

CHURCH PLANTING IN THE DIOCESE OF SALISBURY

Church planting is a process that results in a new, local Christian church being established. It should be distinguished from church development, where a new service, worship centre or fresh expression is created alongside an already existing congregation as part of a mixed economy of church.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework to support:

- Senior diocesan leaders in developing plans for growth
- Archdeaconry and Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committees in exercising their oversight of growing new congregations across the Diocese
- Those considering church planting in assessing need and opportunities, carrying out consultation and seeking authorisation.

Scope:

This policy applies to all parishes within the Diocese of Salisbury.

Policy:

It is the policy of the Diocese of Salisbury to:

- Provide a framework to support church planting as part of the overall strategy of fostering a thriving Christian presence in every community.
- Actively explore opportunities to church plant where:
 - existing congregations have the capability and capacity to expand
 - changes to the demographic are likely to exceed the capacity or capability of existing congregations to absorb or engage
 - sectors of a community are not being reached by existing provision
- Church plant through consultation with all interested parties, including with ecumenical partners and neighbouring dioceses where appropriate, based on the principles of mutual respect, realism, achievability and effectiveness.
- Work, as far as possible, with the cooperation and support of the local incumbent(s), PCCs, rural dean, archdeacon and suffragan bishop.
- Use Bishop's Mission Orders only where these are required to help overcome structural or other blockages
- Ensure church plants work within the legal framework for worship within the Church of England.
- Ensure that leadership of church plants is exercised through recognised leaders who are appropriately commissioned or licensed.

Responsible Parties:

Oversight of this policy rests with the Bishops of the Diocese as the leaders in Mission. The Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committees and the Bishop's Council acting as the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee are responsible for its application.

Theological Context for Church Planting within the Diocese of Salisbury

The Church is the body and bride of Christ who Jesus gave his life for and loves (Eph. 5:23-27). The church is at the heart of God's purposes and Christ's saving work, and is therefore also at the heart of the mission of God.

The aim of church planting, then, is to create communities which display these kingdom qualities of love and unity and thus point towards God.

A church full of life and love, working for the good of the community in which God has placed it, is the proper end of mission. Church planting is one means of bringing in the blessings of the kingdom. Churches function as God's channels of blessing as they serve the physical and social needs of people in their community through the various gifts given to them. But the primary missionary task of the church remains the planting of churches where there are none, a task which is accomplished by various means, but most often by the sending out of workers into the vineyard.

The church is at the heart of God's purposes, and is the primary agent and sign of the kingdom of God. Transformation of societies in God's desired direction occurs through the agency of God's people, and it is local churches which are designed to be the central expression of the values and life of the kingdom. Although the importance of church planting was only gradually unfolded through the book of Acts, a reading of the whole Bible makes it clear that God's plan—his mission—is to draw people from all nations into the new people he is creating and to use each local church to display his wisdom and character to their communities.

Churches have been given the life of the Holy Spirit to reproduce and start new local churches, so that where there is no relevant expression of Christ's body, existing churches are to bring new churches into being. The challenge for churches and for the church planters which they send out, is to start and nurture new churches in such a way that those new churches express the values of the kingdom and so draw as many people as possible to God and bring the kind of transformation God wants to their communities.

The Diocese of Salisbury is committed to the parish system of inherited Church and to supporting the development of a 'mixed economy' of fresh expressions as is appropriate to the needs of the local church. This means growing healthy churches characterised by authentic worship and prayer, where disciples are nurtured, and where worshipping communities are outward looking and serve their 'neighbours'. Church planting is additional to this and will need to pay particular attention to the unity of the Church.

Our vision, which emerged from a process of careful listening to God, to one another, to our communities and to our parishes is – Renewing Hope: Pray, Serve, Grow. This has guided our work in developing the principles and priorities that set the context for mission across our diocese. A Church Planting Consultation was held on 14th May 2016, and lessons learned are incorporated within the policy.

Principles

- The oversight of Mission and Ministry is entrusted to the Bishop as a sign of the Church being One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. This oversight is shared with the college of priests and lay leaders throughout the Diocese. A policy for church planting is part of an overall strategy for Mission and Ministry.
- This policy recognises that the Church of England is still organised into geographical parishes as our way of ministering to all people in the land and as an expression of its duty to care for and present the claims of Christ to everyone. It further recognises that many parish Churches are flourishing and have the strength and resourcefulness to plant within their own buildings and boundaries.
- We recognise that as part of Churches Together in England, we have an obligation to work in partnership with our sister churches wherever possible and practical to achieve a new Christian community.

- Mission works best as part of a mixed economy that includes inherited church and fresh expressions with the possibility of church plants.
- Church Planting is established through agreed values: It must be respectful, realistic, achievable, and effective.

Priorities

- Support those parishes and deaneries in developing and implementing their mission action plans for church planting.
- Explore adequate funding and resources – this should involve Diocesan oversight of Church Plant initiatives, and identify local funding and resources to set up and sustain Church Plant.
- Identify relevant training and formation for lay and ordained leaders for equipping the church planting team.
- Providing a framework for the Diocesan and Archdeaconry Mission & Pastoral Committees in their oversight of new congregations.
- Strengthen the focus of the Archdeaconry and Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committees and their connection with work on new housing communities.
- The need to consider triggers for a new church plant, particularly with reference to new housing estates.
- The need for some analysis of context and prayerful consideration of the best model of intervention.

To assess the effectiveness of the Diocese's Church planting Policy, the following areas will be monitored:

Input Indicators – to build capacity to support church planting activity across the diocese:

- No of people trained in church planting
- No of deaneries/parishes actively engaged in church planting as part of their mission planning and implementation
- No of new church planting projects supported

Outcome Indicators -

- No of new congregations
- No of unchurched people being reached
- Sustainability of church plants financially and in terms of governance and leadership

Our policy is to keep all such opportunities under constant review within the context of our overall Mission & Ministry, and proactively to seek opportunities for planting.

Examples of Models of Church Planting

Church planting demonstrates that church growth is possible. When a new church is planted, there is now either a new church community where none had been before; or a stronger, larger church community than before. Models are constructions; not mirrors of reality. It is important to take them seriously but not literally. Nothing in real life is quite like a model but models can give a particular emphasis so that one can notice and interpret particular aspects of reality and experience.

Church as new Worship Centre - There have been some relatively recent examples of parish communities identifying a site, and securing the resources to plant a new congregation and in time build a worship centre/community centre as a permanent expression of the church's presence and outreach.

Holy Trinity Brompton [HTB] Model - The classic HTB model has been to take a team of people into a large town/university city with a small or nearly defunct congregation. They need three things: an invitation from the Bishop, a CofE church building into which to send their team and an area where there is a potential congregation. They send a team of around fifty people and seed capital of around £50,000. The model needs a critical mass and a certain level of resources and has been challenged and critiqued as being expensive, inflexible and of a certain demographic. Whilst the planting team claim not to draw people from neighbouring thriving congregations, there is inevitably some leakage from other local churches to the church plant. It is no obvious context for this model in the Diocese of Salisbury, and experience of an HTB plant in neighbouring Dioceses has been that local congregation members have moved.

Minster Model - In a minster model, a central church provides collegial support to a team of church leaders based in that church or attached churches over a geographical area. Seeing the group of churches and leaders as a dispersed team, the centre offers resources, oversight, training, gatherings and companionship in order to encourage Missional activity appropriate to that area. This model may be appropriate for a rural market town and surrounding villages, or a large multi-parish team ministry or cluster of parishes.

Church for the Unchurched - There are a variety of models for people who wish to explore their faith in a new format, venue and style, and these would include Messy Church; Café Church; and Breakfast Church. The gathering of people around a particular time, place, and liturgical format can grow into a congregation which can be intergenerational, ecumenical, and focused on the particular needs of that group.

Church Schools and School Churches - The partnership between parish churches and the local church school offers opportunities to explore a five day a week congregation within the school environment. Examples of Baptizing, Eucharistic and Confirming congregations of children, staff, and parents, with companions from the wider church family and community are establishing new worshipping communities for faith development and nurture.

New Housing Estates - Opportunities for church planting within the expected 60,000 new homes, have included appointing a Team Vicar within an existing ministry team to coordinate outreach and worship to the new community; the purchase of a community house and the appointment of two lay mission enablers to live and work amongst the new community

Niche Congregations - Specific congregations can be identified which may be age related, or interest groups, or networks of lifestyle. These may include young people, young adults, professionals, nursing homes, for example.

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Church Planting Policy - Appendix A **- A Framework for the Drafting Church Planting Proposals**

Code of Practice Framework

We welcome proposals for planting, and, in order to facilitate the process, set out the following framework document to guide the conversation between Bishop/Archdeacon, Diocesan staff and prospective planters. We aim for clarity and a capacity to bring together:

- the intentions of church planters
- the process by which churches explore the need & opportunity for planting
- co-ordination of planting efforts

Definitions:

A healthy church

A healthy church is one which:

- Is growing spiritually, numerically and financially.
- Owns a vision.
- Encourages all its members to play their part and use their gifts.
- Enjoys worship and prayerfully seeks God's purpose and direction.
- Is willing to take risks.
- Has different opportunities to share faith and study together.
- Has effective and respected leadership.
- Is engaged with the society it serves.
- Is involved in the life of the deanery and wider Church.

A struggling church

A struggling church is one which:

- Is static or declining in numbers.
- Has no vision for its mission.
- Has little lay ministry and does little to encourage it.
- Is focused on maintaining the status quo.
- Does little to encourage growth in Christian discipleship and understanding.
- Has uninspiring and inefficient leadership.
- Shows little interest in cooperation with the wider Church.
- Shows little interest in serving the wider community.

Questions for Church Planters

Questions to ask if you are contemplating a plant:

1. What is your strategy for church planting? Please produce a written statement – your Mission Action Plan or strategy document will inform the process.
2. What is your desired context for planting? Locality, network, ethnicity/people group will all be considerations here.
3. Has there been adequate investment in prayer in relation to the initiative?
4. Where does your strategy fit within the Diocese of Salisbury Church Planting policy?

5. What are the objectives of this particular planting proposal? Are you seeking to reach unchurched people or Christians who live in the area?
6. Who will be involved in the plant? (Leadership, numbers of people committed to the project etc.)
7. When will you be ready to plant? Timescale, critical path analysis.
8. How are you proposing to fund and resource the plant?
 - o Capital costs of building (if any)
 - o Running costs
 - o Stipends/salaries and oncosts
 - o Housing
 - o Expenses
9. How do you plan to develop leadership from within the community in which you wish to plant?
10. What preliminary consultation is needed with existing Church of England parishes and structures?
 - o Bishop
 - o Archdeacon
 - o Rural Dean and Deanery
 - o Neighbouring Parishes
 - o Bishop's Council
11. Have you consulted with other churches [including non-Anglican] in the area that might be affected by the church plant?
12. What legalities will be required? [this will probably involve you in a detailed conversation with Bishop/Archdeacon]
 - o Pastoral Scheme or Pastoral Order
 - o Bishop's Mission Order
 - o Licences and Lay Commissions
 - o Charitable status
 - o Governance structure (including questions such as PCC and Churchwarden equivalents)
 - o Synodical representation
 - o Safeguarding provisions
13. What do you consider to be the probability of your being ready to plant in the coming year? In coming 5 years? Is your likelihood of being able to plant as intended increasing or decreasing?
14. What support do you need from the Diocese to help you achieve your objectives? (These may not be deliverable, but we want expectations to be clear on both sides.)

Processes for making churches available for planting into.

Church buildings may become available either because a particular congregation/parish has been identified by the Bishop or because a church previously surplus to requirements (usually, but not always, closed for regular Anglican public worship) becomes potentially available.

Heritage issues may well be involved in the process of making a building available, particularly if there are proposals to use procedures under the *Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007*. The Archdeacon will be able to advise on this.

In the case of a planting opportunity with a “live” parish, the Bishop, Archdeacon and Bishop’s Council will work up a proposal to make the church available for a graft or transplant and approach potential planters.

Co-ordination of Planting Efforts

Church Planting across the Diocese will be regularly reviewed at Mission Council and Bishop’s Council. It also needs to be an item on the agendas of Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committees and Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committees.

Training and Development for Church Planting

Resources for training and development of clergy and laity for church planting may be provided by the Ministry for Mission team and in collaboration with the Learning for Discipleship and Ministry team and Continuing Ministerial Development programme

List of documents and resources

- *Breaking New Ground: Church Planting in the Church of England (Church House Publishing, 1994)*
- *Bishops’ Mission Orders: a beginner’s guide (Church House Publishing, 2008)*

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