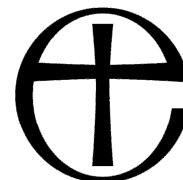




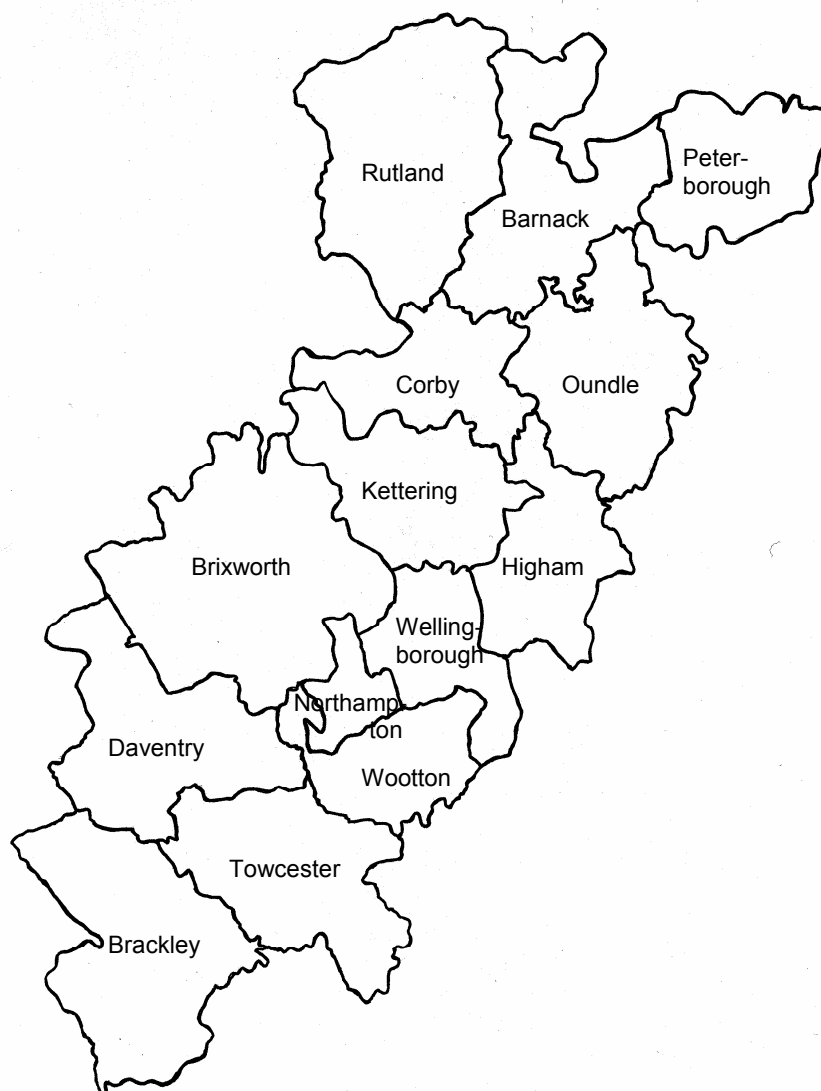
Diocese of Peterborough



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Developing your Deanery Mission Plan

Practical ideas to begin with



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This booklet

This booklet is a companion to *Working towards a Deanery Mission Plan: Background information*. It is important that you have first read that booklet before you begin working on these ideas.

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Starting locally, sharing simply

Step 1: Get the churches thinking and talking

Each church should be encouraged to discuss and fill in the Parish Profile form (enclosed in this pack); rural deans have sufficient copies for each church in their deanery and you can photocopy it or download it from the diocesan website (see p. 2).

It is an important fact-finding exercise so that we can all work together more closely, and form our longer-term plans on the basis of real knowledge and not on assumptions. Very few people, even on Deanery Synods, have a good working knowledge of all the parishes in the area.

Deadline: Suggest that all forms should be returned to the Rural Dean (or Deanery Synod Secretary, or Chapter Clerk – whoever you decide) by a realistic but reasonably close date.

Step 2: Collate their responses and think laterally

You will need to appoint someone (or a small team – two or three people at most) to collate the responses. A blank form “Church Profile responses” is included in this pack to make collation and comparison easier. (It can also be downloaded from the diocesan website.) Please share the results with the whole Deanery Synod (and encourage members to share them with their PCCs).

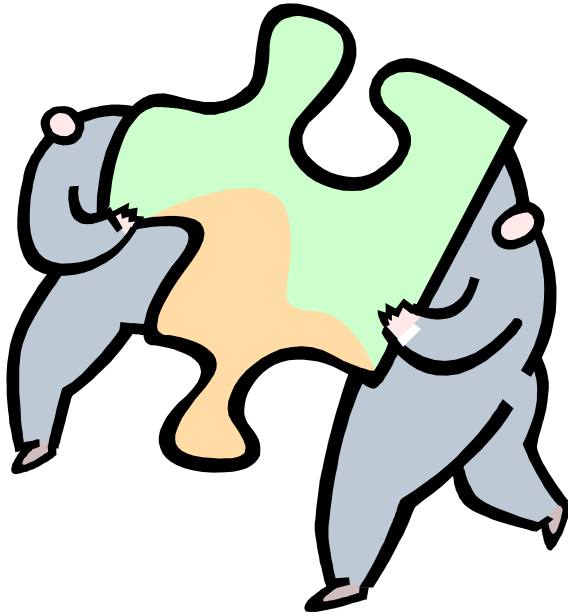
The information will assist your planning for co-operative activity, but what and how you plan will vary from deanery to deanery. Some suggestions are included below.

As you collate responses, and discuss in Synods and Chapters, you will need to be asking such questions as:

- What are the chief mission *opportunities* in this deanery? (eg new housing; institutions such as schools or care homes open to church involvement; specific social situations churches can address);
- What are the chief mission *needs* in this deanery? (eg a chronic shortage of children’s / youth work despite a high proportion of young families in the area; housing areas where few people seem to attend church);
- Where are the actual or potential growth areas in our ministry in the deanery (that is, where people are coming to faith or joining the church)?



- Where are the “leak” spots where numbers are dwindling, and what might we do together to address the problem there?
- How might we together be able to maximise outreach in growth areas without neglecting weaker areas?
- Which churches already have expertise or other resources in our areas of opportunity and need?
- To what extent can that expertise or those resources be shared by others, in an advisory or more hands-on way?
- Given our limited resources, how might we prioritise our needs and opportunities so that we can address them together, realistically and (probably) one at a time?
- What additional resources do we need to import, or grow locally, in order to meet our opportunities or needs more effectively? How might we do that?
- How can we make better use of licensed lay ministers across the deanery? Which ones might be “portable” and what particular skills and time could they offer more widely than in “their” parish?
- Where is there any overlap in pastoral provision, worship or other activity which might become more effective and meaningful if church efforts and resources were combined.
- What “expressions” of church or styles of worship are currently not provided or under-provided? What “fresh expressions” would be appropriate in the area and which churches are best placed to pioneer them?
- What localities, if any, are currently “unchurched” because of housing growth or population shift, where a new congregation might be planted?



- Which church(es) are best placed to spawn a church plant? How might this affect the future deployment of clergy and licensed lay ministers in the deanery?
- Given the current and projected population distribution, what would be the most equitable distribution of our given number of clergy now and in the future? (Imagine you were starting from scratch!)

Step 3: Formulate a practical mission plan

Early on in the process you will find it helpful to draft a deanery mission plan which states your intentions. It will give you a framework within which to move forward, even if details cannot be included yet, or are liable to change in the future. Indeed, a good plan will be flexible, and revisited regularly (perhaps every year) to check progress and adjust targets.

The Deanery Mission Plan is a statement of intent. In so far as it relates to wider diocesan issues (such as parish and deanery boundaries, and the deployment of clergy) it requires approval by the Archdeaconry Pastoral Committee and the Bishop before it can become a diocesan commitment.

The Deanery Mission Plan will have two parts to it. The first part will relate to practical things churches (or groups of churches within the deanery) can do together, from holding joint services to sharing physical and human resources. Many of these can start to happen at once, and no “approval” from beyond the deanery is required. The second part will relate to your proposals for reshaping boundaries and clergy deployment. A suggested template for a plan is contained in this booklet.

Your fact finding exercise and your answers to the questions above will help you to identify some initial easy steps, as well as the bigger issues that need addressing in the longer term.

Ways churches can work and share together

1. Practical first steps

1. Hold regular (?quarterly) deanery services in different churches, followed by time for socialising, with each church agreeing to support them (and if necessary re-arranging their own services to make it more realistic). A slot in the service could enable the host church to outline their particular ministry.
2. Churches within reasonable reach of each other which have similar styles of worship could combine regularly for a larger “celebration”, and / or work together on a rota basis to provide that kind of service regularly. This will relieve pressure on clergy and make more such opportunities available in the area.
3. Consider combining children’s, youth or other activities across several churches to make them more viable, and consider how transport could be provided.
4. Encourage specialist groups (men’s fellowship, MU) to meet together regularly or combine forces on some occasions.
5. Produce a deanery newsletter (once a quarter?) which details events and activities which other churches can pray for and support. And encourage churches to pass the information on! (Brixworth already does this.)
6. Produce a deanery directory of lay people and clergy with specialist gifts and ministries who can at least act as advisers to others, even if they cannot physically do much more. (Brackley have done this.) Also, produce a deanery directory of services so that people can know where they can go if their “local” church doesn’t have a service, or if local worship is at the “wrong” time for them.
7. Consider organising deanery training courses. These could be practical, say for Eucharistic Assistants. They could be Diocesan *Journeying With God* modules. They could be outreach or discipleship courses such as Alpha or Emmaus. Or they could be



“nurture” courses for new Christians.

8. Think of strategic ways in which you can work together on major projects, such as a deanery mission, Christian Aid, Fair Trade issues, group purchasing of consumables, etc.

9. Discuss if the all-important administrative work could be shared by several parishes working together, perhaps having several admin “centres” across the deanery.

10. Use the annual emphasis on the Diocesan Strategy as a focal point for shared activities, training events, etc.

11. Consider prayerfully a deanery mission (to reach out to people on or beyond the current fringe of the church), perhaps repeated every three or four years, and / or a deanery renewal or teaching week or weekend (for church members actively to renew their faith and commitment).



2. Study the suggested boundary changes

At the same time as finding practical ways of working together more closely, the Synod, or perhaps the standing committee initially, and the Chapter, will need to look at any boundary issues that may affect you (see p. 7 in the booklet *Background information*).

It would be wise not to rush this; for some, it will be a painful time as they face the prospect of losing “their” priest and sharing him or her with a wider grouping of churches. (However, some deaneries are raring to go, too! But even they will need to remain sensitive to churches which find it a difficult process, or are reluctant to get involved.)

Any changes will need to be the subject of the extensive consultation that is required of any proposed Pastoral Scheme. It is important that the changes and the reasons for them are discussed openly and any comments or proposed amendments communicated to the Archdeacon.

However, it is also important that the structural issues do not so dominate discussion that the collaborative issues are overlooked or shelved for later attention. Greater collaboration and sharing of resources can start now, and is not dependent on the structural changes being in place (although those changes are intended to enhance the collaboration in the long term).

3. Discuss possible deployment developments

We do not determine the number of stipendiary clergy in the diocese. Each diocese has a “Sheffield figure” of the number of clergy it should have, and the figure is arrived through a formula that factors in several things such as the total number of clergy available in the country and the number of potential posts in a diocese. Our budget is set on this “Sheffield” number. Currently, there is a national shortage of clergy and while ordinations have taken a recent upturn, the shortage is likely to continue for some time.

We are greatly blessed in this diocese by a steady stream of lay ministers being licensed, and of people pursuing vocations to non-stipendiary (or “self-supporting”) ordained ministry. They greatly enrich and extend the pastoral and public ministry of many churches. However, everyone recognises the central role stipendiary clergy play in

the life of local churches. Their deployment in a fair and strategic way will continue to be a matter for careful and prayerful consideration and wide-ranging discussion and listening.

The current and projected clergy numbers for your deanery are included in p. 11 and 12 of the booklet *Background information*. This will become a regular matter for discussion in the Deanery Synod and the Deanery Pastoral Committee whenever a vacancy occurs. The DPC will make recommendations to the Archdeaconry Pastoral Committee, which in turn will make recommendations to the Bishop. Once approved it will become a firm diocesan commitment as well as a local one.

Ideally, these discussions should be on-going, rather than waiting until vacancies occur. So over the next few months you may wish to devote part of a Synod or Standing Committee meeting to looking at the possibilities, sounding out opinions, and formulating some principles in a non-threatening way – before difficult decisions need to be taken.

Diocesan Synod has agreed to set up a Mission Fund,

which includes the additional support we expect to receive from the Church Commissioners. This will support new appointments for church planting and “fresh expressions” of church. Deaneries will be invited to submit well thought-out ideas for projects to which such a person might be appointed. This will be in addition to the number of stipendiary parish clergy allocated to each deanery.

4. Consider creating clusters

To achieve a more effective form of collaboration and spread of resources, especially in some larger deaneries, you might wish to consider creating “clusters” of churches (of varying traditions) which could co-operate together on a more local area level.

These would probably include two or three multi-parish benefices. Those benefices which already have developed ministry teams, or are used to sharing services and resources together, would be able to contribute their experience to the development of trust and co-operation. They might also need some encouragement to get involved: the “autonomous parish” mentality can soon become an “autonomous benefice” mentality!

5. Think about finance

The Parish Share can seem onerous, especially for smaller parishes in less-well endowed neighbourhoods and for all which face the added burden of being legally required to maintain and repair expensive listed buildings on behalf of the state.

It is important that everyone understands what the Share is for. It is not a tax, it is a contribution to the mission and ministry of the whole church. The bulk of the share goes towards the training, housing, stipends and pensions of the clergy in the diocese. It is a tangible means of mutual support between churches; some contribute more than the ministry costs in their parish, others less, depending partly on their ability to give.

A small proportion supports the legally necessary administrative work of the diocese and the staff it requires to fulfil this obligation, and a small team of full time (and some part time) specialist officers. The latter support parish ministry through their hands-on skills and advice, complementing the work of priests and others who cannot be expected to have all the skills and abilities necessary for ministry in today’s world.

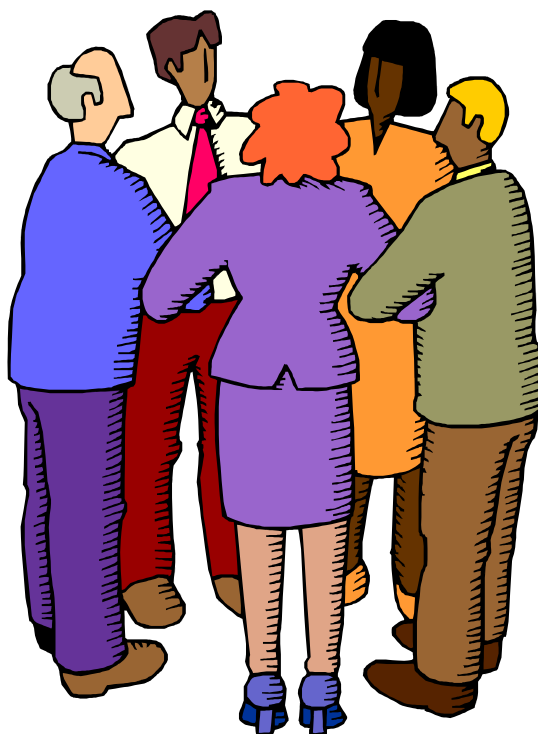
The figures are always made public and the diocese

seeks to be a careful steward of all its resources. Some funding for the two bishops, the Dean and two cathedral canons comes directly from the Church Commissioners and their historic assets, not parish share.

For the time being, it has been decided that the share will continue to be apportioned to each parish, which is responsible to raise it. However, already some deaneries are operating some kind of mutual support system (Oundle and Daventry are two), and this is something the Bishop’s Council wishes to encourage positively in all others. It may be in the future that shares will be apportioned to deaneries and the responsibility for apportionment to individual churches handed over to them.

6. Take the challenge

So there is a “big picture” and some detail. The challenge to each deanery is: can you, together, grasp the big picture, and prayerfully, carefully and sensitively work out how *together* you can translate this on the ground in your locality? The idea of a Deanery Mission Plan is that you should develop a strategy, within certain given constraints, that makes sense to you. And that, most would agree, is far better than having one imposed from “on high”!



A suggested template for a Deanery Mission Plan

Diocese of PeterboroughDeanery Deanery Mission Plan 2006-2010 Revised January 2006

This deanery currently includes the parishes of:

.....
.....
.....

We agree that as members of the Body of Christ and the Church of England's Diocese of Peterborough in this area, we should work together as closely as possible, respecting each other's distinct emphases and ministries, supporting and enriching one another in our ministry and mission to all people in the deanery.

1. In particular

- We agree to work together creatively on the annual focus of the diocesan strategy, and to deliver joint events and activities which we will all seek to support;
- We agree to work together to plant at least two new "expressions of church" in the deanery by (date). We will discuss both the location and nature of these and together support them;
- We will seek to work creatively together in mission order to deliver our contribution (or more) to the diocesan target of 5% growth of Average Weekly Attendance between now and 2010, and will monitor our attendance figures regularly;
- We will discuss and work with each other and with the Archdeacon and Bishops concerning any proposed boundary changes to the deanery, and the future deployment of stipendiary clergy (excluding title curates) in the deanery (including those funded by the Mission Fund), recognising that changing circumstances in church and society and new opportunities for mission and ministry require flexibility and change in church life and structures.

2. Currently, we aim to:

- Agree and implement pastoral schemes relating to proposed deanery boundary changes (specified by (date));
- Work together as closely as possible now with churches in other deaneries which may become part of this deanery when proposed boundary changes take effect, and welcome representatives from them to our Synod, Chapter and other events;
- Discuss deployment of stipendiary clergy (not including title curates) in (specify benefices) and to recommend the following arrangements take effect at the appropriate time (or give date);
- Encourage the following churches to work as "clusters" to share their resources and activities more closely across traditional boundaries, as an important extension of their mission and ministry in that part of the deanery (specify);
- Work together to raise the total parish share for the deanery in this and every year, sharing honestly and sacrificially in mutual support and consideration.

3. During 2006 we especially aim to do the following together (specify activities etc).

.....

4. Over the next two years we especially aim to achieve the following (specify activities, etc).

.....

5. Recognising our limited resources, we shall explore the following deanery (paid or voluntary) appointments (eg youth work, administration) with a view to making them in (year).

.....

6. We agree to review this Plan every year, and to make adjustments to it as necessary. We agree that when we fulfil objectives, we then seek together what further steps may be helpful and strategic for us in the new situation.

Signed by

(Names)

(Position)

(Church)

Date

Note: The Plan would not have any legal force, but the act of signing at a Synod and/ or Chapter would lend it weight and help to forge a bond of common intent. It is important to list the churches committed to the Plan in the event that some refuse to take part. A short liturgy of commitment to the diocesan strategy will be made available, and it may be a suitable form to use when also committing to the Deanery Mission Plan.

Please send a copy of this mission plan to your archdeacon.