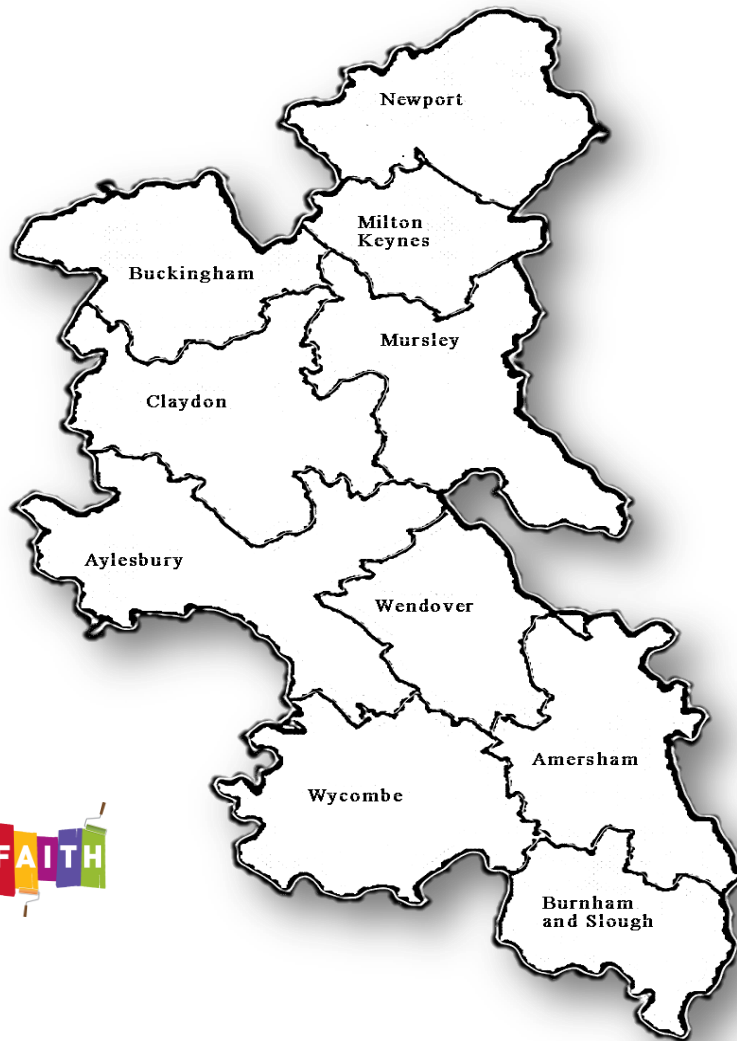


Buckingham Archdeaconry Plan
2015 - 2019



Introduction

In 2010, after a period of consultation, a Buckingham Archdeaconry plan was produced. This was primarily a workforce planning document which has continued to inform our overall vision as well as contribute to change within the wider diocese in the areas of deanery MAPs; a more transparent share scheme and the formation of development posts.

Four years on, the context in Buckinghamshire has changed somewhat. Whilst the numbers of stipendiary posts has been further reduced and now plateaued (in line with the 2010 plan)¹ and properties sold, the population has continued to rise – almost 30% in the last ten years². There has been a significant increase in the number of SSMS retiring and an increase in the number of new homes planned, not only in the conurbations of Milton Keynes and Aylesbury, but also in medium sized villages such as Waddesdon and Haddenham. As many of our urban and suburban parishes have continued to grow, the rural areas struggle with minimal resources creating an uncomfortable contrast across and within deaneries.

Many of the recommendations made in 2010 remain key to our future plans; however there is now an urgent need to look further ahead to ensure that the local church in Buckinghamshire is equipped for mission and ministry in the future. As in 2010 this plan seeks to replace a traditional pastoral model of ministry with a model based upon a vision of the local church as outlined in *Living Faith*. It has at its core a desire for the church to continue to grow in Christ throughout Buckinghamshire and to enable Christian worship, witness and service to be the most effective it can be in the years ahead.

KEY VALUES

The Area Deans and Lay Chairs together with the Area Team have agreed this set of values which undergird our priorities and principles as an Archdeaconry:

- Mutual support, care and respect
- Well organised and effective administration
- A passion for the Gospel
- Willingness to accept change, work with it and innovate
- Advocacy and support for the local church
- Granting deaneries freedom in decision making – expressed through dialogue, support and listening

¹ 2000 = 153, 2007 = 128, 2012 = 118.5, 2014 = 115.2

² See Appendix 1

PRIORITIES AND PRINCIPLES FOR OUR WORK IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

1. Ministry

(a) Stipendiary Numbers

Deaneries have worked hard in recent years to look at stipendiary posts in terms of both deployment and sustainability. Most deaneries have now succeeded in completing that piece of work, although the ability to pay the parish share may not always reflect the desired number of stipendiary posts required. In most deaneries we now have the minimum number of stipendiary ministers to sustain our mission, without much capacity for growth.

There are still three deaneries (Burnham and Slough, Wycombe and Milton Keynes) where pastoral re-organisation needs to be finalised to enable either the gap between local sustainability and diocesan subsidy to decrease, or to deploy stipendiary clergy in the right places. This will happen when vacancies occur.

We recognise that the role of stipendiary clergy is changing significantly as clergy are being encouraged to exercise oversight across a number of parishes, to train colleagues both lay and ordained, and to offer support to large teams deployed across a wide geographical area. Deanery peer support is essential for stipendiary clergy as is both episcopal and archidiaconal support. Clergy need the best resources for this role. In making appointments now we are not only looking for good pastors and teachers, but for good leaders, trainers and mentors.

The age profile of the Archdeaconry is younger than average with 80% of stipendiary clergy currently aged below 60 years³. This means that there should be some stability in terms of posts and people across the archdeaconry over the next ten years.

Appointments are one of the most important factors in developing good local leadership for mission in the 21st century. As an Area Team we are committed to investing time and resources in a) the appointment process b) supporting clergy in post and c) clergy well-being.

(b) Self-Supporting Ministry

Within the Archdeaconry the deployment of self-supporting clergy has become an important factor, particularly as the need to augment stipendiary with other forms of ministry increases and the distribution of associate clergy remains unevenly spread due to where vocations are being grown and nurtured. It is evident that as mission groupings of parishes have developed there is often a rise in the number of vocations to lay and ordained ministry.

In consultation with the Area Deans consideration is now being given to the needs of the archdeaconry as well as gifts of self-supporting priests and has led, over the last two years, to some creative appointments, following the introduction of an end of curacy meeting between SSM and archdeacon.

A large number of self-supporting ministers in the last few years on reaching the age of 70 have moved onto Permission to Officiate therefore, whilst vocations continue to this category of ministry,

³ See Appendix 2

there is an ongoing need to actively promote them⁴. This has been a priority over the last few years and will continue to be one.

(c) House for Duty Ministry

We have, in the last ten years, deployed a number of House for Duty priests, and, unlike previously, are now able to monitor the effects this type of ministry is having on a parish. In some instances House for Duty will be an ongoing post as part of a larger team, whilst in others it will lead to a full-time or part-time appointment in the future because of the growth and leadership development.

We are committed to placing most House for Duty posts in mission groups and within teams. House for Duty ministers retain particular responsibility for churches within a multi-parish benefice, but also have support from other members of a team when not working. Our aim is that as mission groups develop and grow, other ministries (LLMs and lay leaders) will also develop, so all share responsibility for a group of churches.

(d) Training Curates

We are committed to appointing training curates to parishes in a transparent and realistic way involving the deanery mission and pastoral committee as well as maximising the gifts of good training incumbents. Since 2009 all applications for curates have to go through each Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee, this not only makes individual parishes accountable for their own ministerial needs, or the training opportunities they can offer, but also enables the deanery to have some investment in the training of a curate. This is working well and is leading to some creative curacies and the sharing of deanery resources including housing, and finance in the deployment of curates.

(e) Retired Ministry

We acknowledge and recognise the importance of supporting the active retired in their ministries and in their own support of the local church. In the last few months structures have been put in place to have a network of clergy across the archdeaconry responsible for supporting our retired clergy. A team of nine deanery retirement officers now meet regularly and feedback needs and concerns from retired clergy in their care.

(f) Local Ministry Teams and Lay Leadership

In a number of deaneries parish Ministry Teams of lay and ordained are working collaboratively on vision, mission and ministry. The Pastoral Care Course in Amersham Deanery has shown that people in our churches want to be trained for particular roles, and we have a number of licensed preachers. However, this is not happening in any co-ordinated way, and some deaneries are still very clerical dependent, hence overworked clergy and under-resourced laity.

There are a large number of LLMs across the area, some have a very active ministry; others are not used as much as they would like to be. We are committed to exploring ways of deploying them differently and more flexibly.

⁴ See Appendix 3

A growing number of churches are training local preachers, some using the diocesan scheme and others using locally sourced material. We are actively encouraging this.

The appointment of youth workers, and children and family workers continues within our larger churches or team ministries.

The development work of Churchwardens has become important in recent years, with many committed to sharing in the leading of worship across the archdeaconry. The continued development of Ministry Teams (Lay and Ordained) is a key priority in the next five years, hopefully aided by some practical courses of training, which can be locally delivered.

(g) Strategic Archdeaconry Posts

In the past the creative use of archdeaconry posts enabled us to experiment with some more innovative models of ministry (including a half-time Area Dean and a full-time Deanery Development Worker each for five years). Common Tenure has now prevented such time limited models continuing, however the experiments have led deaneries to make their own creative (and permanent) decisions locally such as funding a full-time Area Dean in Burnham and Slough, a three-quarter time Area Dean in Milton Keynes and a half-time mission enabler post in Aylesbury.

We have also benefitted from having a full-time DDO in Bucks for the last six years, with 0.4 of the post, giving priority to vocational development, paid for across the archdeaconry. The funding of this will need to be reviewed when the central DDO team re-establishes itself.

Our priority in creating flexible patterns of working in our rural areas and to relieve some of the burden on rural clergy has led to the commitment to having an Area Dean for Rural Mission and Development soon to be appointed.

Given the size and the growth of the Archdeaconry, it will be necessary to continue to assess the need for additional area support in the areas of training, stewardship and church buildings; which, with the rural post, will complement the work of the Archdeacon across such a large archdeaconry.

(h) Pioneer Ministry and Development Posts

Pioneer Ministry with both church settings and chaplaincies is still developing in the Archdeaconry. This currently includes a town centre chaplain in High Wycombe, a school chaplain and community development priest in Aylesbury, a part-time school chaplain and priest in the Buckingham deanery. One of our priorities continues to be encouraging creativity within deaneries around appointments.

In the last few years pioneer ministry has led to BMOs in Amersham and Milton Keynes, and in the future further outreach work in Milton Keynes may be undertaken in the form of a BMO across parishes. As areas of new housing are developed there will be more opportunity to develop Pioneer Ministry through new development posts, which will be required in the next five years in Aylesbury and Milton Keynes.

We are committed to shared good practice around these posts.

2. Mission

(a) Deanery Planning

Each deanery has taken responsibility for its own planning, based on a number of factors:

- (i) The current provision of parishes/benefices and clergy
- (ii) What makes a good mission group
- (iii) Affordability in terms of ministry cost
- (iv) Local creativity and mission opportunity
- (v) Local need and support

Each deanery makes decisions via the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee, and works collaboratively in ensuring that each benefice has adequate support. The Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committee, in responding to deanery needs, aims to encourage creative working within deaneries, not only in joining parishes into benefices/teams and groups, but also in collaborative working within the deanery and sharing good practice across the deanery. This has also helped focus deanery synod meetings on developing a mission agenda and is producing some good joint projects, deanery training courses and deanery appointments.

(b) Mission Groupings

Over the last five years deanery planning has led to the bringing together of parishes into benefices, teams, groups and missional clusters. This has largely been based upon natural geographical groupings, as well as groups of parishes around a traditional team ministry and is also beginning to be based around responses to new housing.

There are currently 73 mission groups in the Archdeaconry (encompassing 95 benefices), and it is anticipated that these will develop further into around 64 groups within the next five years. These mission groups vary depending largely on the context. In the rural deaneries clusters of parishes usually exist around a larger village or town; in the more urban settings the clusters are based upon either traditional team ministries or larger churches. There are a number of models:

- (i) The multi-parish benefice
- (ii) The multi-parish benefice joined to other parishes to form a larger grouping
- (iii) The large Church – probably with multiple congregations
- (iv) The large village/town church growing a Minster Model of ministry
- (v) The traditional team
- (vi) The gathering of individual churches into a cluster or two separate churches working together

Each mission group operates around a team of ministers – stipendiary, non-stipendiary and lay. It is our aim to resource these missional groups to enable local mission to thrive.

(c) Partnerships

The Anglican Church in Buckinghamshire has developed some key partnerships over the years, including significantly the ecumenical pattern of ministry in Milton Keynes. There are a variety of Local Ecumenical Partnerships across the deaneries which have been created to meet local needs.

The vision is however far wider than the traditional ecumenical denominations and it is necessary for congregations to be open to forming partnerships in many different directions whether for worship, witness or service. It is important that churches continue to form partnerships with other denominations, particularly in areas of new housing, and where smaller congregations (of differing denominations) can be amalgamated to become more effective.

Partnership between parish and local school has also developed significantly over recent years. We are aware of the changes in education and the number of small church schools across the Archdeaconry and the Area Team work closely with our schools advisers to support this work and monitor any changes.

Many of our larger churches are quite self-sufficient regarding mission and outreach and most deaneries have now developed some joined-up thinking on doing some things better together. The Archdeaconry is however vast, and it is difficult to share good practice across deaneries, the wedding project being one rare example of where this has happened successfully and we aim, in the next 18 months to further resource work in the area of Funerals and Baptisms.

The size of the Archdeaconry often prevents relationships between churches outside the deanery, and the Area Team has to therefore carry the wider narrative and undertake the tasks of forming links and sharing good practice. In recent years partnerships have been encouraged between deaneries, and there are some good examples of where deaneries have supported one another in mission (The Amersham Pastoral Care Course used in other deaneries) and financially (Amersham supporting Burnham and Slough in 2014).

In the coming years emphasis will be further placed on parish partnerships, for mutual support, as well as for practical and pastoral reasons.

(d) Church Planting and Transplanting

As well as mission to new areas of housing, there will be a continued need in the future (as outlined above) for the local church to support one another. Under-used church buildings and limited resources have the possibility to become the basis of exciting new ventures and fresh expressions of church if deaneries adopt a shared vision of outreach.

A new vision of church planting and transplanting (where a group of members of a particular congregation move into an unused or underused place of worship in another place) within deaneries and across deaneries would help inject new energy into certain places. Seeing our mission groups and large church as resource hubs will ensure that the local church continues to have an outward focus. This kind of strategy would need resourcing in terms of training, but coupled with the need to plant churches in areas of new houses the demand for skills in this area could be quite considerable.

(e) New Housing Areas

Our priority for new ministry and related support structures (finance, buildings, running expenses) is in the areas of new housing. Within the Diocese a significant proportion of the new housing is planned for Buckinghamshire (31,447 new homes in large scale developments alone). Already the Aylesbury deanery have responded to new growth with a new team vicar appointment, deanery financial support, the formation of missional groupings around new areas of development and

appropriate formal changes in pastoral organisation. In Milton Keynes, an ecumenical new communities group oversees some of the changes and has led to denominational support within different areas of the city.

Milton Keynes has faced the challenge of becoming self-sustainable in terms of ministry since the building of the city itself, but now has no capacity for the continued growth of new housing without additional external support.

As well as Milton Keynes and Aylesbury, a number of our villages are facing significant new housing development, which will need to be supported by changing structures and patterns of mission and ministry, these include Haddenham and Waddesdon. There is also significant development appearing on green field sites between parishes, which requires oversight and new vision. Examples of this are between Bletchley and Newton Longville (Mursley and MK deaneries), Fleet Marston between Aylesbury and Waddesdon (Aylesbury and Claydon deaneries) and south of Aylesbury between Bedgrove and Weston Turville (Aylesbury and Wendover deaneries). An indication of the extent of these smaller developments as part of the New Communities Group brief would be helpful in the coming years.

Resourcing these areas locally and by Diocesan officers will be important over the next five years, as will consideration of our deanery boundaries. It may be necessary to undertake a major review of the shape of our deaneries in a few years, based upon changing populations.

3. Vocation and Discipleship

In recent years there has been significant development of vocation in areas where there is much vitality and good leadership. Coupled with a good training strategy, a pro-active vocational strategy in certain areas is urgently needed to sustain ministry and develop lay potential.

There are significant geographical gaps in leadership development (lay and ordained) and deaneries where very few people are offering themselves for licensed ministry. Current diocesan local training courses (geared towards local ministry) are proving too inflexible and the promotion of whole life discipleship is too dependent on local leadership.

A pro-active approach by the training department and area team needs to be taken in these areas to change the culture which is either too parochial, or too unattainable.

It is important that those appointed to these posts have the skills to take initiative and develop their own ministry in relation to the parish and deaneries they serve. Particular emphasis over the last six years on a structured and supportive MDR scheme has contributed to a better supported and developed clergy, now the emphasis needs to shift to developing the laity and releasing ministry teams.

There is an urgent need to train lay leaders in congregations, who in turn may develop specific ministries (lay and ordained). This need is acute in the more rural deaneries, where congregations are more scattered and therefore more in need of worship leaders to assist with regular services.

A programme of 'Growing Leaders' courses would be a way forward, as would the appointment of someone with a local training brief to give time to rural training needs. It would also be good to develop a short course to help churchwardens and other able laity to lead non-Eucharistic worship, which could be run in deaneries to equip local congregations and give the necessary confidence and training to people willing to serve in this way. A number of deaneries would respond to this readily.

4. Parish Share

Parish Share is going to continue to be a challenge for most churches, particularly the smaller ones. Research has shown that people will give to something they believe will make a difference, not only to themselves, but to others and generosity comes from a belief that God makes that difference. Hence we have some very generous churches, supporting one another, paying their parish share, funding local ministry and ministry across the world.

However, we have little stewardship capacity as a diocese and many congregations still do not know how to go about challenging and increasing personal giving, hence the parish share suffers and so does the whole deanery. Parish Share figures for 2014 still reveal that in a number of instances, one or two key churches affect the whole deanery's ability to pay the share. Practical assistance for these churches (who often have to raise significant funds for a large church building too) will be essential in the next few years.

Support for deanery officers around the area of finance is also key and needs to be a diocesan priority, as does the operation of a stable share scheme which is easily understood and responsive and in which our parishes can have complete confidence.

5. Church Buildings

In order to consolidate ministry in the more rural areas and be more realistic about our mission it will be necessary in the next five years to consider the use of our church buildings.

In recent years many churches in the archdeaconry have improved facilities, undergone a re-ordering or developed partnerships with their local community (including school) to widen the use of their church building. A survey of these changes will take place in Buckinghamshire in the next twelve months.

There are some places where a vision for a particular building still needs to come to fruition and where partnership may help. However there are also places where church buildings will be surplus to requirements and, in the coming years, deaneries will be encouraged to have discussions about these and make recommendations. The recent proposals to allow for 'festival' churches, opening a few times a year will be helpful to these discussions.

6. Priorities for the Archdeaconry

- (a) Working with the new Area Dean for Rural Mission and Development to establish flexible and permissive patterns, supportive networks and a Living Faith vision for our rural deaneries.**
- (b) To continue to develop missional units between parishes, benefices and within teams and deaneries offering shared resources to support the wider church and the communities it serves.**
- (c) To promote partnership between parishes, between deaneries and across deaneries.**
- (d) The establishment of development posts in our most significant areas of new housing, together with the creation of flexible patterns of ministry and governance.**
- (e) Strengthening the Area Team with help from the Diocese in the areas of stewardship, church buildings, training and discipleship.**
- (f) Investment in people; including clergy well-being, retired clergy, churchwardens, Area Deans and Lay Chairs.**

7. Priorities for the Diocese

- (a) The creation of some flexible resources for lay discipleship, the development of teams and local leadership.**
- (b) Ongoing vocational development to increase local leadership – LLMs, SSMs and Lay leaders.**
- (c) The provision of personnel to locally resource new community development, financial stability, and deanery strategy around church buildings.**
- (d) A programme of support for our Lay Chairs and Area Deans, which includes training, networking and resourcing.**

APPENDIX ONE

Deanery Comparisons

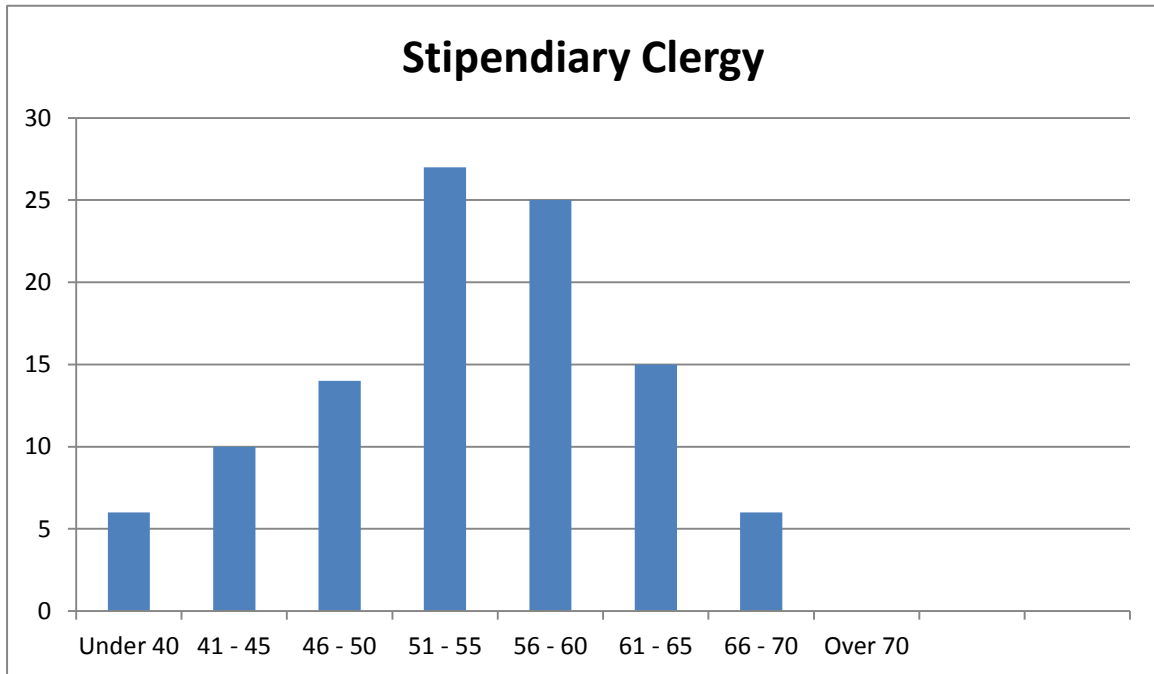
Deanery	Pop (2011 Census)	Increase in Pop from 2001	ER	ER change from 2012	No of Ch's	Stipendiary Ministers	Other Licenced Ordained Ministry (SSM and HfD)	Retired Clergy (with PTO)
Amersham	111,500	39,346	4,222	131	32	18	15	16
Aylesbury	104,700	37,597	1,885	12	35	12.5	5	25
Buckingham	21,200	6,559	632	8	22	5	3	11
Burnham and Slough	193,600	78,344	2,445	142	30	20	4	16
Claydon	21,000	6,645	791	16	25	5	3	4
Milton Keynes	213,400	94,765	1,525	1	29	14.2	6	20
Mursley	21,500	6,638	799	(6)	21	5	2	5
Newport	32,200	10,253	932	84	23	6	2	8
Wendover	35,100	10,494	1,811	11	20	8	5	7
Wycombe	151,100	52,138	3,297	(15)	38	20	9	12
TOTAL	905,300	342,779	18,339	384	275	113.7	59	125

BUCKINGHAM ARCHDEACONRY AT A GLANCE

Deaneries	10
Benefices	95
Churches	275

APPENDIX TWO

Age Profile of Bucks Clergy



APPENDIX THREE

