

AXBRIDGE DEANERY

DEANERY MISSION PLAN

‘Resourcing Effective Ministry for Effective Mission’

Process

The plan has been devised through discussion at PCCs, a Deanery Mission and Pastoral Group (“DMPG”) away day, further discussion at clergy chapter, revision at DMPG. Circulated at Synod members in May 2017 and agreed by members in July 2017.

The strap-line for Axbridge Deanery: ‘Resourcing Effective Ministry for Effective Mission’ arose from the DMPG away day. All we seek to do as a Deanery is rooted in this phrase.

The process began early in 2016 and it is a happy coincidence that the Diocese has subsequently charged each deanery with taking on this process. Questions were sent to all the parishes in preparation for the away day and we also were concerned to ensure that we keep looking outside of our own narrow church needs to the needs of our local communities. We have been supported throughout the process by Caroline Bruce, Parish Consultancy Officer and part of the diocesan Ministry for Mission team.

The Plan was updated and revised again in January 2020, following discussion at DMPG and Deanery Synod.

Introduction

Axbridge Deanery is broadly a rural area with both affluence and deprivation. It is divided into ten benefices. There are ten stipendiary clergy equating to nine full-time posts; one self-supporting associate minister, two stipendiary curates and one self supporting curate. There is a supportive chapter which enjoys meeting once a month over a pub lunch. We have 13 retired priests holding PTO across the deanery who enjoy involvement dependent on the status of their health. We recognise that their contribution to the ongoing ministry in our deanery is crucial. Fourteen readers assist in ministry. A significant number of lay people have trained or are training to become Lay Pastoral Assistants. A significant number of lay people are authorised to assist in leading worship as Lay Worship Assistants.

There has been considerable population growth in recent years especially in the Highbridge Area probably in the region of three thousand new residents. Further significant housing is planned in the Highbridge, Burnham and West Huntspill areas. This has put huge pressure on local community resources with schools running at full capacity and medical centres very over-stretched. An industrial estate in Highbridge is ear-marked for significant development. Smaller developments are in the process of construction in Wedmore and Cheddar. This may but is not guaranteed to address the lack of affordable housing in the villages. The summer months sees a huge influx of people especially to Berrow and Brean the villages having very distinct summer and winter characteristics. The village of Brean can go from a few hundred in winter, up to a staggering 100,000 at the height of the season. Cheddar is another significant tourist area.

Two large Secondary schools serve the area one situated on the border of Burnham and Highbridge. The second in Cheddar. Children from the far end (Priddy, Easton and Westbury Benefice (“PEW”)) may attend schools in Wells. School Ministry plays a very significant part of the life of the deanery. Every benefice has a school and the majority of primary provision has church affiliation. Kings of Wessex in Cheddar is one of the few Church Senior Schools in the diocese and employs a chaplain who is part funded by local churches of different denominations.

We need to remain realistic in the deanery when it comes to small congregations trying to maintain ministry and also finance listed buildings.

We are a deanery who have expressed a desire to work together and to share in celebrating the gospel in our diverse area.

The following plan is unashamedly fluid. Our aims and goals are interdependent on each other. It begins with a series of commitments to each other and then goes on to set out how we seek to fulfil our commitment. The time scale is broadly speaking over a rolling three year period but this will adapt and change as we do.

Our Commitments

Our detailed plans are based on their sense of commitment to the following broad goals.

1. As a Deanery we are committed to working together in co-operation wherever possible.
2. As a Deanery we are committed to raising up, training, using and supporting lay ministers whose ministry will be both within their local church setting and across boundaries.
3. As a Deanery we are committed to supporting those churches and communities with significant social needs, either financially or with ministerial support.
4. As a Deanery we are committed to supporting those churches and communities with significant new housing by working together to see how the needs of those new areas can best be served.
5. As a Deanery we are committed to resourcing lay and ordained ministers who will be 'champions' for potential areas of need or arenas for outreach. These are yet to be decided but could include farming and agriculture, tourism, lay development, poverty and deprivation, schools.
6. As a Deanery we are committed to ensuring that every Deanery Synod, Deanery Chapter and Mission and Pastoral Group is a Learning Environment/Experience so that the deanery can play its part in nurturing ministers, thus resourcing ministry for effective mission.

How we seek to fulfil our commitments to each other

1 As a Deanery we are committed to working together in co-operation wherever possible.

Aim	When	Who
Goal 1: To develop a deanery prayer diary to support the whole of our deanery in prayer. To be reviewed Advent and Easter	ACHIEVED and ONGOING	At present Area Dean.
Goal 2: To draw up list of retired clergy, & readers, willing to cross parish boundaries	By summer of 2020	Area Dean to liaise with Deanery Retirement Officer and Deanery Warden of Readers.
Goal 3: To encourage regular meetings with clergy, active retired clergy & Readers at deanery level for support and discussion	By Summer 2020	Area Dean to liaise with Deanery Retirement Officer and Deanery Warden of Readers.
Goal 4: To create a deanery website and/or Facebook Page to encourage greater sharing of events.	ACHIEVED On going maintenance Full review early 2021	Lay Ministry Coordinator with Deanery Synod Member
Goal 5: To create a regular Deanery wide newsletter for use in parish magazines	To appoint a volunteer to run the news sheet by the end of 2020	Deanery Synod

2 As a Deanery we are committed to raising up, training, using and supporting lay ministers whose ministry will be both within their local church setting and across boundaries

Aim	When	Who
Goal 1 To support the Lay Ministries Coordinator	Ongoing	Deanery Synod
Goal 2 To identify training opportunities that can be best done across parish boundaries	Current and ongoing. (Achieved – LWA, LPA, Open the Book, Godly Play, Mental Health First Aid)	Lay Ministries Coordinator All Leaders
Goal 3 To ensure that any Safeguarding Training is delivered in and advertised throughout the Deanery	Annually	Safeguarding Officer who has received further training to train. (currently vacant)
Goal 4 To develop a culture where lay ministry is celebrated as a deanery and recognised at deanery events and worship opportunities.	Achieved with LWA commissioning July 2017 Ongoing at twice yearly deanery services	All Leaders Lay Dean of Synod Lay Ministries Coordinator
Goal 5 Website to become a Resource Hub for Training	Achieved July 2017 Needs ongoing maintenance	Lay Ministries Coordinator Area Dean All Leaders

3 As a Deanery we are committed to supporting those churches and communities with significant social needs, either financially or with ministerial support.

Aim	When	Who
Goal 1 To set up a central Deanery pot of money from which deanery course material and expenses are resourced. Every Parish contributes fairly.	Ongoing. Parishes contribute 0.5% of Parish Share as needed	Deanery Treasurer
Goal 2 To explore seasonal 'Tourism Chaplaincy' in Tourist Areas <i>(March-October)</i> <i>(or High season provision only July/August)</i>	June 2020 Synod to hear about the challenges Find a lead person(s) to explore this following June 2020 Synod Explore with ecumenical partners what is happening and investigate other partners. Ecumenical Partners to be invited to June Synod	DPMG Area Dean/Graham Witts DMPG
Goal 3 To provide a forum where wardens and others from our 'small congregations' can gather to share common problems and seek resources Ensure opportunities exist at Chapter/Synod/DPMG for areas of need to be shared	Achieved Spring 2019 onwards	DPMG Regular DPMG Agenda item
Goal 4 Ensure that the Foodbanks in Highbridge and Cheddar remain well resourced with goods, money and volunteers Take opportunities to challenge the need for Foodbanks to exist at all	Ongoing Invite MP to Synod early 2021	Regular Chapter & Synod reports Area Dean

4 As a Deanery we are committed to supporting those churches and communities with significant new housing by working together to see how the needs of those new areas can best be served.

Aim	When	Who
Goal 1 To work with local PCCs to identify needs and means of responding	Ongoing Housing Hub: 6 th May	DMPG Lay Dean
Goal 2 To communicate across the deanery where new housing is likely to occur: and to draw up a list	Following from 6 th May Housing Hub; by June 2020 Synod	DMPG
Goal 3 To identify particular skills and talents needed to implement strategy to address those needs and to draw on experience across the Diocese	After meeting as above And ongoing according to population growth	
Goal 4 To encourage benefices responding to new housing to meet together regularly.	2020/2021 ongoing	DMPG/Area Dean
Goal 5 To investigate a possible deanery pioneer post split between mission in the new housing estates and seasonal tourist centres	Begin process spring 2021 of putting in a bid for a Pioneer post	DMPG and Area Dean

5. As a Deanery we are committed to resourcing lay and ordained ministers who will spend some of their ministerial time as ‘champions’ for a number of areas of potential areas of need or arenas for outreach.

Aim	When	Who
Goal 1 Appoint “Champion” for lay ministry training	Completed	Jonathan Philpott Parish Priest Berrow/Brean
Goal 2 Appoint Champion for Tourism and to support seasonal street Pastor Scheme	February 2017	Synod Members & Clergy to engage with recruitment
Goal 3 In the light of extensive work with schools to appoint a Champion for schools Ministry and to consider Chaplaincy Roles.	Completed March 2019	Kevin Wright Parish Priest of TPOTS
Goal 4 To continue awareness of the appointing of champions for particular areas of ministry: eg farming and agriculture, disability, poverty and deprivation.	To conduct an interest/skills audit amongst clergy/readers and lay persons to identify potential Champions. From January 2020	Area Dean/Assistant Area Dean/Clergy Chapter/PCCs
Goal 5. To consider the role of “Champion” or “Chaplain” in some cases when vacancies occur. Such posts advertised with a deanery remit may attract potential candidates to parish posts.	Whenever a vacancy occurs ‘Champion’ profiles to be drawn up as needed. <i>NB: Not all Champions will be ordained this is not the only route (see above)</i>	Area Dean/Archdeacon/PCC DMPG + Deanery Synod

6 As a Deanery we are committed to ensuring that every Deanery Synod, Deanery Chapter and Mission and Pastoral Group is a Learning Environment/Experience so that the deanery can play its part in nurturing ministers, thus resourcing ministry for effective mission.

Aim	When	Who
Goal 1 Ensure content of Deanery Synod Meetings address the above	When deciding on Synod Programme. And annually.	DMPG
Goal 2 To ensure all speakers to Synod are aware of our commitment to learning. Discussion and engagement is to be encouraged. Synod Members are always asked to consider what they take back to their own PCCs	Ongoing	Responsibility on the person making arrangements with speaker
Goal 3 To invite PCCS to form their own Mission Plans	May Gathering 2021	Members of DMPG
Goal 4 To dedicate three-four chapter meetings per year to a focused learning opportunity.	Chapter programme discussed annually	Area Dean/Assistant Area Dean

In brief: Key Points

- Axbridge Deanery seeks to be a supportive community of Christians engaged with our local community and our ecumenical colleagues to 'Resource Effective Ministry for Effective Mission'
- We value the gifts of all people, of all abilities and all ages.
- We know that key to our hopes and dreams is effective communication with each other and with God!
- We acknowledge that it is God's mission and God's timing, but we are called to fulfil his call laid upon us

Updated with revised time line January 2020