken forward with a person or group, with the necessary capacity and authority, assigned to advance the recommendation.**

## 11 Conclusion and Way Forward

The Deployment Group trusts that the work outlined here can be positively taken forward or that the work done is a catalyst to other thinking to take us into the next phase of the life of the Diocese, and whatever future God has in store for us, aware that current systems are not sustainable.

The report notes the strains the church is under in many respects including stretched finances, high vacancy rates and the well-being of church leaders and has heard the call from many different parts of the Diocese for radical change.

This report has made a large number of recommendations. Some of them are about ways of working (e.g. 5) and some are about encouraging what is already happening to develop further (e.g. 16, 18 and 28) and some about new emphases.

All deployment work should be done in line with Recommendation 5: **Deployment decisions are based on an holistic consideration of employed and office holder posts, lay and ordained, paid and voluntary and full time and part time.**

The report advocates a **clear direction of travel for future ministry, based on a focal ministry approach** (Recommendation 7).

Below are three key recommendations on process that will enable this work to move forwards coherently:

- 1 Bishop's Council receives the report and authorises a Working Group and Programme Leader to oversee the planning and implementation of deployment work, in line with the approved recommendations. The Group should regularly report on progress to Bishop's Council.**
  
- 10 Work is done to (a) develop and embed this strategic thinking and (b) link it with other areas of diocesan work such as Common Fund, buildings and education.**
  
- 13 With immediate effect, priority is given to devising a revised formula for deployment that can be aligned with work on Common Fund and budget.**

Alongside this process, guidelines will need developing, as highlighted in the report, in a number of areas, to take forward the deployment strategy e.g.

- 12 Clear structure of responsibilities at deanery, archdeaconry and diocesan level.**
- 14 Devising and introduction of clear guidelines for realigning when a post comes to an end.**
- 27 Clear guidelines and policies for what happens when a house for duty post is realigned.**
- 31 Realigning resources for associate ministry.**

In addition to this, and with immediate effect:

Following Recommendation 9, **impending vacancies should be considered in the light of these recommendations and a spirit of experimentation fostered.**

In line with Recommendation 11, **Ministry for Mission should consider how to focus and align its work, so that it provides support for deaneries, parishes and individuals in embracing and navigating change.**

The navigation of change in the future will involve many challenges but also many opportunities. The specific deployment challenge is about having the right people in the right places to take forward the mission of the church and in response to God's love seeking to be the people of God and living and telling the story of Jesus. This report recognises and rejoices in the diversity of the Diocese as a place and of the different church traditions within and believes that the qualities of courage, rigour, imagination, and generosity will be essential in working out how best all God's people can be released and deployed to serve God in Somerset in the years ahead.

## **12 Gathered List of Report Recommendations**

The recommendations below are taken from the body of the report. Some are things that are already beginning to happen but are important elements of future deployment.

- 1 Bishop's Council receives the report and authorises a Working Group and Programme Leader to oversee the planning and implementation of deployment work, in line with the approved recommendations. The Group should regularly report on progress to Bishop's Council.**
- 2 Parishes, deaneries and archdeaconries are actively encouraged in the creation of reconfigured posts and that methods are in place to share good practice.**
- 3 Across the Diocese and within deaneries people are helped to appreciate the way ministry is lived out in the different places and contexts of Somerset and that understanding is deepened and learning shared.**
- 4 The aspiration that all are set free and equipped to live out their distinctive vocation is central to deployment decisions. In this way bishops can be bishops, priests can be priests, deacons can be deacons, readers can be readers, administrators can be administrators, churchwardens can be churchwardens, LWAs can be LWAs, pioneers can be pioneers etc... - that all God's people can be set free and equipped to live out their distinctive callings.**
- 5 Deployment decisions at all levels are made in the light of the 7 principles highlighted in Section 5.**
- 6 Deployment decisions are based on an holistic consideration of and value for the full range of employed and office holder posts, lay and ordained, paid and voluntary and full time and part time.**
- 7 A clear direction of travel is set with an emphasis on focal ministry, as outlined in this report.**
- 8 Worked examples showing how focal ministry could work in the Diocese are used to help in the process of people understanding the proposal, and its practical out working, and to assist deaneries in planning.**
- 9 In the first instance, impending vacancies are looked at in the light of these proposals and that a spirit of experimentation is fostered.**

- 10 Work is done to (a) develop and embed this strategic thinking and (b) link it with other areas of Diocesan work such as Common Fund, buildings and education.**
- 11 The work of Ministry for Mission is focused so as to provide support for deaneries, parishes and individuals in embracing and navigating change.**
- 12 Deployment is carried out within a clear structure of responsibility and decision-making authority at deanery, archdeaconry and diocesan levels.**
- 13 With immediate effect, priority is given to devising a revised model for deployment that can be aligned with work on Common Fund and budget.**
- 14 Immediate consideration is given to the devising and introduction of clear guidelines for realigning when a post comes to an end or becomes vacant.**
- 15 Formal use is made of interim ministers. This should be trialled as soon as is feasible.**
- 16 Readers are strategically deployed, as appropriate, to serve the church in providing Christian leadership in communities, including as focal ministers.**
- 17 (a) vocations to SSM are encouraged (b) the Diocese offers more integrated thinking in the deployment of SSMs (c) the results of a survey of SSMs are used to inform decisions about future SSM deployment.**
- 18 The Diocese actively promotes vocations in, and supports locally deployed ordained ministers.**
- 19 The Vocations Team continues to work with the national church to open up training pathways for people from varied backgrounds and with different educational backgrounds.**
- 20 The savings made through higher vacancy rates are strategically deployed, in line with the recommendations of this report and that applications can be made by deaneries for additional resource for posts from this pot.**
- 21 The option for more time to be given to the work of area dean and deanery leadership are pursued further, in line with the focal ministry model proposed in this report.**

- 22 Any deanery-type posts have a clear and focussed area of work and description of role, discerned by the DMPG, integral to the Deanery Plan and scrutinised on an archdeaconry and diocesan level.**
- 23 Where associate priests are appointed to larger churches, they are encouraged to offer support to other churches in the deanery.**
- 24 Chaplaincy provision is integral to deployment planning and decisions, and that the Chaplaincy Strategy Group is asked to feed into the implementation phase of the deployment work.**
- 25 Deployment decisions play their part in fostering a culture of innovation and pioneering and enable pioneers to emerge.**
- 26 The term 'House for Duty' is no longer and the provision of 'House for Duty' posts in their current form is phased out over time as such posts become vacant.**
- 27 Clear guidelines and policies are drawn up to clarify what is possible when a 'House for Duty' post is realigned (as per recommendation 12).**
- 28 Where appropriate, PTO clergy are deployed more strategically.**
- 29 Where appropriate, there is realignment of resources to enable ministries of administration in support of mission and evangelism.**
- 30 Methods of deployment that support Magnificat parishes are developed and that an appropriate group is in place to "Magnificat proof" strategic thinking around deployment.**
- 31 Guidelines for realigning resources for associate ministry in larger churches, in line with the principles of this report, are devised to assist deanery, archdeaconry and diocesan planning.**
- 32 The Flourishing Rural Church Group has an active part in planning, implementation and support around the provision of focal ministers in particular and this strategy in general in the rural areas of Somerset.**
- 33 The variety of emerging ministries are encouraged, and appropriately resourced, and their part in an overall economy of ministry recognised.**



- 34 Further work on deployment is informed by the Diocesan Church Planting guidelines that are in the process of being drawn up.**
- 35 The future of ALMs is assessed in light of the principles in this report.**
- 36 The work of Diocesan Support Services is reviewed in the light of the need for taking forward a deployment strategy.**
- 37 Current examples and good practice and in due course new ideas from around the Diocese (and other dioceses) are centrally collated for diocesan learning and for sharing with deaneries and parishes for both the devising and implementation of strategy.**
- 38 Bishop's Council should refer this refer this report to the Audit and Risk Management Group for it to consider in depth the risks and mitigations of the proposals in this report.**
- 39 There is planning for each recommendation taken forward with a person or group, with the necessary capacity and authority, assigned to advance the recommendation.**

## Appendix

### A suggested deployment model

This paper, as referred to in Section 7 of the report outlines a deployment model that is designed to work with the recommendations of the deployment group. The paper was prepared by Charlie Peer, Head of Strategic Programme and endorsed by the group. As noted in the report further detailed work including working with representatives of deanery leadership is necessary to assess the viability of the model.

The model has the following aims:

1. To work with the focal ministry approach, taking account of the shift from “one vicar per benefice” to “a focal minister in every community”.
2. To avoid using a percentage-based formula, based as that is on a clergy workload calculation (which takes no account of focal ministry).
3. To ensure a robust framework for deployment of ministry resource (allowing financial planning) without losing the creativity and theological vision which is implicit in the focal ministry approach.
4. To provide a rigorous framework for deployment decisions, ensuring consistency and fairness across the diocese.

To reconcile these four aims we use a series of **thresholds** for population and congregation size, ensuring a minimum level of deployment at each threshold<sup>26</sup>.

#### Factor 1 – congregation size

The number of people in the worshipping community of a single church. This can include multiple congregations within a church. It can also include daughter churches where these are evidently part of the same church set-up. It does not apply to multiple churches within a benefice, and should not be used to “top up” posts to a multi-parish benefice: these are covered by the rural aspect of the model.

Thresholds for congregation size:

Congregation size	Minimum ministry deployed
<50	Voluntary or self-supporting focal minister
50-99	Subject to a parish development review. Full-time stipendiary if agreed, otherwise a voluntary or self-supporting focal minister. Possibility of a half-stipendiary appointment. Possibility of shared incumbency with <u>one</u> other church of same size.

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<sup>26</sup> If a church or parish hits a threshold for more than one factor (eg congregation size AND population), these do not aggregate. Thus a stipendiary post might be deployed to churches of 100 or more, or to parishes of at least 4,000 people, but passing both thresholds does not mean that two stipends are deployed.

100+	Full-time stipendiary (assumed to be an incumbent priest)
200+	As 100+, with the possibility of a full-time associate minister, subject to an agreed mission action plan.
Very large (500+?)	Add the possibility of a second associate, again with an agreed mission action plan.

## Factor 2 – population

The population of a single settlement. In rural areas this usually equates to a church parish, although in some places several settlements have been combined within a united parish. In larger towns, a settlement consists of multiple ecclesiastical parishes.

Thresholds for population size:

<1000	Voluntary/self-supporting focal minister where a suitable person can be discerned within the local community.
1,000*	Voluntary/self-supporting focal minister. Where a suitable person cannot be discerned locally, a FM should be deployed to the parish.
3,000	Intermediate threshold, can be placed at either the 1000 or 4000 threshold as appropriate. Possibility of half-stipendiary or a shared incumbency with not more than one other parish of similar size.
4,000	Minimum of one stipendiary minister, to be focal minister of the principal parish church and coordinating minister to any other churches in the town.
10,000	Intermediate threshold, treat as 20,000 where there is more than one church. For single churches, consider adding a second stipendiary where there is sufficient capacity locally for mission and growth.
20,000	A minimum of one stipendiary incumbent per 10,000 or part of 10,000. Additional incumbents (i.e. above the minimum) are deployed where there is capacity in the relevant parish to cover ministry costs via parish share.

\*see also factor 4 below.

## Factor 3 – indices of multiple deprivation

Each Magnificat Parish is guaranteed one stipendiary incumbent, to be included within the minimum levels described under “factor 2 – population”.

It may be appropriate for MPs within the same benefice to continue to share the same incumbent.

Magnificat Parishes in Bath & Wells are those with one or more Local Super Output Areas (LSOA) in the bottom 10% nationally of Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), or the entire parish in the bottom 15%.

## Factor 4 – Schools

A parish in which a school is present should be guaranteed a focal minister. This is particularly relevant to small villages of less than 1,000 population, which should normally be treated as though over the 1,000 threshold where there is a school.

**Factor 5 – Rurality**

Since the focal ministry approach tends towards the deployment of unpaid focal ministers in small communities (whether SSM, LLM or voluntary), it is necessary to deploy additional posts to rural areas in order to provide oversight, cover, and sufficient provision for occasional offices and other pastoral needs.

These posts are deployed by deanery: they are the FM for a single parish and a Co-ordinating minister across the deanery. These posts can also provide training expertise to the parishes and FMs under their oversight. In many deaneries it will be appropriate for one of these posts to be the Area Dean.

Thresholds for rural CM posts:

Number of rural parishes in deanery without a stipendiary FM	Number of stipendiary co-ordinating ministers
0-6	Combine with neighbouring deanery
7-10	1
11-24	2
25+	3

**Additional posts (non-parochial)**

It is strongly recommended that provision is also made for other ministries within the deployment envelope. This model does not need these additional posts in order to work: however, without them, it becomes purely concerned with parochial ministry, which would be a missed opportunity and a sad oversight in a strategy for focal ministry, which is intended to make room for the future shape of the church and to allow creativity and vision in ministry deployment.

These additional posts should be mission-focussed (in line with our strategic priorities) and in practice this would mean chaplains, church planters and pioneers. They could be allocated on a per-deanery basis or as a diocesan-wide resource to be deployed where opportunities arise. In the case of chaplains, and perhaps pioneers, a full-time equivalent allocation could be split into part-time or sessional ministries.

## Dependencies

i.e.: things that would enable this model to function well.

The five factors together provide an equitable and clear framework for deployment. However the model does represent a change from current policy and, together with the introduction of a focal ministry approach, would face challenges when introduced. A successful change would be dependent on at least some, and probably all, of the following:

- A diocesan oversight structure: probably a specially convened group. This seems essential, as without it, there would be little chance of implementing the model consistently across the diocese.
- A re-modelled common fund system, in which there was some easily understood relationship between share and deployment, would help to enhance the sense of fairness.
- A well resourced and well understood provision of parish support from diocesan support services, to accompany parishes through transition to a different form of ministry and to enable each church to face the future with hope and confidence.

Overall, and in common with the recommendations of the report, this would require decisive leadership from the Bishops' Staff and Bishop's Council, as well as a robust implementation plan with sufficient project management infrastructure to see it through.

## Projection of resource deployment

It should be clear that the model permits plenty of flexibility in decision-making at local level, within the parameters set. Therefore, it is not possible (or desirable) to map exactly where each post would be, until deaneries have had the opportunity to work out the implications locally.

However, it is possible to create an example of how deployment might look under this model, making certain assumptions. The following table gives such an example, of how deployment of stipendiary posts might look under this model, in a theoretical situation where the ministry of every benefice had been re-deployed.

Ministry	Stipendiary posts	
	Upper range	Lower range
Magnificat parishes	20	20
Other incumbents in the larger urban areas (20,000+)	48	42
Smaller towns (4,000-20,000; incumbent plus additional ministry)	32	27
Other incumbents in rural areas	14	8
Additional co-ordinating ministers for rural areas	39	39
Associate ministers to larger churches	12	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>142</b>

Some points to note about the above table:

- The difference between the two ranges is due to differing assumptions. These can be explained in a separate document if desired.
- It is possible to vary the number of stipends under this model by adjusting the thresholds, particularly those for congregation size and population. For example, if for budgetary reasons the number needed to be reduced, the thresholds could be moved upwards. Similarly, they can be moved downwards for a more generous allocation.
- Maintaining a lower number of parochial stipends would mean that the additional missional posts suggested on page 3 became a realistic possibility. This would be consistent with our stated aim “to re-align our ministry resources towards mission”.

## Final note – deployment of focal ministers

Time has not yet permitted a detailed count of the number of focal ministers envisaged in this model. This could be done in a couple of hours work. However, an initial scan suggests that a minimum of **130** non-stipendiary focal ministers would be needed for this to be a genuine focal ministry model, rather than a cost-cutting exercise. These would be drawn from a diverse pool, e.g. SSM clergy, readers, or other lay ministers, but this still represents a major vocational and training project for the diocese.