

# ANNUAL REPORT 2018

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# MESSAGE FROM BISHOP RACHEL

*I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.*

PHILIPPIANS 1:3-6



**This annual report is a window onto life in the Diocese of Gloucester in 2018 and I hope you find it encouraging and inspiring.**

‘The Diocese’ is who we are together as the Church of England in this part of the country. We are made up of many worshipping communities, including parish churches, Cathedral, schools, chaplaincies and Fresh Expressions of church. The diocesan departments are integral to this.

2018 was the second year of living our vision of LIFE, discerned together in 2016 through prayer and conversation involving several thousand people. The unified vision which emerged is focused on John 10:10 (see page 6).

No one worshipping community will be focusing on every priority, but every worshipping community is asked to discern how the LIFE vision resonates with their calling to be church in their local setting. All of us are committed to our Faith theme, and the evangelistic desire for people of all ages and backgrounds to encounter Jesus Christ is a golden thread running through every aspect of the vision.

For each priority there is a group holding a strategic overview, which includes the provision of resources, training and support. Many priorities are interwoven as this is not about a string of additional diocesan initiatives, but rather how we view all we are and do through a LIFE-shaped lens.

# BISHOP RACHEL'S VISION MESSAGE

As I look back on 2018, I rejoice in so much which has been fanned into flame, and some of this is reflected in the following pages. All of it is underpinned by diocesan staff who are there to support and enable local mission and ministry in many different ways.

As we move into the next year of LIFE I am both excited and expectant about what will continue to be planted, watered and grown. I am also aware of the considerable challenges we face, and the coming years are going to see changes across both urban and rural areas, not least in places of new housing. We have work to do on the future shape of mission and ministry across each deanery and how we nurture and deploy appropriate patterns of leadership (lay and ordained). Of course, our financial resources are key (page 24).

It is my hope that we will have an increasingly varied landscape of church configuration, such that inherited patterns of church are lived amid new ways of doing church, as we better connect with people in the places and activity of their lives. In all of this we need to continue to grow in our understanding of what it means to 'be' the Church, gathered and sent, so that people of all ages are strengthened to live out their faith in their daily lives. This of course includes paying attention to how we are better stewards of creation.

Another of our challenges relates to engagement with children and young people. There are many good news stories across our diocese, not least around schools, colleges and university, yet there is a place for lament as well as thanksgiving. I am glad that there is a commitment to see how LIFE priorities might nurture and deepen faith in young people, families and households.

There is of course the ongoing question for all of us about what we say 'no' to and this needs to be looked at in relation to what it is we implicitly say 'yes' to week after week. We need to be courageous in decisions about the shape of our mission and ministry wherever we are.

However, all these challenges provide immense opportunities and I would like to thank everyone who has been part of the adventure so far, as we give thanks to God for 2018 and the privilege of joining in with God's Kingdom mission of hope and transformation.

Through Jesus Christ, **'God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things'** (Colossians 1:20) and one day **'creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God'** (Romans 8:21). One day all will be brought to completion and God's kingdom will be fully here. Yet all this is not simply about a future hope. As followers of Jesus Christ we are called to join in now with God's mission of liberation and transformation - to work for the flourishing of all people and the flourishing of the whole of creation.

In five years' time I dream of our worshipping communities being celebrated as being at the heart of our wider communities, known as living and breathing beacons of love and hope.

As we serve and engage with those communities, people of every age will be inspired to discover Jesus Christ for themselves.

I dream of new and existing followers of Jesus Christ being increasingly confident in telling their stories of faith, and sharing stories of how our gifts are being nurtured as we participate in God's work, both within the lives of our worshipping communities and in the encounters of our daily lives.

And in all of this I hope that we will be even more connected across the Diocese - both within our worshipping communities and with new people and organisations - working together to transform lives and communities as we continue to pray 'Your kingdom come.'

# Life

*"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full"*

## Leadership

*Committed to transformation*

- Developing diverse lay and ordained leaders from the communities we serve
- Piloting liberating models of leadership and ministry, especially in multi-parish benefices
- Creating learning networks for lay and ordained leaders

## Imagination

*Opening new paths to faith*

- Investing in our engagement with baptism families to spark an amazing adventure with Jesus Christ
- Placing schools at the heart of our mission with creative connections between churches and schools
- Encouraging new and courageous ways of worshipping, in different places, which connect with more people
- Approaching the use, upkeep and future of our church buildings in bold and creative ways



Find out more visit  
[gloucester.anglican.org](http://gloucester.anglican.org)

## Faith

*Living as adventurous followers of Jesus Christ*

- Enabling people to discover new depths to prayer and spiritual growth, individually and together
- Nurturing confident disciples to live out their faith seven days a week
- Sharing our stories in new and different ways, including through digital media

## Engagement

*Living out Christ's love and hope*

- Being advocates for human flourishing, through initiatives which combat injustice, environmental destruction, exclusion and isolation
- Using sport, music and art to build relationships and share the Christian faith
- Connecting with new housing developments in innovative ways
- Investing in people and programmes, which excite young people to explore and grow in faith

# CELEBRATING OUR SHARED MINISTRY - STORIES OF 2018

## Leadership

### *Creating learning networks for lay and ordained leaders*

## Thrive

*"I believe it has given us the impetus to change."*



**Life in a multi-parish benefice is varied and complex. A Thrive community is a committed gathering of people, working together and learning ways to cooperate more effectively with God's mission in the world. It combines ways to explore the experience and wisdom of everyone in the community.**

Ros Greenhalgh, a Rector in the North Cotswold Deanery tells us about her experience of being part of a Thrive community.

"A group representing three out of four of our churches commenced on the Thrive programme and we have thoroughly enjoyed our time together looking at how we might work better together as a multi-parish benefice and how we might reach out to the communities around us. It has given us time to discuss and explore the type of benefice we want to be and those things we might implement to get there. As the benefice rector it has given me the opportunity to discuss and implement ideas with a group of people who are concerned about mission.

*"I believe it has given us the impetus to change and has involved others which has made the process much easier."*

The Revd John Longuet-Higgins, Vicar of the West of Severn Benefice said, *"We have used Thrive to build a leadership team around our Family Development Minister. Some of the outcomes are a monthly Messy Church, Family Church, and Little Church."*



Leadership

## Piloting liberating models of leadership and ministry, especially in multi-parish benefices

### The Funeral Project

**Turning a 20% decline in the number of Church of England funerals over the last few years into a 10% increase.**

**Gloucester City Funerals is a diocesan initiative offered to Funeral Directors (initially in Gloucester City) to provide the most complete range of ministers for funerals from a single source.**

In the Gloucester City area, we can supply Licensed Ministers for any funeral situation from priests for traditional church funerals to ministers for crematorium services or woodland burials, with each ceremony tailored to the needs of individual families.

People wanting a Christian funeral will have a date and time agreed within 24 hours of their call.

The Revd Mike Smith, who is leading the Funeral Project said. *"The central booking process allows clergy to be confident that if they can't take a funeral, they know that the funeral will be handled well by a professional minister, whilst retaining the pastoral contact with the grieving family within the parish."*

"In addition, the central invoicing and payment system takes the burden off the treasurers in parishes and ensures prompt payment whether the funeral director has paid or not."

[www.gloucester.anglican.org/about-us/our-churches/funerals](http://www.gloucester.anglican.org/about-us/our-churches/funerals)



Leadership

## Developing diverse lay and ordained leaders from the communities that we service

### Celebration of Black saints

**Celebrating those who have inspired us from diverse backgrounds.**

**A special service of choral evensong with a difference was held in Gloucester Cathedral celebrating Black History Month. The event was organised with a group of people who are working to encourage Black, Asian and minority ethnic vocations across the diocese. The service started with African drumming and included pieces from both Renewal, a diverse gospel choir, and the Cathedral choir, with a sermon by Bishop Rachel.**

*This service has been part of a programme of events to encourage a diversity of people in our communities to grow and be nurtured into leadership.*

After the service the celebration continued with food and drink, which was provided by the different communities who came together to organise the event.

Elder Anthony Saunders was involved in the service and said that he hoped the churches could continue the relationship. He said, "The service was for the Anglican Church to celebrate with the Black Minority Ethnic community and also because it was Black History month. For me as a person from the Black ME Community it was a most inspiring occasion. Overall truly reflective and inspiring."





## imagination

*Encouraging new and courageous ways of worshipping, in different places, which connect with more people*

## A service in the churchyard

***“Perhaps the greatest joy — and, I believe, reflection of the Kingdom — is the sense of community which the service creates.”***



**Highnam Church has been connecting with people who may never have been inside their church building before, but often visit loved ones in the churchyard, by being imaginative in how they offer new ways of worship.**

The Vicar of the Highnam Benefice, the Revd Canon Helen Sammon explains their new churchyard service.

“The footfall through many of our churchyards is high, and yet often we engage with these families only over questions of plastic flowers and inappropriate grave management, as we tread the fine line between upholding churchyard regulations and responding to pastoral need. As with weddings, baptisms and funerals however, there is a great opportunity to engage pastorally and as part of the mission of our churches with visitors to our churchyards.

*“It was these encounters and observations that led me to plan our first ‘Service in the churchyard.’*

“It was held entirely outside. The people we hoped would engage with this were those who are familiar with the churchyard, and yet might feel no connection with the interior of the church building.

“The service was simple and short and embraced the whole churchyard so every person at some point could be close to the grave of his or her loved one. We ended with a cream tea outside, giving a chance for conversation and connections to be made.

“A woman came on her own from several miles away, having been invited by a member of our community. Thirty years ago, her sister had been murdered. She said that she could rarely visit the grave, as she found it too distressing, but came to this event as she knew that she would have the support and prayers of others.”

## imagination

*Approaching the use, upkeep and future of our church buildings in bold and creative ways*

## Worship, food and fitness

***“We are passionate about wanting our church to be at the heart of our community.”***



**St Peter’s Church in Framilode (part of the Stroudwater Team) has taken the creative use of their church building to a new level.**

Visitors to the church can experience pop up restaurants, fitness classes, indoor bowls, tap dance classes and special Severn Bore breakfasts with a great view.

In the past five years, a toilet and a kitchen have been fitted in the church and the pews replaced with chairs and folding tables, allowing more freedom to host different events. Current plans include new lighting and better audio-visual equipment to enable the introduction of film nights.

Team Vicar Liz Palin said. “We are passionate about wanting our church to be at the heart of our community. We know that by offering our fitness classes and pop up restaurants we are engaging with people, some of whom would never usually come through our church doors. This way they can visit for an event and we can start to build relationships, make people feel welcomed and often they will then feel comfortable to come back and take part in worship.

*“It’s also been about making the most of our church building as a community hub. Churches can often be the only community space people have in more rural areas and so we have wanted to make the most of what we have.”*

Betty Haynes, who is on the Framilode PCC and helps organise events in church said, “Events like these are showing real faith – God’s kindness and acceptance and love to everyone. Church isn’t just for church people. St Francis reportedly said, “Preach Jesus, and if necessary use words.” I really believe that is true. I’m proud of the church’s reputation for being welcoming and accepting and offering a diverse range of activities to connect people.”



imagination

*Placing the schools at the heart of our mission with creative connections between churches and schools*

## Church and school working in partnership

**Bringing the school and worshipping community together.**



**The Revd Susan Cooke, Vicar of the Greenway Benefice has been working to create close links with Shurdington Church of England Primary School with some brilliant results.**

Susan shares her story. "When I arrived in the parish, work was already underway to create a good church/school partnership, but it was clear that the headteacher was keen to do more and so was I.

*"We were already doing Open the Book and running an after-school Wednesday club for the children. So, we decided that to increase our links we would hold our benefice service in the school. This way both the school and worshipping community were invited to come together.*

"It was from this service that one of our members asked if their grandchild could be baptised in the school, which her elder sister attended, as it would be a natural place to invite other children and their parents from the school to attend.

"We thought this was a great idea and the family even found an old stone sink, which we used as the font to baptise Evie.

"It felt natural for Evie's sister to be in her school and to worship and much less daunting for all the family and friends they invited, some of whom get nervous about going into a church."

Headteacher Jon Millin said, "Our close link with the church benefits our school in so many ways, whether it be the amazing regular worship they lead, support with prayer or the amount of volunteers we have to support school life."

imagination

*Investing in our engagement with baptism families to spark an amazing adventure with Jesus Christ*

## Baptism – making connections and building relationships

**Wrapping Gods love around the child.**

**St John's Church in Churchdown and Innsworth have been creatively connecting with families that enquire and have their child baptised at the church. Members of the church have shared what they do, to make this a very special time in the family's lives.**

"We provide baptism packs which we give out at baby and children's groups as well as providing it online. It's full of information, explaining what baptism is, through to the service. This way families feel confident about what it all means and what they can expect.

"We always make sure that there is a member of the baptism team at baptism preparations. This way we can build relationships, so when parents come through the church doors, they see a familiar face straight away, which makes people feel much more comfortable.

*"We make blankets for the babies, which are gifted to them on their baptism day. Sewn inside the blanket is the message 'With love from St John's Church on your baptism'. They are treasured by the families and we will often see the babies out and about with their blankets. For us it's about wrapping God's love around the child in a visible way.*



"We gift families with a baptism card and we ask the godparents to get each member of the congregation to sign the card. Families keep this card as another special reminder of the day.

"We will always send a one-year baptism anniversary card, inviting the family to a service. We ask them to bring their baptism candle with them which we then light at the service.

"To keep connected we use Facebook letting families know about every occasion we have for children in the church. It's a very effective way of staying in touch and keeping the relationship alive."

[www.gloucester.anglican.org/your-ministry/children-youth-and-families/](http://www.gloucester.anglican.org/your-ministry/children-youth-and-families/)

## Enabling people to discover new depths to prayer and spiritual growth, individually and together

### The Mez

***“We get to chat with people, the food is good and we share stories about what it means to live ‘kingdom’ lives.”***

**The Mez, a weekly Friday night meal, is about bringing together the many different people that work with, volunteer or link with and form part of the Grace Network community.**

The Grace Network is a social enterprise based in Stroud Deanery. It provides many different services from a furniture shop to a parent and child enterprise through to facilitating the local food bank. The Grace Network employs people who have often had a difficult life and come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

*The meal is an opportunity to spend time together and to talk about the big and little questions of life. Placemats around the table have ‘Table Talk’\* questions, which encourages lots of informal conversation.*

Cara Mansell, who is involved in the organisation of the Mez said, “We wanted to create different spaces where we could bring people together to share the Gospel of Jesus. So, we formed the Wayfarer project, which was the creation of seven sacred spaces where the Kingdom of God is made tangible to those who enter.

“The refectory, where our Mez meal is held is one of those seven sacred spaces. It’s such a brilliant time together.

“Our family love eating at the Mez. The kids get to play with friends, we get to chat with people, the food is good, and we share stories about what it means to live ‘kingdom’ lives. It’s a great way to end the working week.”

\*Table Talk is a brilliant resource by the Ugly Duckling Company [www.theuglyducklingcompany.com](http://www.theuglyducklingcompany.com)



## Nurturing confident disciples to live out their faith seven days a week

### My everyday faith story by Di Blandford

**“I’m a Police Inspector in Gloucestershire constabulary. For the last 20 years I’ve worked in the CID, predominately with rape and serious sexual offences and also child abuse offences. So, I’ve worked for many years alongside people who are vulnerable by virtue of their age or the situation they are living in and I’ve got a real passion for helping people like that.**



*“I think part of that comes from my Christian faith where Jesus also worked and spoke and loved the outcasts in their society. I’m really passionate about helping young people in particular and I’m currently working with children that have been exploited through county lines and drug exploitation. I feel it’s really important for them to get early intervention to get them out of that criminal activity through sport or creative activities, by having a stable adult in their lives who’s just there to support them through that pivotal age as they are growing into adulthood.*

“I worship at Cranham Church and I’m involved outside of work with PSALMS which is a local sports ministry project. There is an amazing team and they do all sorts of sports with young people and teenagers and take them away to residential etc. It gives them the channels to talk about their faith and that links well with my police work as through this type of ministry, these young people I work with could have a stable adult and support network which helps them to become happy and healthy adults.”



## faith

Sharing our stories in new and different ways,  
including through digital media

## #Liedentity

*“My desire is for every person to discover their worth and potential as a unique individual created in the image of God.”*



### Print, TV and radio

80 plus individual articles and interviews on the #Liedentity campaign. This includes national BBC breakfast news, the Telegraph, Guardian, Independent, the Times, Church press and extensive support from radio stations such as Heart FM and the BBC.

### Videos produced

14, with around 20,000 individual views

### Tweet impressions

190,612 (not including conference)

### Facebook reach

approx. 40,500 people

Three years ago Bishop Rachel embarked on a campaign to raise awareness of body image anxiety in young people and the pressures they face through social media, TV and advertising to look a certain way.

Bishop Rachel said, “Over the last couple of years I have been speaking publicly about this issue and promoting the message that who you are, is more than how you look. I launched a social media campaign #Liedentity with pupils from All Saints Academy in Cheltenham, challenging negative body image and encouraging young people to look within to discover true value and beauty. This has given me a great opportunity to speak with young people about my own identity in Christ and my desire for every person to discover their worth and potential as a unique individual created in the image of God.”

In 2018 we held a national liedentity conference. We invited 200 people who worked with young people in dioceses across the country and provided information and resources which we hope will help build self-esteem in the many young people that the Church engages with.

*During the day the use of our hashtag saw it trending up to 100 real engagements per hour on twitter. We had 1,072,712 impressions with a reach of 289,279 people.*

[www.gloucester.anglican.org/parish-resources/communications/lieentity](http://www.gloucester.anglican.org/parish-resources/communications/lieentity)

## engagement

Using sport, music and art to build relationships and share the Christian faith

## Cathedral hosts football tournament

*“It’s an experience that the kids will remember for the rest of their lives.”*



Around 30,000 people have watched the Cathedral tournament video  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lddzTNTpYg>

The Sports LIFE priority group have been delivering a diverse programme of sports and events to connect and share the Christian faith with and to children and young people across our diocese.

One of these events was a football tournament held in the Cathedral. About 300 people came, made up of football teams from schools, communities and churches.

Andy Poole from PSALMS (Putting sports alongside sports ministry) said; “It’s an experience that the kids will remember for the rest of their lives. When they think about Church, they will look back on this day of enjoyment and engagement. It was a huge success and the Cathedral was buzzing all day.

The results of this day continue to build positive relationships. For example, churches are preparing to deliver sports ministry as a result of their experience and number of young people who attended now continue to meet in PSALMS sports sessions because of the positive experience they had.

This event was part of a wider sports ministry plan to develop fresh expressions of church that grow disciples who make disciples. This work has so far connected with –

### Pulse games - A half day of fun and energy for Key Stage 2 pupils that focuses on PE and RE/PSHE

1,202 school children  
102 volunteers from local churches  
84% of the children were keen to attend church events after experiencing the Pulse games

### Active RE - Using a sport, games and physical activity to teach key learning points

359 children engaged through 132 lessons

### Sports camps summer 2018

Around 100 young people attended the camps, with 83% saying they would come again and 56% saying they would now like to explore going to a church as a result of the camp.

## engagement

Connecting with new housing developments in innovative ways

## Three benefices, one mission

*“How do we best put forward God’s mission?”*



*“We met and discussed the parish boundaries and how best we could serve our communities”, continued Gwyneth. “None of us were defensive over boundaries, or people, we were just all passionate about doing the best for our communities and serving them in the most effective way. Which is why it was agreed it would be the Longlevens benefice who would develop the relationship with the school and reach out to the new housing community.”*

**The way the church ministers is often determined by parish boundaries that have been put in place by church authorities. But three vicars from Gloucester have been working together to discern how they can best put forward God’s Mission, alongside the needs and hopes of the communities they serve.**

The Revd Gwyneth Gibbens, Vicar of Longlevens Benefice, shares their story. “A big new housing area was being built, which included a new primary school in Longford. It turned out that the new housing covered two different benefices – St John’s Churchdown and the Severn Towers Benefice.

Although it included these two areas, the natural centre of gravity for people connecting with the church was Longlevens, because of the practicalities behind access and roads. So, when the new headteacher contacted me to discuss delivering Open the Book, I couldn’t agree, because the school was not in my parish!”

It was then that Gwyneth came together with the Revd Suzanne Skepper, Rector of Severn Towers Benefice and the Revd Jacqui Hyde Vicar of St John’s Churchdown.

This conversation led to the three benefices working very closely together, which included organising a joint mission weekend in Longford, which Bishop Robert supported and attended.

“The three of us coming together has been one of the most precious things. A true partnership. We are now in the process of officially changing the parish boundaries!”

## engagement

Being advocates for human flourishing, through initiatives which combat injustice, environmental destruction., exclusion and isolation

## Dementia Songs of Praise

*Remembering the past, engaging in the present*

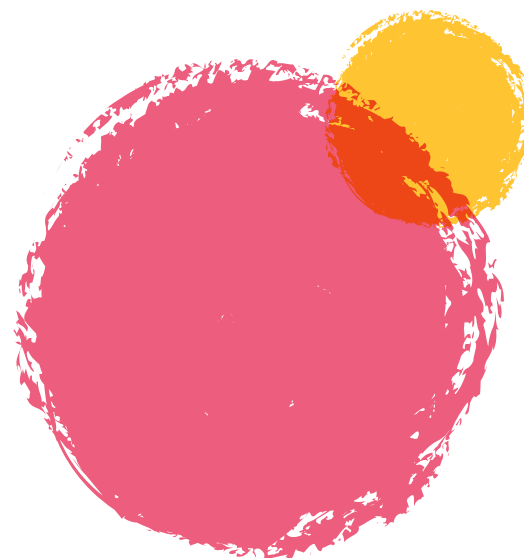
**The Revd Canon Nikki Arthy and her pastoral team became increasingly aware of a number of people in their worshipping communities living with dementia. They wanted better to understand and support those who have dementia and the people who care for them.**

Nikki said. “We wanted to understand dementia better and how we could welcome those living with dementia into our church building and so we arranged training to become more informed. One of the things to come out of that training was an idea to start a monthly Songs of Praise for those with dementia and their carers.

“We sing lots of old hymns that people love and trigger memories. We have had some lovely feedback, with one carer telling us that it’s the only thing the gentleman she looks after will get out of bed for.

*“Memories may fade, we may become muddled, but we are always held in the memory of God who loves each and every one of us.*

“Our responsibility as a church is to reach out and support those living with dementia and their carers, as well as going out into our communities and supporting those living with dementia as well.”



Watch our video here

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAtix3uSKBw&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAtix3uSKBw&feature=youtu.be)



Investing in people and programmes, which excite young people to explore and grow in faith

## SPREE

*Encountering God  
in a powerful way*

The Diocese has joined forces with Urban Saints, Worcester Diocese and Scripture Union to run SPREE, a high-octane camping and activity weekend for children and young people aged 8 to 17 years.

The fast-paced programme is jam-packed with a wide range of brilliant activities, day and night and the Christian faith is explained in a clear and relevant way in age-appropriate sessions, suitable for children and young people from all backgrounds.



11 year old Sam was one of the young people who went along. He said, "Mostly it was about the fun activities that we did. I really liked CrossFya, the rappers – not just because of the rap, but because they believed in God. In our groups we talked about God and Jesus a lot and it made me believe more too."

Sarah Todd, Assistant Curate at St Barnabas Gloucester, took a group of young people. She said of the experience, *"Spree 2018 was a wonderful weekend of worship, teaching, fellowship, prayer and fun. As a leader, I came back inspired, thankful for time spent with our wonderful children and youth and with a suntan! Leaders, youth and children engaged fully with the programme on a hot weekend and enjoyed spending time together as a church family and meeting new diocesan friends who were camping nearby. We can't wait for 2019!!"*

[www.urbansaints.org/spree](http://www.urbansaints.org/spree)

## 2018 STATISTICS

Marriages  
and blessings

969

Baptisms and  
thanksgivings

1,655

Funerals

2,582

\*USA adults

11,105

Easter  
attendance

22,574

\*USA children

1,214

Christmas  
attendance

53,374

Number of  
Fresh Expressions

212

\*Usual Sunday Attendance

# MESSAGE FROM COLIN RANK

CHAIR OF THE DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE

*You will have read on the preceding pages all the wonderful, hope-filled stories from around the diocese which demonstrate how the LIFE vision is showing the fruit of God's faithfulness through his people. The finances of the GDBF show a more complex message of God's faithfulness and also his challenge to us and our discipleship.*



The financial outturn for 2018 followed that of 2017 in producing a significant deficit in the GDBF accounts. GDBF's directors commissioned a detailed review of the sustainability of the diocesan finances, a summary of which follows this message. This clarifies the challenge that we as a Church face which is the rising cost of funding the traditional model of parish ministry; the clergy, their housing and associated costs. As things stand these costs are not being met by parish share contributions from PCCs. Instead we are having to rely on the generosity of previous generations held in GDBF reserves.

In this respect we are faced with a significant missional challenge and are working through the recommendations set out on page 27 of this report. We need to make sure our mission and ministry is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to this and future generations. Bishop Robert will be leading conversations with every deanery about their future mission plans.

As ever, God's provision is at work and I am encouraged by the initial response to an initiative to assist PCC's to engage in our response to God's generosity coupled to the Parish Giving Scheme which helps to manage stewardship and improves cash flow. The results have been promising. It is the intention to provide every assistance to those parishes who wish to engage in improving their fund raising and experiencing less pressure from financial need.

In 1919 the Church established PCCs as a means of galvanizing the whole people of God to better serve the Gospel. In the same year the GDBF was established to complement that structure and support and resource mission and ministry across the whole diocese, recognising ours is a shared diocesan mission and not an aggregation of local ministries. One hundred years on we, together, need to consider the way forward as GDBF, PCCs and individuals, to make sure we enable the Gospel to be proclaimed today and into the future. Due to the generosity of our forebears we have the opportunity and the resources to do this in a considered manner. It is my prayer that everyone will engage in response by moving the issue of stewardship up the agenda.

# HOW HAVE WE DONE

SOME HIGHLIGHTS

number of stipendiary clergy funded



Stipendiary vacancies at 31st December 2018 were 18 (2017:15)

parish share contributions



“ongoing” deficit



balance sheet value (net assets)





# DIRECTORS' REPORT

for the year ended 31 December 2018

## STRATEGIC REVIEW

### The sustainability of the diocesan mission and finances

In 2019 Bishop's Council commissioned a small group to investigate and report on the sustainability of the budgets of GDBF. This commission was in response to members of Council reporting that parishioners were deeply concerned about the sustainability of the finance of the diocese and therefore via parish share, GDBF.

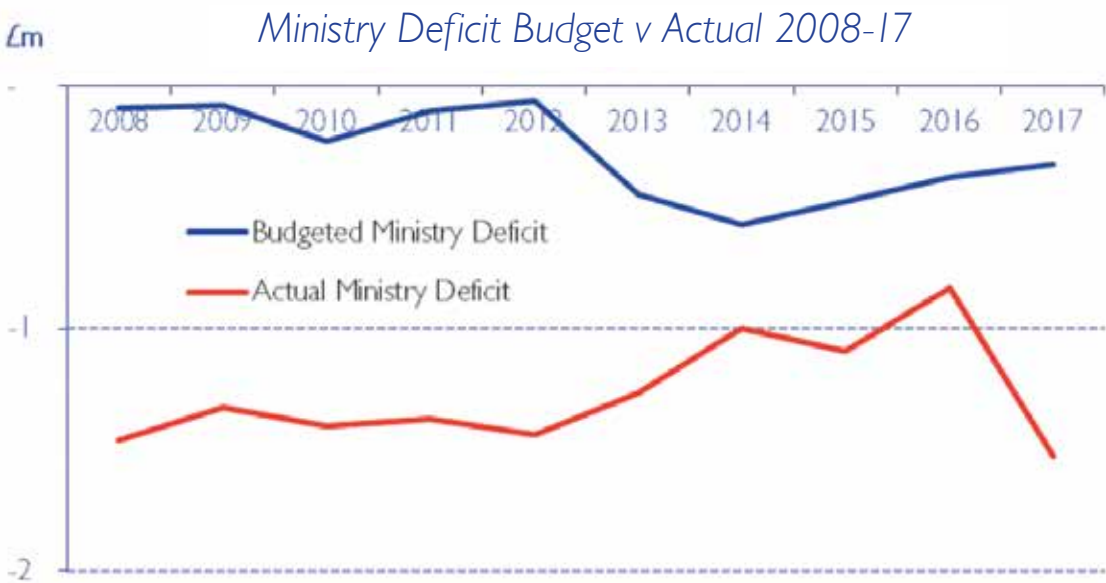
The group undertook a ten-year retrospective look at GDBF's finances (2008-17) and a wider review of diocesan mission and ministry as the rock on which GDBF's finances are founded.

The report is sobering. Whilst not identifying an impending cataclysm there is an unavoidable conclusion that the current structure and financing of the diocesan mission is unsustainable and requires generational change in order to be put onto a sustainable basis. This section sets out a brief summary of the report's conclusions and recommendations.

#### Underlying shortfall in funding parish ministry of £1m p.a. funded by asset sales

Between 2007 and 2018 the aggregate gap between parish share collected and Parish Ministry costs was £12.7m. This deficit was funded through asset sales (£8.8m), trading profits of Good and Faithful Servant (G&FS) (£2.1m nett of development fund grants) and savings in non-parish ministry (£2.0m).

In essence GDBF has had to sell inherited assets to the tune of £1m a year for the past ten years to subsidise shortfalls in parish share. Looked at another way the average benefice in the diocese has had over £100k from GDBF property sales to subsidise its ministry costs in the past decade. Whilst there has been some considerable efforts by officers and committees to maximise the value of these sales (notably Glebe Committee and G&FS) and ensure such sales were well managed, nevertheless now historic resources have gone.



Benefices are struggling; 60% at risk; 10% critically.

Looking at the underlying finances of parishes in the diocese the group notes that parish share represents around 35% of parish expenditure as a whole. This would need to increase to 39% of income to mean parish share met the needs of GDBF's costs in support of parish ministry. This is against a background of over 70% of benefices reporting a surplus every year reviewed.

It was notable that too many parishes rely on the prevalence of "fundraising" rather than regular, unrestricted giving as their principle income source. Fundraising is less sustainable and means the "use" of such income is more often set by the donors than strategically by the PCC.

Putting finances alongside mission statistics the report concludes that around 60% of benefices are at notable risk of being missionally and financially unsustainable. Over ten percent of benefices are facing an immediate crisis. The following summary table indicates the broad outline of the reports analysis:

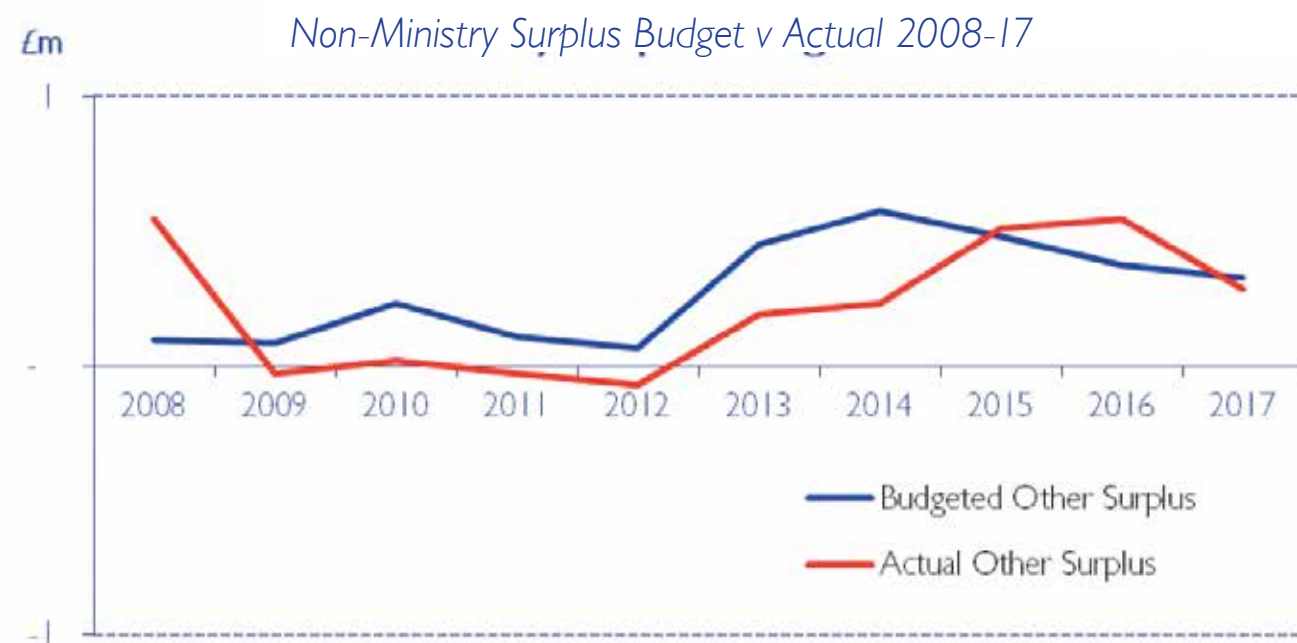
	Number of benefices in each category		
	Green	Amber	Red
Reported Annual Surplus	46	19	27
Benefice Population	40	20	32
Congregation size	35	18	39
Average Giving	8	28	56
Parish Share = Tax Efficient Planned Giving	14	16	62
Parish Share (low = green, red = high)	48	28	16
Number of Church Buildings	19	32	41
Aggregate	33%	25%	42%

Looking at which benefices are most sustainable it is clear the strongest correlation is good stewardship – in benefices where regular giving covers the cost of parish share there is no concern for sustainability missionally or financially. Cause and effect within this particular correlation are not clear but it is important that simply making a "surplus" does not offer any assurance of long term sustainability for local mission, indeed the two most sustainable areas are both financial.

The group also noted that the analysis was based on benefice rather than parish level ministry and had concerns that the PCC structure may be tying too much financial resource too locally and thereby limiting wider mission. This proposition notes the obligations on PCCs are heavily biased towards buildings (essential legal obligations), then ministry (mainly parish share as a moral obligation) with mission suffering as a result. Coupling this order of "necessity" with the widely perceived "ease" of local fundraising/giving to the building rather than mission makes a compelling case that the Church is struggling against its structures to invest in mission and evangelism.

## The burden of “overheads”

A complaint often heard is that the cost of the “overheads” of belonging to the Church of England are a burden for parishes. The report is clear that this is not true as the following chart comparing “non-ministry” income and expenditure demonstrates:



This chart also illustrates the impact of the Central Services Review (CSR) in 2013/4 in substantially reducing “non-ministry” costs. Total non-ministry costs in 2017 were lower in absolute terms than they were in 2007. This is despite introducing the new, necessary departments of HR and Safeguarding and the highly effective Parish Giving Scheme.

The group noted that there are unlikely to be any further savings from “central service”, although cost sharing with the Cathedral should be looked at for good governance. It is also very clear from the accounts presented elsewhere in this report that the cost savings to the Housing budget is unsustainable without change. The modest cut (£50k) proposed by the CSR was made to an already underfunded budget. Work is underway to better balance need and affordability but it is expected to take some time.

## Recommendations

The report made the following recommendations (summarised here), all of which were adopted by and are being worked on by Bishop’s Council;

- A.** Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Group (DMPG) to undertake a detailed assessment of the sustainability of each benefice; both a short-term project and a long-term methodology in pastoral schemes and ministry deployment planning.
- B.** To invest in Stewardship support for parishes across the diocese to increase unrestricted regular giving.
- C.** Bishop’s Council and DMPG to seek to simplify the structures of ministry across the diocese to minimise the risk of structural impediments to mission
- D.** To invest in ways of lightening the emotional and practical burden of church buildings on PCCs.
- E.** To continue to promote and articulate in different ways the fundamentally missional purpose of parish share and its necessity to enable the sustainability of the Church in this diocese.
- F.** To investigate further costs sharing between the GDBF offices and the Cathedral.

## There is however hope

Fortunately the good stewardship of the GDBF’s balance sheet over the generations means there are resources, and therefore time, to effect change. We also see signs of growth and clear mission opportunities around the diocese, aided by the LIFE vision and reported elsewhere in this document.

Bishop’s Council are therefore both resolute and hopeful in looking to address the strategic challenges facing the sustainability of the diocesan mission and finance.

For the full 2018 Annual Accounts please visit the Finance Page which can be found under Parish Resources on the Diocese of Gloucester website.

[www.gloucester.anglican.org/parish-resources/parish-finance-gift-aid-legal-advice](http://www.gloucester.anglican.org/parish-resources/parish-finance-gift-aid-legal-advice)



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