

Diocesan peer review report

Diocese	CANTERBURY
Date of peer review meeting	2 nd October 2018
Date of peer review report	11 th October 2018
Diocesan representatives	Bishop Trevor Willmott (Bishop of Dover), Jenny Corcoran (Bishop's Chaplain), Anna Drew (Director of Communications), Colin Evans (Strategic Programme Manager), Julian Hills (Diocesan Secretary), Mike Keirle (Dean of Jersey), Jo Kelly-Moore (Archdeacon of Canterbury), Darren Miller (Archdeacon of Ashford), John Moore (Vice-Dean of Guernsey) and Stephen Taylor (Archdeacon of Maidstone)
Peer review panel members	David Cain (Chair), Marlene Wylie and Bishop Pete Broadbent, supported by Alan Cruickshank

1. Report introduction

- a. The peer review panel is very grateful to those from the diocese who attended the peer review meeting and those others who assisted in the preparations. We were pleased with the openness that was displayed in the self-assessment and at the meeting itself: this was very valuable to the panel and we hope it will increase the value of the process to the diocese.
- b. We note that, since the peer review meeting took place, Bishop Trevor has announced that he will retire in May 2019. We pray for him in his work over the coming months, for the senior diocesan team as they prepare to lead mission and ministry through the vacancy period, and for those involved in the discernment process. At our meeting we were struck by the coherence of the senior diocesan team and we encourage you to put efforts into maintaining this.
- c. We also note the continuing discussions regarding the diocese's role in relation to the Church of England in the Channel Islands. The comments we make below do not assume any particular outcome from these discussions, but equally we hope they will have relevance for the Church on these Islands.
- d. For the record, the three areas of your self-assessment which we explored in depth during the meeting were: **Leadership, strategy and culture, Serving individuals and transforming communities, and Resources.**
- e. We hope and pray that you will find our report helpful in capturing the key issues we discussed and our subsequent reflections.

2. The panel's conclusions

The peer review panel has reached the following key conclusions from this peer review:

- a. We welcomed Bishop Trevor's summary that the last two years had been 'purposeful and realistic'. In relation to 'purposeful', and in the light of the previous peer review panel's conclusions, we were very pleased to see that you have developed a clear statement of your Changed Lives, Changing Lives strategy. Importantly, you have also brought in a Strategic Programme Manager and have introduced practices which have positioned you well to make progress. You have begun to communicate this strategy, helping others to understand the vision (although we will return to the theme of communications later in our report).
- b. In relation to 'realistic' you obviously understand the challenge of a declining and ageing church attendance, and the need for continued and increased generosity in order to provide the ministry and fulfil the mission you describe in your strategy. You have done well to achieve growth in income from parish share and high collection rates, but you are clearly alive to the financial challenges you face as a diocese.
- c. It was good to see how important prayer has been in your strategic journey and we were encouraged that you were continuing to make prayer a strategic priority.
- d. We were very pleased to explore with you your approach to transforming communities and serving individuals. As indicated on the self-assessment form, this comes across as an area of particular strength.
- e. We were encouraged by the 'policy on a page' for integrated missional work through churches and schools. We think you are wise to make work with teenagers a priority for action.
- f. You know that you need a new website. Coming from outside the diocese, we believe this is now both essential and urgent and we were pleased to hear it was a priority for this autumn. You are also alive to the need to keep the website up to date with good content, and to refresh it in perhaps two years' time.
- g. We were pleased to hear of new worshipping communities, including the excellent example of Ignite, and you have learned the important lesson to put Christ 'front and centre' from the very start of new gathered groups. However, we were left unsure whether you were actively creating an environment where church planting, other fresh expressions of Church and new congregations were being strongly encouraged and facilitated. There are questions, too, about the replicability of the Ignite model – this will need careful monitoring – and of how the Church across the Diocese can be refreshed.
- h. You recognise the challenge of helping church members into shared leadership and being enabled to share their faith and tell their story, and this highlights the importance of developing your innovative strategy for Missional Learning Communities.

3. Celebrating the good news

There were many aspects of your work which are to be commended and the panel believes that the following diocesan strengths and examples of good practice might be shared more widely across the Church:

- a. As well as many examples of individual projects relating to transforming communities and serving individuals, we particularly appreciated the more structural steps you had

taken such as the introduction of community audits to ensure that local efforts are well targeted and designed.

- b. Not only do you have your 'finger on the pulse' of housing developments across the diocese, you are being proactive with local churches to determine the best local responses, including relocating clergy housing into better community locations.
- c. Your development of Ignite will continue to provide an exciting model for others in the Church who want to reach marginalised individuals with the gospel of Christ. There will also be important learning points for others arising from your replication of this model in other locations.

4. The panel's suggestions for the diocese to consider

We offer the following suggestions which the diocese may wish to consider in terms of changes, improvements, and/or in-depth exploration:

- a. *Changed Lives, Changing Lives* must clearly remain your priority. We suggest that the first challenge is to communicate – and keep communicating – the strategy and how it relates to individual worshipping communities. (Although anecdotal, it is probably true that when you are bored with communicating the strategy you will probably only have reached half the people you want to reach). The second challenge will increasingly be to 'hold your nerve', building and sustaining your efforts on the strands you have selected in order to achieve the outcomes you hope to see.
- b. With this in mind, and in the light of our discussions about 'what if you don't?', we would urge you to be clear among yourselves about the absolute priorities for the next year, drawing a distinction between these and the issues which you would love to address but which could conceivably be deferred if this proves necessary.
- c. We comment above that a new website is essential. You have established a budget for this work but it is critically important that you make sure that sufficient funds are in place to design and deliver what will probably be the most prominent face of diocesan life. Typically, this might require a budget well into five-digits especially as there appears to be a need for a significant redevelopment of the website.
- d. We suggest that you model the 'financial cliff-edge' that David Cain described, probably as part of your work to update your financial strategy; this work might also consider whether you are making the best use of your Designated Funds.
- e. We suggest that you take advantage of the parish share review which you have begun to find new ways to communicate the purpose of the system, and to create a scheme which encourages and welcomes above-share contributions from parishes and/or deaneries.
- f. We believe you should seek external advice on how to strengthen your approach to new worshipping communities, from Bishop Ric Thorpe or from dioceses which are actively pursuing this course of action, and to identify ways to tease out and harness interest from your churches. For example, the Centre for Church Planting and Growth offers a very useful guidance on a [deanery mapping process](#).
- g. Your risk register demonstrates good practice in recording the key risks you face and you have recently updated it. We would encourage you to identify ways to manage the highest risks more actively.

5. 'Signposts' and other actions

The peer review panel and SDU representative offer the following 'signposts' to people

and/or further information:

- a. Alan Cruickshank has provided you with copies of the slides he used in his presentation on learning points from other dioceses, and he is happy to provide further information if that would be useful to you.
- b. It would be helpful for you to keep in touch with Exeter Diocese's progress on their SDF project which explores sustainable models for less-used church buildings.
- c. You asked whether other dioceses had experience of creating a Disaster Recovery Plan. Alan suggests that you could make contact with Leeds Diocese (Debbie Child, Diocesan Secretary) and/or Gloucester Diocese (Benjamin Preece Smith, Diocesan Secretary).
- d. Bishop Pete has shared information from London Diocese on the interplay of GDPR/SARs with safeguarding and other record keeping; we hope this is helpful to you.
- e. Although not mentioned at the meeting, there may be lessons you can learn from Guildford Diocese who have recently completed a parish share review.
- f. Alan Cruickshank will share with Anna Drew some additional information about diocesan website development, gathered from his colleagues in Church House, Westminster

6. Diocesan Response¹

Our comments on and response to the peer review panel's report are:

We would like to thank the panel for an enjoyable peer review process and an engaging conversation throughout the peer review meeting. The report fully captures and reflects the development of the diocese and holds a helpful mirror up that enables us to see clearly where our focus needs to be as we seek to lead the diocese forward.

We have shared the report widely as you have suggested, including on our website. We will also be taking your recommendations into the relevant strategic and operational governance structures and processes going forward. In particular, our Strategic Programme Manager will facilitate the tracking of our actions against each of the recommendations and will present regular reports on progress to the senior team.

This peer review has been most helpful to us and we would thank all the members of the panel for their time, generosity, openness and helpful suggestions in conducting the review for us. We were particularly pleased to note your comments about the strong coherence of the senior team which gives us every confidence for the future of the diocese.

¹ The diocese is invited to provide a response to the peer reviewer's report and this ideally should be sent to the Strategy & Development Unit within 4-6 weeks of receipt of the peer review team's report; the Unit will then forward the response onto the peer review panel.