



EXPLAINING KEY TOPICS

Thank you for picking up this booklet that explores some key topics of Fit for Mission.

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AN INTRODUCTION FROM BISHOP RUTH WORSLEY

‘Go and make disciples of all nations’ were Jesus’ final words to his followers here on earth. It is the mission that we as the Church seek to fulfil. To live and tell the story of Jesus so that everyone, whoever they are, might discover that God loves them. As Christians we want people to share in the hope, joy and peace that we have come to know.

Here in Liverpool diocese, we are asking God to help us become a bigger Church to make a bigger difference. Taking time to listen to God, to one another and to our wider community is where it begins. Recognising that we can’t do it on our own and that we need to liberate the gifts of the whole people of God is the next step. And then taking the risk to commit to change that can make a difference, is the challenge we have to face.

As a diocese we are offering every church the opportunity to collaborate in a completely new way with others, for the sake of the gospel. This change is focussed on growing the church by reaching out to our communities in new ways, so becoming younger and more diverse. And this focus is enabled by forming larger single parishes, and in doing so releasing the energy and gifts of lay and clergy for local mission. Change is not something many relish and yet just repeating the things we have always done, and working harder at it, is not making the difference we seek.

This booklet gives clarity on some of the practical elements of Fit for Mission to help you prayerfully discern if your church will enter the programme of structured change.

I pray that as we are obedient to God’s call to follow him so we, like Andrew, find ourselves emboldened and equipped to invite others to join us on the journey of faith. May you know God’s presence and blessing as you move forward together.

+Ruth

GOVERNANCE AND PCCS

We are all eager to see our churches thrive and grow, introducing more people to Jesus and seeing more justice. To do this our churches will need lighter structures in the future that free up our time to focus on mission and ministry within our local communities.

New PCC Setup:

Each larger parish will have one new PCC, serving as the governing body, and focusing on finance, buildings, employment, safeguarding and other legal aspects. Meanwhile, local leadership teams will concentrate on mission and ministry.

Connection points:

Each church or worshipping community will have a named clergy person who will oversee both the community and the local leadership team. Every church will also have a finance co-ordinator, warden, and safeguarding officer, who will be part of three respective PCC sub-committees.

Transition period:

Towards the end of the two-year transition period, before the larger parish is formed, a shadow PCC group will meet to prepare for this new way of governance and ensure a smooth transition. They will be the bridge between the current and new structures, and they'll work on policies and communication plans to ensure the new governance structure is ready for action.

We want everyone in our church congregations to be well-informed and engaged with the process – a Navigation team, made up of local clergy and lay people, will be responsible for coordination and communication during the transition period.

At every stage local people, lay and clergy, will be making up the teams that decide the shape of the future larger parish – your experience and knowledge will form the future.

GOVERNANCE AND PCCS

Here's how it will work in a larger parish...



PARISH RECTOR

They will chair the new PCC and clergy leadership team.



NEW PCC

Serves as the governing body to the parish, looking after legal aspects like finance, buildings, employment and safeguarding.



LOCAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Looks after mission and ministry in their context, such as worship, introducing people to Jesus, and justice initiatives, each overseen by a named clergy person.



PCC SUB-COMMITTEES

Every church will have a finance co-ordinator, warden and safeguarding officer, who will be part of three respective sub-committees. They'll communicate between churches and the PCC.



SHADOW PCC

The bridge between the current and new structures, and they'll work on policies and communication plans to ensure the new governance structure is ready for action.

FINANCE

By managing money together we can support each other, and be good stewards of the money God has given us.

Financial Confidence for churches

- Each church should be self-sufficient, but with an openness to supporting the wider body of Christ (Acts 4 & 2 Cor 8)
- Each church has its own fund, in the shared finance system, with up-to-date income and expenditure always visible to both the PCC finance team and the leadership team of the church
- All money given to a church is credited to that church's fund, including the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) and legacies, rather than it disappearing into one big pot.
- The PCC will align their work to a transparent set of fiscal rules, so everyone can feel confident.

Commitment and communication

The PCC, acting as faithful stewards and charity trustees, will oversee parish finances with a commitment to compliance and accurate reporting, updating on progress at every parish meeting. When it comes to individual church finances, each community will balance what they spend with what they get, using a forward-looking budget.

If an expenditure is already foreseen in the church's budget, their leadership team can spend it when needed without PCC authorisation. The budgets will be put together by the finance sub-committee of the PCC; each church will have a member on that team to ensure good understanding and communication.

Care and collaboration

When people give money for specific reasons (restricted donations), the PCC finance sub-committee will make sure it's used in line with the individual's wishes. Likewise, this finance team will be sensitive to unrestricted legacies and ensure that funds designated for a previous purpose (e.g. fundraising for a new toilet block) will be used for that.

FINANCE

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To help things run smoothly, the PCC finance sub-committee will use new software, and be supported by a larger parish bookkeeper. This sub-committee will be made up of finance coordinators from across the churches.

LOCAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Becoming a larger parish brings many exciting opportunities, one of which is the introduction of Local Leadership teams. While the PCC focus on governance matters, these new teams will focus on mission, ministry and justice initiatives in the local church and community.

Whether a large church or a smaller worshipping community, our local leadership teams will be led by the Spirit to deepen and grow the local expressions of church, with each team member bringing their gifts and strengths into the mix, championing the 4 mission priorities in the context they serve; Introducing more people to Jesus, deepening discipleship, developing Christian leaders, working for justice.

Support and flexibility

During the 'act as if' transition period, the Cultivate team will help each church/worshipping community develop its missional opportunities, through six-monthly pyramid reviews. This process will also help define the future priorities for the local leadership team.

Leadership teams, overseen by a named clergy person, have the flexibility to lead the mission and ministry in their unique context. Because they are part of a larger parish, they also have the support of a wider group of people to bring new skills/experience and the possibility of working together across the larger parish on some aspects of ministry (e.g. youth). Each local leadership team is accountable to their clergy person, the PCC and each other.

This focus on the local, while being part of a diverse whole, reflects the diocesan commitment to a full variety of traditions so the maximum number of people can find a place of belonging.

You can find out more about Cultivate, here:

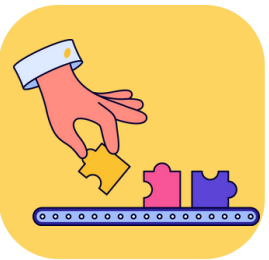
<https://www.cultivateleaders.co.uk/>

LOCAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Here's how it will work in a larger parish...



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Relationships and collaboration are key, with meeting frequency decided locally, allowing for flexibility and responsiveness to community needs.



To enable the leadership teams to focus on mission and ministry, churchwardens will lead a sidespersons team to handle practical tasks such as setting up for services.



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RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Collaboration

Moving into a larger parish structure opens the door to greater collaboration and skill sharing, by enabling best practices in existing and new worshipping communities. Where it makes sense, leaders can form strong portfolio team ministries across the larger parish and develop diverse worshipping communities and justice initiatives, so more people can find a place of belonging in their community.

This greater sense of collaboration and collegiality will also benefit our clergy, who will be able to receive closer support and accountability from each other, increasing their sense of well-being and reducing feelings of overwhelm and isolation as they journey the path of ordained ministry together.

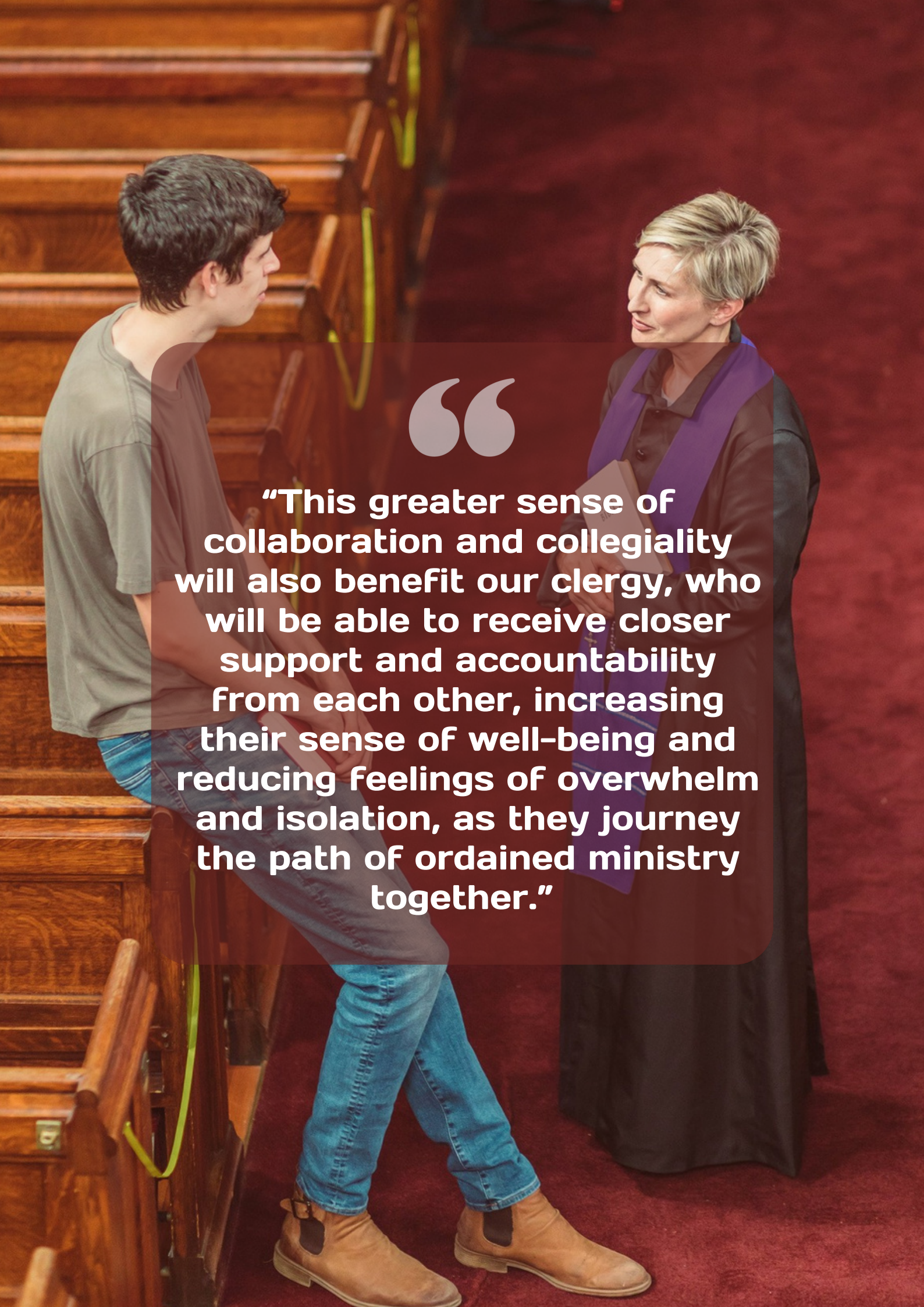
Local decisions

A key principle in the Fit for Mission programme is supporting local leadership and enabling local decision-making.

At every step local leaders will be supported to make good local decisions; the Fit for Mission team and resources then enable those decisions to be implemented. Skilled change facilitators and leadership coaches are on hand to guide through challenges, as clergy meet weekly to foster support, accountability and collaboration. A range of other teams, made up of both clergy and lay leaders will be created to help navigate the journey together.

During the 2-year transition period, a Rector will be appointed to lead the clergy team, through a standard transparent clergy appointment process run by your Archdeacon and Bishop.

There will also be an open invitation to attend Cultivate, a programme designed to help lay people identify their missional call and create new or develop existing worshipping communities and justice initiatives.



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BUILDINGS

Our buildings are well-loved and important parts of both our church and local communities. As we think about how we can grow and sustain our churches for the future, we recognise the challenges we face in adapting them for 21st-century mission and worship, while also maintaining and repairing them.

Approach

Rather than responding from a point of crisis, the right building process is focused on taking a proactive approach to the challenges. Allowing space and time for detailed consideration, investigations and the forming of a proposal that will enable a larger parish to make good local decisions about what will best support their mission and ministry.

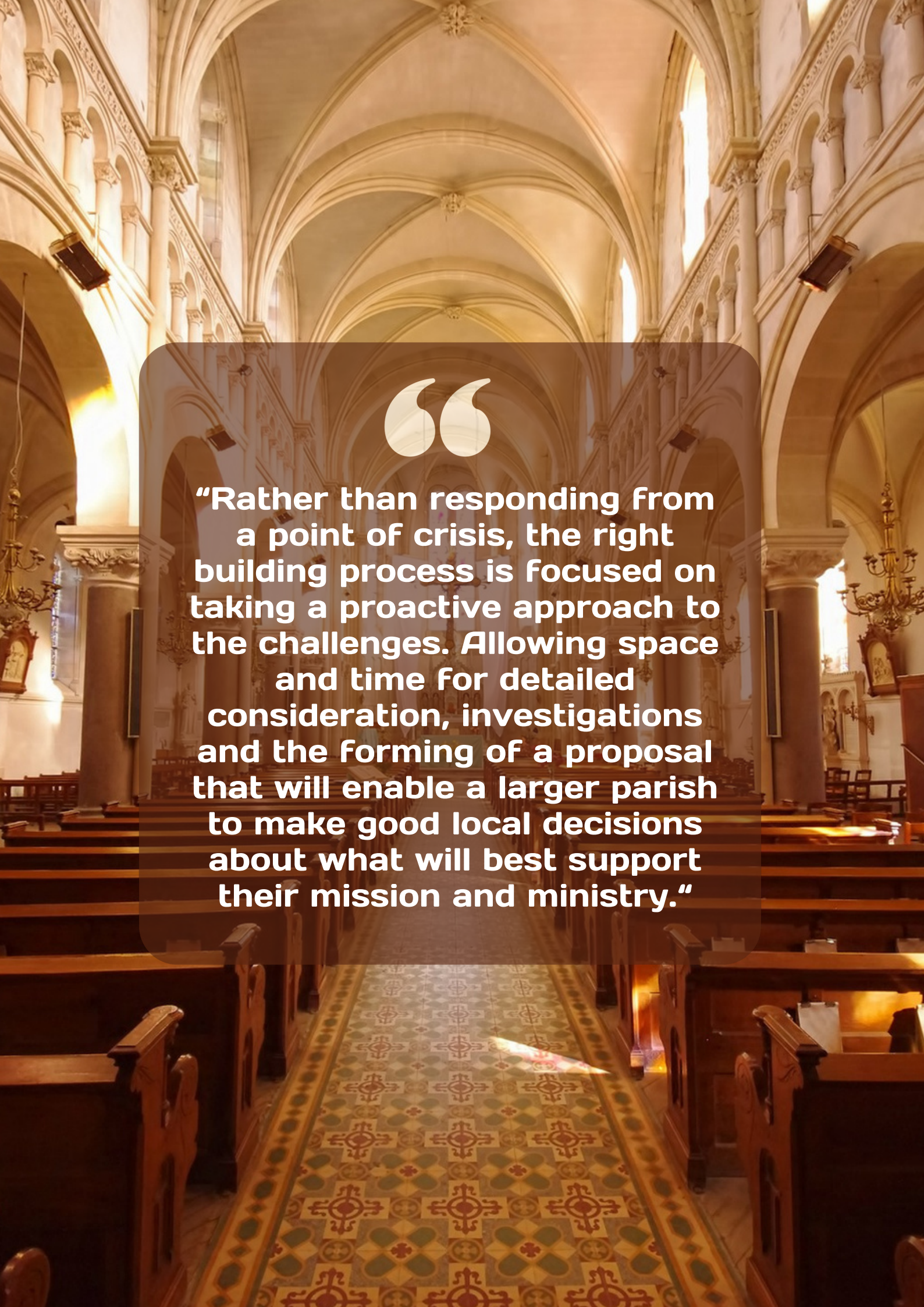
Led from a local parish level, the local right buildings team will begin a consultation process, gathering data, and assessing each building against a 14-point assessment that covers; spiritual and social support, environmental impact and economic sustainability.

These assessment objectives align with the objectives of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for sustainable development and the Church of England's Coming Home report which highlights social and environmental benefits when looking at the use of church assets.

Local decisions

The local team who will undertake this work will be made up of between 5 - 8 people, who will work together to ensure that local intel is uncovered, understood and fully considered in the process.

Following on from this proposal and decision-making stage, there is the additional Fit for Mission resource of a buildings project manager, to help develop projects that will improve our buildings for mission. This will be supported by a fundraiser, who can support fundraising efforts, for the budget needed for building reorganisation.



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SAFEGUARDING

While this journey may change the way we do some things, what won't change is our commitment to safeguarding. As you explore Fit for Mission, it's important to know more about the strong safeguarding plan for each parish.

Working together

In a larger parish, safeguarding structures will adapt to offer more support to Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs), while following existing principles. A PCC safeguarding sub-committee, led by a parish safeguarding lead who is also a PCC member, will work together across the larger parish. The sub-committee will be made up of a Parish Safeguarding Officer from each church.

Safer recruitment will be streamlined by using better IT and through much of the process being undertaken by the centralised support services team, freeing up PSOs to be the safeguarding eyes and ears on the ground.

The role of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team won't change; they will continue to provide, support, guidance and training. They will also continue to receive reports of any safeguarding concerns.

Some of the Safeguarding Officers who are already working in this new way, share their thoughts on the next page



"Feel we have a clear structure now."

"Makes us more professional."

"Good to have support from others."

"It's wonderful to get to know one another and be a team."

"Taking the bulk of the recruitment processes away from us and centralising it is fantastic."

CHURCH OF THE FUTURE

In working hard to sustain and grow our churches of today, it's exciting to reflect on what this could mean for our churches of tomorrow. By aligning our work to the four missional priorities we can practically consider what it may mean to experience church in the future.

We are prayerful and hopeful for a thriving church, with congregations that are rich in diversity, across age, ethnicity, ability, gender and tradition, and buildings that are accessible and environmentally friendly.

Looking forward

We envision that local leadership teams will be made up of passionate and skilled individuals who will help to drive local mission and ministry, supported by a team rector and a wider PCC, who'll look after governance tasks.

We hope to see clergy build strong relationships with each other, as they work together providing each other with mutual support and accountability. They will be free to focus on mission and ministry, while a skilled support services team focus on administration.

We anticipate a wide variety of portfolio ministries across wider geography, with local lay people sharing their gifts and calling with the wider community, perhaps in youth and children's work, funeral ministry, or social justice.

We hope to see more people come to know Jesus, deepen discipleship, develop leaders, and work for more justice, and we hope you will be part of making this happen.

A photograph of a diverse group of people, including a young girl in a blue shirt, an older woman with glasses, a man with a beard, and an older man in a white shirt and tie, all smiling and clapping. They are seated in front of a light-colored brick wall. A semi-transparent grey box with a quote is overlaid on the center of the image.

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WHAT ARE THE EXPERIENCES OF OTHERS?



Jen All Souls, L South Navigation Team

Being part of the Nav Team has been a real blessing. We've prioritised meeting together in person and built strong relationships across all lay and clergy members. We have sometimes had difficult conversations, but these are always done in a grace-filled way, underpinned by a shared vision and determination to work towards something robust and feasible, where diversity of theological position is respected and upheld.

Three lay members of the team have been in interregnum for at least part of the planning process, and our meetings together have provided camaraderie and support during what might have otherwise felt a very difficult and isolating time.

Nav Team has also provided a taster of how the teamworking approach of the larger parish will help everyone to lean into their strengths and benefit from the gifts that others have. It's been great to have an opportunity to use the strategic planning and analysis skills that I use in my day job and I feel the benefit of those members who bring a much more pastoral perspective to our discussions.

Recently we analysed the results from a survey measuring just how much admin clergy, paid administrators and volunteers do in their parishes, so we could prioritise what would best sit within the Support Services Team. It was staggering to see how much time was taken up doing things that - if we centralised them into a small number of professional posts - would take far less time. I've already had a taster of what accessing this support might feel like, as someone from the diocese very generously offered to take the online accounting from me to free up my time to take part in Nav Team. For her, using MFAO is quick and straightforward, and I think it would be right to say she enjoys doing it! Her gift to our church means I have been released to offer my skills to help in the planning of the larger parish, and to keep our PCC functioning while we await our new vicar.

I would encourage anyone entering into this discernment process to get as involved as you can. Fit for Mission will seem scary for as long as it feels like 'them and us', but once you are building relationships with other people, you can see how collaborative working under a larger parish is not just possible but a genuinely positive thing.

WHAT ARE THE EXPERIENCES OF OTHERS?



Ann, St Mary's, L South Navigation Team

I had heard bits about Fit for Mission – PCC, finance, safeguarding, buildings but what I really wanted to know was “where is God in all of this”, and now I know, and I want to share that with you. I have felt God was in all our joint services in the churches of our deanery. Not one was the same. Each reflected the individuality and the uniqueness of each church, and that won't change in Fit for Mission. The support that the ministers feel as they meet regularly will enable this to continue. Mission and revival will be at the centre of our worship, and through Cultivate, it will show us, the congregation, how we can move out into to draw people to Christ in places where they feel comfortable and where they want to learn more.

There has never been a time in my lifetime where a faith has been more essential in this selfish and unpredictable world, and I believe that Fit for Mission will enable each church to spread the gospel because the time is ripe for Mission and Revival.



Fran, Curate at St Andrews in St Helens

I think a lot of people might have assumed or perceived that Fit for Mission was creating these one larger parishes, and we'd all become some kind of homogeneous one mass, and we'd be expected to blend our traditions on knowledge in some kind of way -that our distinctiveness in our diversity would be lessened. Actually, my experience in reality is that the richness of diversity, tradition and churchmanship, all of that was a respected and also formed a really rich offer to the people of St Helens.

What's next?

- **Arrange a PCC meeting with Fit for Mission**
(email fitformission@liverpool.anglican.org)
- **Sign up for emails about Fit for Mission**
(tinyurl.com/FFMCOHORT3)
- **Read - watch - listen - talk**
liverpoolcofe.org/fitformission



liverpoolcofe.org/fitformission
fitformission@liverpool.anglican.org