

# Episcopacy in the Diocese of Bath and Wells: a new Bishop of Taunton who will join us in living and telling the story of Jesus

April 2025



## The context for an appointment

### Our demographics

Some key data about our diocese is given below. While our population may not be large, the number of churches we have and the distances that need to be travelled in support of clergy, people and communities in a large geographical area of high population dispersal are high.

<b>Geographical Area</b>	<b>1610 sq miles</b>
<b>Population</b>	1,000,000
<b>Archdeaconries</b>	3
<b>Deaneries</b>	18
<b>Benefices</b>	160
<b>Parishes</b>	485
<b>Churches</b>	564
<b>Population per church</b>	1,773
<b>Percentage of GMH population</b>	3.2%
<b>Stipendiary clergy</b>	158
<b>Ordained self-supporting ministers</b>	53
<b>Chaplains (including lay chaplains)</b>	99
<b>Percentage of women incumbents</b>	33%
<b>PTO clergy</b>	324
<b>Readers</b>	155
<b>Bishop's Mission Orders</b>	2

### Our vision

Extensive work has been undertaken over the last two years to renew the Diocese of Bath and Wells's vision:

In response to God's immense love for us, we seek to be God's people, living and telling the story of Jesus.

We have identified five areas of focus to help us put our vision into practice:

- Valuing, cherishing and developing the people and resources we already have
- Sharing in ministry and leadership
- Developing new and existing worshipping communities
- Growing and deepening in faith
- Transforming communities

Significant progress has been made on the first four aspects of our strategy, with detailed plans for how we aim to achieve the agreed outcomes. The new Bishop of Taunton will play an essential role in enabling the implementation of our vision. They will also have clearly defined responsibility for taking forward a number of key and clearly delineated areas of activity. In particular, the strategic leadership of our fifth area of focus, our work in transforming communities that seeks to enable our churches, schools and chaplaincies to work with local partners to be Good News in local areas.

This will entail giving leadership to the diocese as we reflect on how we respond to the last three of the five Marks of Mission, which underpin our activity. Including leading our work to:

- capture information on the current situation
  - what parishes are already doing
  - the range of needs and issues across the diocese
- help the diocese consult and implement our response
  - which activities to prioritise
  - the outcomes to deliver
- help prioritise issues in our society to which specific attention should be given

The Bishop of Taunton will also work with the Diocesan Board of Education to review our vision and outcomes for Church of England schools across the diocese.

### Practical considerations

The stipend and working expenses of the Bishop of Taunton are funded by the Church Commissioners. Housing is provided by the Diocese of Bath and Wells.coo

## Bishop of Taunton - role description and person specification

This section sets out a draft working summary of the challenges and leadership roles of the next Bishop of Taunton, as well as a person specification.

The role description and person specification should not be considered in isolation but in the context of the vows and duties undertaken at ordination and consecration as a bishop, and the Canons of the Church of England.

Feedback and input on this role description and person specification is warmly invited. Please send it to: [newbish@bathwells.anglican.org](mailto:newbish@bathwells.anglican.org) no later than Monday, 14 April 2025.

### Purpose of role

To offer enabling, effective, inspiring, transformational episcopal leadership in the Diocese of Bath and Wells in close collaboration and partnership with the Bishop of Bath and Wells and working as integral part of the Bishop's Staff Team (Archdeacons, Dean, Diocesan Secretary, Bishop's Chaplain, Head of Mission Support and Ministry Development, Directors of Finance and Education).

### Challenges/priorities of role

- To share in the Bishop of Bath and Wells' role as chief pastor in the diocese in the pastoral ministry of a diocese that is geographically large and widely dispersed.
- To share in leading the continual renewal of mission and ministry across the Diocese through supporting the implementation of the strategic vision of the diocese in the parishes, chaplaincies and schools of Bath and Wells.

### Main responsibilities of the role

- To be a colleague and critical friend to the Bishop of Bath and Wells; playing a full part in the collegial life of the Bishop's Staff Team, sharing in the leadership, oversight and development of the diocese.
- To engage effectively with leaders, both lay and ordained, across the diocese, offering ministry that supports the life and mission of churches through pastoral care of clergy and other ministers, participation in appointments and licensings, conduct of Benefice Visits and Ministerial Development Reviews.
- To be a confident, joyful inspiring presence in the public square, taking up opportunities that the Church in Somerset still has to be a convener and trusted partner in seeking the common good.

- To offer effective and specific leadership on the implementation of a number of areas of our strategic vision namely:
  - Strategic leadership on the transforming communities element of our diocesan strategy that enables our churches, schools and chaplaincies to work with local partners to be Good News in local areas.
  - Engagement with our diocesan Education, Children and Young People’s teams to ensure that children, young people and schools have essential parts to play in the implementation of all aspects of our diocesan strategic vision
  - Support of the development of vocational pathways towards ordained and other ministries that will enable our strategic priority of enabling shared local ministry across our diocese. This will include becoming the sponsoring bishop for ordinands in our diocese.
  - As we value, cherish and develop the people and resources that we have, to take oversight of our work in ministerial wellbeing – supporting clergy, Readers and other ministers to flourish within their roles.
- To ensure thereby that the mission and ministry of the Diocese of Bath and Wells aligns with the Church of England’s national priorities:
  - To be a church that is younger and more diverse
  - To be a church where mixed ecology is the norm – where every person in England has access to an enriching and compelling community of faith by adding new churches and new forms of Church to our parishes, schools and chaplaincies
  - To become a church of missionary disciples where all God’s people are released to live the Christian life.
- To help create healthy cultures that are supportive of safeguarding in which all will flourish and which are coherent with the safeguarding policies of the Church of England, modelling the role that all in leadership must play in exercising responsibility for safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and the provision of pastoral care of survivors.
- To take an active role in promoting generous giving and good stewardship needed to enable the financial sustainability of our diocese.
- To undertake other appropriate lead functions as agreed with the diocesan bishop.
- To proclaim the Christian faith with confidence, in preaching, through media engagement and in any other appropriate ways.
- To assist in relating the local church to the national and international Church (especially through Bath and Wells diocesan link with the dioceses of Zambia) and vice versa through participation in the College of Bishops, regional bishops’ meetings, ecumenical gatherings and diocesan links.

- To continue personal, professional, theological and ministerial development and formation.
- To uphold the Five Guiding Principles as set out in the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Priests and Bishops, and to promote the flourishing of churches across the range of the theological breadth of the Church of England.
- To discharge all other duties as set out in canon law.

## Person specification

We seek someone who, in the following areas:

<b>Spiritual life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is confident in Christ, and grounded in their life of prayer.</li> <li>• is at home in their own church tradition but rejoices in the breadth of the Church of England.</li> </ul>
<b>Theology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is theologically literate; educated in theology at least to degree level; and is capable of creative and innovative theological reflection that is faithful to Christian tradition.</li> <li>• can articulate a clear and compelling theology of mission and ministry enabling others to be curious and engaged.</li> </ul>
<b>Vision for mission and delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates evidence of engagement in innovative and fruitful mission and ministry, ideally in a parish context.</li> <li>• has a track-record of change and growth in a significant area of church life.</li> </ul>
<b>Formation of others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delights in exercising positive creative influence over others that allows them to explore and develop their vocation and fulfil their potential in Christ.</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement in community life and public issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is a confident articulator of the Christian faith, relating it well to issues of contemporary concern and can address a range of audiences with both charity and clarity.</li> <li>• is a trusted partner with those in wider society and has a clear track record as such.</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguarding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• takes safeguarding issues with the utmost seriousness which they warrant, understanding the role of a suffragan in this area, working with his or her colleagues on the Bishop's Staff team and the diocesan safeguarding team.</li> </ul>
<b>Young people and education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has experience which includes ministry or leadership positively linked with education, children and youth work.</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership and oversight of others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is a self-aware leader who is comfortable with being so</li> <li>• is patient, kind-hearted and resilient able to deal positively but decisively with challenge and conflict.</li> <li>• is aware of the dynamics of power and their possible abuse and who always seeks the flourishing of others.</li> </ul>
<b>Working with others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is sufficiently self-aware and emotionally intelligent to be able to form strong, purposeful and fruitful relationships both with individuals and teams.</li> </ul>
<b>Management of resources and structures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is experienced in issues of organisational leadership and financial discipline, understanding due accountability and is confident in exercising 'cabinet' responsibility.</li> </ul>