

The 2015 Follow-Up Group: Report to Bishops Council

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The “2015 process” is an exercise in strategic planning. The original discussion document was piloted in a deanery in the Autumn of 2008 and rolled out in early 2009 to start a process of discussion. Though initially targeted at deanery synods and committees, latterly parishes have also begun to embrace the 2015 planning concept. The members of the follow-up group are not the same as those who wrote the original report. They were appointed in Spring 2009 to carry out three specific objectives:

- Monitor and encourage discussions within deaneries
- Draw together emerging insights
- Report to Bishops Council, and Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committees.

The group held its inaugural meeting in June 2009 and decided to progress its remit in three distinct tranches:

- Meetings with stipendiary clergy and other ministerial groups within the diocese, including Readers, Self Supporting Ministers (SSMs) and retired clergy
- Further discussions with deaneries through synods and specially arranged meetings
- Discussion with specific interest groups and other church networks.

1.1.2 On behalf of the group the Bishop wrote to all stipendiary clergy, and all Rural Deans and Lay Co-Chairs encouraging participation in further discussion. Whilst not every chapter or deanery has taken the opportunity, a considerable number have engaged in the process and individual letters and comments have also been received. Every meeting attended by members of the 2015 group was written-up and checked for accuracy. Where necessary, further clarification was sought. The group also looked at the original notes of the deanery road-shows. There is always more information that can be gathered, and the group is conscious that not all deaneries responded in this second tranche of consultations. However, it does not have the capacity to force participation beyond that which deaneries are prepared to contribute, and it considers that it has gathered sufficient data to write a coherent report for Bishops Council. We would like to thank those who participated in our discussions.

1.1.3 A criticism levelled at the follow-up group was that it was not adequately representative of the diocese; there were insufficient laity, or clergy with parish experience, for example. Those criticisms are undoubtedly true, but they misunderstand the role of the group which was not to be representative of others, but to listen to what others had to say, to faithfully capture and present those responses, and to draw out any recommendations that arose from them. The report, therefore, is **not** a distillation of the views of the members of the follow-up group; it **is** a distillation of the views of those who have engaged in the 2015 process from across the diocese.

1.1.4 There are five important considerations for those who read this report:

- All contributions are anonymous. This was a deliberate policy to encourage an honest response. However, we are confident that all comments can be referenced and accurately represent what was said.
- Some of the comments are critical. We have been careful to stress the weight of any criticisms; those commonly voiced have received more emphasis than those which represent a minority view.
- Some comments may mis-represent a present reality. For example, many respondents wanted training to be more flexible and locally delivered even though the ability to deliver local training

already exists. Since perception can sometimes be as, or more, powerful than reality such (*mis*)perceptions need to be noted and addressed.

- Some of the issues have been under discussion for many years, such as the development of a ministry of “oversight” [para 2.2.4], or the role of Readers vis-a-vis Local Ministry Teams and Ordained Local Ministers [para 2.6.2 ff]. The fact that they are still issues is highlighted as evidence that further work needs to be done.
- The recommendations are both short and long term responses. Whilst it is our hope that change can be implemented coherently, what is certain is that a “One-size-fits-all” situation will not work; the present is messy, and the future looks even messier. The recommendations should be read in this way; they are rarely the only solution to a problem but they represent ideas to be tried and evaluated. Recommendations are couched in the broadest possible terms, without specifying in most cases who would be responsible for their implementation. It is our view that that should be determined by the Bishops Council if the recommendations are accepted.

1.1.5 This leads to a very important consideration - the 2015 process is not an end in itself; it should be part of the fabric of diocesan thinking at every level (diocese, deanery, parish), monitored and evaluated on a regular, cyclical, basis. The sense of crisis that the publication of the original 2015 document generated arose partly because such strategic planning was not part of “normal” diocesan culture outside of a few key committees. Furthermore, 2015 is not about managing decline but planning for a different future. If we are to ensure that our structures, personnel and resources are fit for purpose, in response to the rapidly changing social context that our communities and towns are experiencing: **Recommendation 1. The diocese engages in strategic planning on a three-year cycle.**

1.1.6 In formulating this recommendation the group took advice from members of the laity who had considerable experience in strategic planning, all of whom indicated that they would be willing to assist the diocese in this process. Although three years seems a relatively short timescale their view was that to successfully implement change requires constant attention, and that some of the external issues faced by the diocese, especially the economic conditions, will generate threats and opportunities that require a relatively quick response. Three years was their recommended timeframe, at least in the early stages, which may become five years once the concept was embedded. A diocesan strategy and implementation plan would outline the vision for the diocese, establish goals to be achieved within an agreed timeframe, identify what actions, capabilities and resources are required to achieve these, and thus help the diocese to prioritise its use of resources. Regular monitoring of progress would be part of the implementation plan. Communicating this as widely as possible would enable others to understand what is happening and help them to make their own decisions in the context of the broader plan.

1.1.7 If 2015 has begun a process, then what happens next and who takes responsibility for managing change, is crucially important. The work of the follow-up group is finished, and the group will disband. However, monitoring and oversight of the recommendations contained in this report, if accepted, rests with the Bishops Council, to whom this report is addressed. These need to be progressed as a matter of urgency if the momentum of the original discussions is not to be lost. Some of our recommendations will assist the change process, but it is vital that: **Recommendation 2. Bishops Council take responsibility for the change management required by the diocese. This should be a standing item on the Council’s agenda requiring reports from deaneries, boards and committees. An annual report should be presented to Synod on progress achieved, and an “enabling group” should be established to oversee the process.**

The 2015 Follow-Up Group

Nick Read (Chair), Rob Daborn, John Dinnen, Claire Lording, Mary-Lou Toop, Michael Vockins, Lydia Davies

July 2010

1.2 Index

The report is laid out in the following sections:

- 2.1 Human Resources
- 2.2 Stipendiary Clergy
- 2.3 Self Supporting Ministers
- 2.4 Support Ministers
- 2.5 Retired Clergy
- 2.6 Readers
- 2.7 Laity
- 2.8 Senior Staff
- 2.9 General considerations about ministry

- 3.1 Diocesan Structures
- 4.1 The Deanery Responses
- 4.2 Deaneries as “units of mission”
- 4.3 Multi-parish benefices
- 4.4 Church buildings
- 4.5 2015 at a parish level
- 5.1 Allied Organisations
- 5.2 The Mothers Union
- 5.3 The Church Army
- 5.4 Kairos Partnership Ltd

- 6.1 Summary of Recommendations
- 7.1 Appendices

2.1 Human Resources

2.1.1 The pattern and nature of ministry across the diocese was a key consideration in response to 2015. There is an impressive spectrum of licensed and accredited ministry across the diocese, but this diversity also leads to confusion. The following were reported:

- Stipendiary Ministers – mostly parish-based stipendiary priests
- Self Supporting Ministers (SSMs) – including parish based SSMs (the majority of Ordained Local Ministers (OLMs) fall into this category) and work-based SSMs or “Ministers in Secular Employment” (MSEs)
- Support Ministers – Lay and Ordained Ministers licensed to specific diocesan posts, some paid and some voluntary
- “Retireds” - Retired clergy who exercise a ministry under “Permission to Officiate” (PTO), normally within a group of parishes
- Readers – Laity who have undertaken Reader training and are licensed accordingly
- Lay Ministers – Laity who are members of a Local Ministry Team (or a less formal parish equivalent), but who are not Readers

The confusion of roles is accompanied by an equally confusing set of procedures for accrediting or licensing the people fulfilling these. “Who authorises whom?”, and “To whom are people accountable?”, can be very difficult to answer succinctly for each of the types of minister mentioned above!

2.1.2 The relationship between these types of ministers needs attention. There are, of course, many situations in which ministry is being exercised collaboratively, harmoniously and with clarity, but the converse was stated often enough to suggest that it is a problem that needs to be addressed. A significant number of ministers of every type indicated that they felt their roles were poorly understood by their colleagues in the other “types” of ministry and by parishioners in general. Most criticism of the lack of awareness of their role was directed at stipendiary ministers by the others. The following are indicative of the statements we received:

- Stipendiary priests felt very few parishioners understood what they did beyond leading public worship, and even fewer understood the legal framework within which they operated.
- SSMs were often viewed as unpaid parish priests, and those who exercised a work-place ministry often felt neglected by the wider church. In some cases the pejorative term “hobby priest” or “part-time priest” was used by stipendiary colleagues.
- Readers pick up the pieces of the rota that the others are unable to do and in some parishes they were actively discouraged. Some were asked not to participate in the Deanery roadshows.

2.1.3 One reason for this lack of awareness is that outside of the West of England Ministerial Training Course (WEMTC) very little training or resourcing takes place collectively. It is simply taken for granted that clergy will understand the role of Readers, or that stipendiary priests understand how priesthood is being exercised by SSMs in a secular workplace. For pragmatic reasons Stipendiary’s, SSM/Retireds and Readers have their own (separate) support networks. Although some training and study days are held in common, for example Continuing Ministerial Education is open to Readers, the ability for interaction between the different ministerial “groups” is still very limited. **Recommendation 3. More opportunity should be given to joint training and discussion between all types of accredited ministry, with clearer guidelines of their respective roles, leading to greater appreciation of the resource that is to hand.** Practically this might best

be achieved at deanery level. Clergy study days could also explore the relationship between different forms of accredited ministry.

2.1.4 The diocese has a major role to help create a vision in which clergy and laity recognise their respective roles and are enabled to fulfil them. Each member of the Christian community needs to be encouraged to recognise what they are called to be, and allowed to fulfil that potential. This is not happening in many cases and a change in the prevailing culture is still required so that ordained is not set off against lay, or stipendiary against self supporting etc. There is not only confusion of roles, but also reticence to accept the validity of others' ministry in many cases. It is important that all in ministry understand how the different types of minister complement each other, and all understand what ministry means for them. The emphasis is still predominantly "we are helping the vicar to do his/her job". As one respondent put it, our emphasis throughout should be "What can I do to help you fulfil your ministry, rather than how can you share in mine?"

2.1.5 The original 2015 consultation document assumed, though without being explicit, that the diocesan strategy on the development of Local Ministry Teams would continue, and that these represent a major component in the future development of ministry. The emphasis on developing LMTs remains a diocesan objective, but caution needs to be exercised in the means by which this is progressed. These issues are explored more fully in paragraph 2.7.3 below.

2.2 Stipendiary Clergy

2.2.1 Priests are called to a particular way of being a Christian and it is felt that this is increasingly under threat, especially from those who emphasised "value for money" or a "payment for service" culture within the church. In this respect it was felt unfortunate that previous discussions about deanery planning were couched in terms that linked ministry provision to affordability. People were encouraged to see a direct relationship between what they paid in parish share, and the provision of services to their parishes. However, the pressure on priestly identity was not only internal (within the church) but also external. There is a broader question about the role of an institutional church when the majority of people are not interested in institutional religion.

2.2.2 There was broad consensus about the role of a priest. They were those who walked with people pastorally, sacramentally and prophetically, and were a public focus for the life and ministry of the whole church i.e. they had a representational role. They carried particular responsibility for oversight and teaching, and for convening and overseeing worship. It was acknowledged that others shared in this, especially when more than one community was the unit of ministry. The priesthood was a "priesthood of all believers" and therefore the emphasis should always be on shared ministry, affirming and enabling others to participate to the full. However, it was recognised that this remains an aspirational goal, and one that is not always achieved in practise.

2.2.3 The majority of stipendiary priests valued the formal link between vocation and place, and there was little enthusiasm to have a "pool" of vicars operating across a deanery. The 2015 consultation report emphasised that "oversight" would be a distinctive feature of ordained ministry, possibly over areas much larger than their current benefices in the case of stipendiary clergy. To quote from the document, *"leadership...will be much more a role of oversight, of shared episcopate, than the traditional model of a parochial priest."* However, the concept itself is still poorly understood or capable of a number of different connotations. There is considerable confusion about the priestly vocation and the "job" of being a vicar. The latter is much broader with considerable managerial, administrative and legal responsibilities. Does "oversight" mean the same thing as "managerial responsibility?" Many of the tensions, and a considerable degree of the stress that stipendiary clergy experience, arose from this.

2.2.4 Developing "oversight" has been a prominent feature in diocesan literature and discussions from the mid 1990's onwards, so the discussion is not new, but it does not appear to have been resolved. Oversight

carries connotations of shared episcopacy, but the model with which we operate is hierarchical; it suggests being in charge (an overseer) with implications of overall responsibility and control; and the legal structures of the parochial system translate into authority lying with the incumbent. Shared ministry, or “oversight” is, therefore, too readily understood as something else the incumbent has to manage. Whilst in many business environments there is a clear differentiation between the role of an operations manager, who deals with the detail of administration, HR etc., and the Chief Executive who deals with strategy, vision, values etc., within the parish priest these roles are largely expected to occur within a single individual. The diocese needs to be clear about the distinctiveness of the priestly vocation, which does not change, rather than the context within which this is exercised, which is changing all of the time, and also be clear what is expected of priests exercising a ministry of oversight. The group was informed of an information leaflet from the Diocese of North Michigan which listed those in their local ministry team. “The priest” occurred half way down the list on page two of the document!

2.2.5 The legal link between the incumbent and the church building(s) was often valued but also felt to be highly constraining in terms of time and resource. One of the more radical suggestions was to break the legal links between incumbents and their buildings, though this idea generally received a mixed response. However, it was felt that the multi-parish benefice provided an opportunity to trial this. **Recommendation 4. The diocese examines ways of reducing the managerial and administrative burden on stipendiary priests, and experiments with alternative ways of maintaining the fabric and functionality of church buildings that does not require an incumbent having the legal responsibility.** Many respondents felt that they had been poorly equipped initially to take on the legal responsibilities for buildings. Some were supported by excellent churchwardens, but in many cases the churchwardens also had a poor appreciation of the complexity of their role and required considerable support. One idea that was discussed was to allow experienced churchwardens to share their knowledge with others across the benefice or deanery, and to encourage mentoring of newly appointed incumbents by more experienced priests. This should be monitored to ensure that best practise was identified, captured, communicated and supported.

2.2.6 An often voiced criticism was that if the context of priestly ministry is changing, the theology and structures that underpin this ministry have not changed with it. This is not only about a theology of priesthood, but also our understanding of ecclesiology and of authority. Of particular concern, expressed throughout the consultation, was not that most clergy were resistant to change or to recognising that things needed to develop, but that they lacked the time and resources to implement such change, and many diocesan clergy were themselves approaching retirement (one of the triggers for the consultation in the first place). Thus many felt that 2015 was an additional burden being imposed upon them rather than an important part of “normal” strategic planning. **Recommendation 5. More attention is paid to developing greater theological awareness of modern practices of priesthood.** Thinking is taking place, witness the recent publication of a book entitled, *“If you meet George Herbert on the Road, kill him,”* but there is very little awareness or discussion within the diocese to develop a robust theology of how we are called to minister in the 21st Century within our rural context.

2.2.7 New appointees to the diocese faced a particularly difficult time in that they were poorly provided with resources about the diocese. In particular people stressed the need for a diocesan handbook, and for better induction to the roles and responsibilities of support ministers who could assist parochial colleagues. **Recommendation 6. A “hand-over” book is prepared for those who are new to the diocese including a diocesan directory, information on the role of support ministers, together with key diocesan contacts, and a mentoring system is adopted to support those newly in post.**

2.3 Self Supporting Ministers (SSMs)

2.3.1 The group is very diverse, incorporating SSMs who are primarily parish focused and those in work-place ministry. Thus, in responding to their needs, it is important to emphasise that there is no one-size-fits-all approach, though there should be a generic understanding of their role within which all SSMs fit. There was frustration that more could be achieved if there was greater dialogue with, and recognition of the gifts

of, SSMs. While the defining characteristic of all of the ministries within this group is priesthood, it was felt that priesthood was understood by the majority of people in the diocese as the stipendiary/parochial model. SSMs are part of diocesan ministry, though sometimes broad based and not necessarily focused primarily in one place. They have a ministry of presence with people “on the edge,” as one put it, they are of the “Order of Tentmakers”. More needs to be done to articulate priesthood in its widest sense, and to recognise priestliness when it operates in a non-parochial model. Leadership within the church is drawn almost exclusively from within the stipendiary/parochial model and this was a barrier that needed to be addressed. Could an SSM be an Archdeacon if they had the appropriate skills? Such variety in the practice of priesthood is something that should be embraced, celebrated, and developed further.

2.3.2 Even if senior staff may understand the role of SSMs, this is not often the case with parishioners or stipendiary colleagues. It is even less the case where the focus of ministry is in the workplace rather than the parish. A pejorative view is that they are “part time” or “hobby” priests rather than ministers with an authentic priestly vocation, often in a secular context. This may be reinforced by the licensing system where SSMs are licensed to a parish without any reference to their wider vocation. In some dioceses the designation within the license is both to a parish and/or to their wider ministry e.g. “licensed to the parish of X and to the work of a teacher/bank manager” etc. **Recommendation 7. The diocese licenses SSMs to the widest possible role reflecting the diverse nature of their ministry.** If this is not possible under the terms of the licence, then the diocese should explore ways in which their wider remit can be articulated and acknowledged. They are often pioneers and role models for others and may also be in a position to articulate more coherently the needs of parishioners who, like them, are in full time employment. They carry unique insights and reflections because of their non stipendiary status and are free to explore possibilities that may not be open to stipendiary clergy.

2.3.3 Overall, greater attention needs to be made to monitoring and enabling the variety of priestly roles within the diocese. Resources for internal reflection and the opportunity for external, objective, assessment should be made available to all priests, whether stipendiary, SSM or retired, who exercise a ministry within the church. These systems could involve laity as well as the stipendiary clergy so that others have a greater understanding, and appreciation, of the role of SSMs/Retireds. As with retired clergy (see below), there is a need for an induction process for SSMs who were not previously familiar with the diocese into the diocesan strategy and the development of effective local ministry.

2.4 Support Ministers

2.4.1 Support Ministers exercise a specialist ministry across the diocese. They comprise ordained and lay, paid and voluntary. Some are “internally focussed”, working primarily within church structures, whilst others are almost exclusively externally focussed, working with secular agencies and issues (a list is attached as Appendix 1). There was general confusion over the role and activities of diocesan Support Ministers across the diocese, especially from those who had previously had very little contact with them. Those with an “internal” brief are better understood than those working with external organisations and issues. There is also some confusion about the differences in the role of a “Support Minister”, and the roles of the various “Advisers” that the Diocese has appointed, such as the Council for World Development and Partnership Adviser and the Diocesan Vocations Adviser.” Of particular concern to many is whether the support ministers currently in post are fulfilling the right roles to progress the strategic vision of the diocese. It is a chicken-and-egg situation where the lack of strategic planning makes it difficult to assess whether diocesan objectives are being met (see also the comments in para 1.1.6)

2.4.2 The title Support Minister can be wholly be misleading; whilst some genuinely “support” parish clergy in their role, others have an externally focussed ministry which has very little impact on parochial structures. However, those in the parishes tend to judge the value of support ministers by the contribution they are perceived to make to parish ministry. Greater clarity is required to articulate the particular contribution that individual Support Ministers are making to the mission of the church. It was suggested that Bishops and Support Ministers should have a scheduled pattern of deanery visits to help foster better

communication between the centre and the grass roots. However, responsibility for communication does not rest with the individuals alone and a comprehensive communications strategy should be developed.

2.4.3 There are particular issues relating to ordained support ministers who exercise a priestly role, but for which recent legal opinion suggests they be treated as secular employees, which has served to undermine confidence in their role as priests. The issues of ministerial reviews versus job appraisal, priestly formation versus training etc., have not been adequately addressed. The new management structures which are being put in place are not fully enough developed to ascertain whether they will provide support and coherence to the many Support Ministers who did not previously benefit from these.

2.5 Retired Clergy (“Retireds”)

2.5.1 Retired clergy are an important resource, but one that requires careful planning. Retireds have had a mixed reception depending on where they live. Some are active and are used by their incumbents (or other parish clergy), whilst others have been told they are surplus to requirement. Yet a hugely under-utilised area is the capacity of retired clergy for prayer. Many were not recipients of the Diocesan Prayer Diary, for example, though they continued to say a Daily Office. There was also concern that no formal mechanism existed to draw attention to retired clergy who are ill, or who have died.

2.5.2 Whilst for many retirement has opened up new possibilities for the development of their skills and allowed them to exercise new and exciting patterns of ministry that are fulfilling both to them and those whom they serve, in some parishes the Retireds are considered as potential barriers to change, because they prop up the *status quo* rather than allow development of lay ministry or because they exercise their ministry in ways that disable other licensed ministers within the parish (for example, see the section on Readers below). The relationship between the receiving parish and the clergy seeking PTO status needs to be carefully scrutinised so that the way in which they exercise their ministry complements the existing provision. We are aware that guidelines existed in the past to help articulate some of these issues but they are not in general use today. **Recommendation 8. Guidelines are developed and implemented so that ministers seeking PTO status have the best possible fit with the needs of their receiving parish(es).**

2.5.2 There are practical difficulties that need to be acknowledged. The geographical distribution of Retireds is not even, many live in the same locations and are not therefore easily deployable across the diocese. Furthermore it is acknowledged that it would be unwise to build a ministry strategy reliant on the presence of Retireds as they are inevitably growing older and will become less available. There are also anomalies in that stipendiary clergy can retire, and be given Permission to Officiate (PTO) status at 65, whilst SSMs do not require PTO status until they are 70. For those who move into the diocese to live, there is no formal induction for them of the way the diocese works, its strategies or its priorities, and therefore no clear understanding of the context in which their continuing ministry might be exercised.

2.5.3 **Recommendation 9. The Diocese should appoint advisers for retired ministry development whose role is to engage in an exploration of ministry with all clergy seeking PTO status** (whether they were already present in the diocese or not). This is not the same role as those who already do an excellent job as co-ordinators for retired clergy helping to maintain a social and pastoral link, or of the Clergy Retirement Officer who helps prepare clergy for retirement, though both would have a role to play in implementing best practice. Many retired clergy wish to explore ways of mission and ministry that were difficult to achieve whilst they were responsible for running their own parishes, but they are rarely asked after they have retired. This can lead to new possibilities for them and their receiving parishes, or even in a wider deanery or diocesan role. Obtaining PTO status should involve a formal exploration asking how they want their ministry to develop, what aspirations they might have, and what they have to offer as a resource for the diocese and/or what resources and training they need. This will also involve a formal induction into the diocese, its strategy and its aims and objectives.

2.6 Readers

2.6.1 Readers voiced the same concerns as the other “types” of ministers in that whilst many were fully integrated and exercised a deeply satisfying ministry, there were a significant number who felt under-valued and under used. One surprising result of our discussions was to learn of the number of Readers who had been actively discouraged from participating in the deanery 2015 roadshows.

2.6.2 There were particular tensions with this group with respect to lay-members of Local Ministry Teams, Ordained Local Ministers and retired clergy. If lay-members of LMTs exercised a ministry without an apparent need for theological training, of what value was the Reader’s training? Of course the converse may also be true with Readers being unnecessarily defensive towards other forms of lay ministry. Some Readers indicated they felt like “dinosaurs” which had been superseded by Ordained Local Ministers (OLMs). There was also a need to discuss Reader ministry in relation to that of retired clergy. In a number of cases the “Retired” simply wanted to conduct the whole service, rather than exercise a joint ministry with a Reader licensed to the parish. What these examples point to is the need for a clearer understanding of the particular roles and responsibilities of Readers, given that they have also been selected and trained by the church. These issues are not new and have been discussed many times previously, but they remain unresolved.

2.6.3 Readers exercised a ministry under conditions analogous to that of Self Supporting Ministers and most valued the content of their theological training, even if they sometimes questioned the lack of opportunity to put it into effect. However, there was criticism that the training was less flexible than it might be and that the previous experience of Readers was rarely a consideration when training was being delivered. Although attempts had been made to conduct a skills survey of Readers there was no comprehensive assessment of the skills-base they represented, or what resource they could offer to the diocese at large. **Recommendation 10. The diocese undertakes a comprehensive mapping exercise of Reader skills and aspirations and explores how this resource can be more effectively deployed.**

2.6.4 Many Readers felt underused, or that their ministries were not as effective as they would wish. For example, where training of lay worship leaders was being carried out in many parishes it was often without consultation with the Readers, who felt they were well placed to assist in selecting and training other lay-ministers. In some respects local Readers had better knowledge of the parish than the incumbent, who might live in a different community. Similarly, why were the wardens of Readers always clergy, couldn’t a suitably qualified Reader also be a sub-warden? In general, Readers felt they had more to offer and the diocese should “think outside the box.” New models of using Readers should be explored; why couldn’t Readers formally be inducted as chaplains, or be seen as a valid expression of “fresh expressions” where appropriate. It has been argued previously that Readers should have working agreements which are understood and ratified by the PCC and Wardens across a benefice, and we wish to continue to support this trend. **Recommendation 11. All Readers should have a working agreement that is monitored by the diocese, and this should be aspirational outlining how the post-holder wishes to develop their ministry and what they require to achieve this.** The working agreement should have the widest possible ownership within the designated parish(es).

2.6.5 In response to the lack of clarity about their role, some Readers and SSMs, for example, have been encouraged to explain their ministry to parishioners, usually within the context of a church service or as part of the sermon. This was universally felt to be beneficial and often led to further enquiries from others within the congregation who began to test their own sense of vocation. **Recommendation 12. Raising awareness of SSM and Reader vocations should be encouraged with suitable supporting material prepared and circulated, perhaps on a specified day during the year.**

2.7 Laity

2.7.1 Greater lay involvement was considered essential for the future, but a number of issues needed to be addressed to realise this. First is the ability of those in leadership positions to work with volunteers, and the skills necessary to effectively enable the volunteers to develop. Many organisations offer training and support to those who work with volunteers but the church rarely utilises this expertise. Not all parish priests

are equally gifted in this area and training should be developed to encourage and equip them. Secondly, whilst training of laity was considered important the location for such training was equally so; it needed to be in a “safe” and accessible environment. Mention was made of Lichfield Diocese where the Bishops Certificate was a modular course run over two years which could be run either at parish or deanery level. The idea of accessing “accredited” training in a centralised location was not felt to be helpful to many people. Furthermore, much accredited training did not credit life experience or previous qualifications and more should be done to accredit prior learning/experience. It was widely felt that training needed a more flexible approach and there should be greater opportunity for localised training appropriate to the needs of the parish/person. There needs to be a light touch between what is “official” and “unofficial” (licensed and otherwise) with elastic boundaries. Some deaneries wanted to explore the idea of a local deanery training programme. This section highlights a general lack of awareness of what is available, since the diocese already has a considerable amount of flexible, locally delivered, training material. Overcoming this misperception is important and therefore: **Recommendation 13. The Lay Development and Local Ministry Officers work to raise the profile of locally delivered and accredited courses.**

2.7.2 Many respondents saw the need to develop extended Communion or lay Eucharistic ministers as a response to a perceived decline in ordained ministry across the diocese, or at least a relaxation on the restrictions applying to extended communion. Some felt that there needed to be a review of the role of the Eucharist in our patterns of worship. Was the expectation of a weekly parish communion appropriate for our communities and for our resource-base of ordained ministers?

2.7.3 The consultation highlighted issues in relation to multi-parish benefices. There were differences of opinion on how well clergy were equipped to undertake their ministry over the widely different situations found in multi-parish benefices. Some felt that their previous experience and support enabled them to fulfil this role, others that it did not. However, many expressed the view that although local ministry teams or the development of lay ministry remained an aspiration, their parishes were “light years” from achieving this goal, particularly where parishes were remote and/or sparsely populated. What was needed was a scheme more tailored to the individual parishes without a presumption that it would lead to a Local Ministry Team. **Recommendation 14. The diocese creates a network of Parish Development Advisers who can work with parochial clergy, providing additional capacity to support parishes to take their next step(s), whatever may be appropriate.**

2.7.4 The relationship between Parish Development Advisers (PDAs) and those responsible for calling and equipping Local Ministry Teams needs to be carefully addressed. There is obviously an overlap between the two, for example the material which exists to support parish development already exists, but is often labelled as, or associated with, Local Ministry Teams and this may have restricted its accessibility. Neither are we suggesting that PDAs operate a parallel advisory role which could be in opposition to the development of LMTs, but that a broader approach to parish development is required than occurs at the moment. Accessibility may be improved if there is a distinction between the two, but they need to work closely together. Sharing of best practise was considered important, for example one deanery had instigated a plan to provide secretarial support for each of its incumbents.

2.7.5 Greater engagement could be sought with laity who possess particular administrative or managerial skills in the service of the church. A report was published by the diocese in 1999 entitled “*Administration and Your Parish – suggestions for the devolution of parish administration*” which contained many good practice ideas. **Recommendation 15. The report “Administration and Your Parish” be reviewed, updated and re-issued.**

2.8 Senior Staff

2.8.1 The role of senior staff in establishing the ethos of the diocese was a subject of much discussion, and of great importance. If the future requires greater flexibility and experimentation then it was felt that this needed to be “led from the front”. The prevailing view was that the diocese was largely risk averse and

somewhat inflexible in its approach. No one favoured extreme solutions, but many wanted opportunities to trial new things and “think outside the box” and respondents indicated that it was often difficult to engage in discussions about alternative ways of being church in a genuinely exploratory and open way. There were particular comments about the relationship between ministers (lay and ordained) and the bishops/Senior Staff. In practise, the role of the Bishop was often as poorly understood as the role of others engaged in ministry.

2.8.2 One other significant issue in this relationship concerned how one addressed pastoral sensitivities and legal authority, and where one could obtain advice confidentially. There were occasions when clergy were asked by parishioners to do things that might make sense pastorally but which may require flexible interpretation of canon law. It was felt that there was little opportunity to discuss these issues or to seek advice, because the perception was that senior staff would feel they had a duty to uphold the legal niceties without appreciating the pastoral and social realities being addressed by the parish clergy. One respondent stated the view “We need Bishops to be there for us, not to be controlling us.” In response clergy have sometimes taken decisions unilaterally and not sought help. It was suggested that there could be greater devolution of responsibility to Rural Deans to support clergy faced with difficult pastoral/legal questions and/or that the clergy mentoring scheme (see para 2.2.7) might help.

2.8.2 Many perceived a wide gulf between being “on the ground” and “at the centre”. Clergy wanted a more collaborative relationship with their bishops though it was acknowledged that there was major constraint on Bishops’ time. There was also a fear expressed that parishes may wish to be more radical than the bishops would be comfortable with. It was commented that remarks that 2015 was not about reducing clergy numbers or closing churches, said initially to reassure people (which it did), may also have been counter-productive because it implied that more radical solutions would not be entertained even if they were appropriate.

2.9 General considerations about ministry

2.9.1 The consultation showed that there is a considerable resource available to the diocese, however it is not as coherent or as effective as it could be. We have stressed that many ministers (of whatever description) felt satisfied and fulfilled in their role, but enough stated the contrary view to suggest that this needed greater attention. There are four perceived weaknesses: First, the diversity of licensed ministry within the diocese is confusing and the roles of each in relation to the other, and to the mission and ministry of the church, is not clearly understood or articulated. The response is not to suggest reducing the diversity of our ministry resource, but to make it more coherent. The discussion highlighted a number of areas that need addressing. For example: where the attitudes of stipendiary clergy can be a blockage to other ministers functioning most effectively; the problem of some retired clergy who dis-able other, local, ministers; the issues relating to Readers who have undergone theological training feeling de-valued by lay-members of LMTs who exercise ministry without an apparent need for any training.

2.9.2 Secondly, we do not readily know or understand the skills base that exists. Recommendation 10 (para 2.6.3) suggests a “skills audit” of Readers specifically, but a general skills audit would be of significant benefit to the diocese. It could, for example, identify: stipendiary priests who need help developing “managerial” skills; laity who have specific skills of value to the diocese; church wardens who can help train and develop other church wardens across a benefice or deanery (see para 2.2.5). The language of corporate organisations does not come readily to the church, but there is a sense in which the diocese needs to see itself as much more of a team than it does at present, with the members of the team respected for the unique contributions they are able to make, or, if it is more preferable, we may ponder on Paul’s analogy of “the body”. Our recommendations are to try and ensure that there are greater opportunities for those in ministry to operate more synergistically than they do at present. Hence: the requirement for some sort of induction for those with PTO status; greater opportunities for joint training and discussion; all ministers having a working agreement of some sort which includes aspirational and developmental issues.

2.9.3 The third weakness is that the development of ministerial practices has not always been accompanied by a theological or legal underpinning that keeps pace with the realities on the ground. We have highlighted, for example, the confusion of roles between priesthood and the managerial responsibilities of incumbents for buildings and parishes. We need to find ways of freeing stipendiary clergy to enable them to fulfil their wider, legal, remit – or of freeing them **from** that wider, legal, remit.

2.9.4 The fourth weakness that has been raised is a perception amongst many of the more senior clergy that there are very limited opportunities for progression and development within the diocese, and no oversight of their role that encourages the development of skills and experience that would fit them for more senior posts. This has practical consequences; a loss of morale and of quality priests leaving the diocese. Very few of the senior posts have been filled by internal candidates over recent years, and ministerial reviews do not address training and development needs with a strategic oversight. It is almost exclusively left to the individual to determine what they need to progress in their priestly development.

2.9.5 The introduction of Common Tenure may present a major opportunity to address some of these wider issues as it will lead to discussions about priesthood, management and job descriptions etc. It is not clear what provision the diocese is making to introduce Common Tenure and what discussions will take place, but we hope that the opportunity is not missed.

3.1 Diocesan Structures

3.1.1 In the same way that there is confusion about the diversity of ministry within the diocese, there is equal confusion about the structures of the diocese. This confusion is widespread and occurs at every level of diocesan activity. The relationship between the Cathedral, the Diocesan Office, the Bishops Staff, the Bishops Council, the Synod and the DBF and their respective roles vis-a-vis deaneries and parishes is often poorly understood with a resulting lack of confidence in the decisions that have been made. This was an issue highlighted by the Vision Statement Working Party in 2006, which has still not been addressed. At one of the deanery meetings we attended, clergy present had to define what was meant by “the diocese” before we could proceed with the discussion! There is very little material that is accessible or “user-friendly” that explains the work of the diocese, or its value to the wider community. **Recommendation 16. The diocese produces a clear, accessible, report which explains what it is, how it works and what it does.** Mention was made, for example, of the summary Annual Report produced by Worcester Diocese.

3.1.2 Whilst it may reflect concern being felt over the wider economic situation, some criticism was levelled at the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF). The criticism was not about the DBF’s ability to manage the diocese’s money wisely, which received considerable praise, but of how decisions were made about spending and what was being achieved in return. People felt they had no way of influencing the decision-making processes, or at least did not understand how they could participate in them. Presentations on the budget/financial matters should be more comprehensive than a statement of income and expenditure and what the diocese needed. What do we want to achieve, and what is being achieved through the way we allocate our resources? (see comments in para 1.1.6) It was felt that the previous deanery presentations by members of the DBF, which drew a link between parish share and stipendiary clergy – how many clergy could each deanery afford?, had fostered the idea that people gave in return for service provision. Thus, in the current financial climate, people were questioning what they received in return for their giving, rather than the idea that their giving was to enable the overall mission and ministry of the church.

4.1 The Deanery Responses

4.1.1 Discussions have continued throughout the last twelve months with deaneries, and this section also builds on the returns from the deanery road-shows in 2008/9. Individual deaneries are not identified, and some are more advanced than others in their response to 2015, but there are generic themes emerging.

4.2 Deaneries as “units of mission”

4.2.1 Geography is a hugely important factor in the psychology of people and the delivery of ministry. It was felt that not enough notice is being taken of this either in the way that multi-parish parishes are being created or in the way that the boundaries of many deaneries have been defined. It seemed as if deaneries had been designed in response to opportunity, as parish vacancies occurred then re-organisation happened, rather than with a strategic overview that asked whether they worked socially and/or geographically. **Recommendation 17. The diocese undertakes a comprehensive review of deanery boundaries to assess whether they represent the best way of grouping our parishes, both geographically and socially.**

4.2.2 If deaneries are considered to be appropriate units of mission and ministry for the future, then many need help to develop their capacity further. More should be done to understand the nuances of each deanery and plan accordingly. For example, the statistics within the original 2015 document dealt with the diocese as a whole (aging population, numbers of young people etc), but there are very important local variations and our planning should reflect this. Similarly the resource base available to each deanery can be quite different, both in terms of its people (retired clergy, SSMs and Readers are not spread equally across the diocese) and its plant. Some deaneries have market towns and their accompanying infrastructure, whilst others were almost wholly composed of small communities. However, there have been major success stories in developing Local Ministry Teams across very remote rural areas. What is not clearly understood are the factors that lead to success (though the longstanding commitment of parish priests and the development of teaching and resourcing over several years, have all played a role), or of the barriers to achieving success. There is no detailed strategic assessment of what resources are available that could be applied to our forward planning, or assessments of whether special support is needed for those with comparatively little additional resource.

4.2.3 It was felt that more should be done to foster cross-boundary work, not only within the diocese but especially with neighbouring diocese/deaneries in Lichfield, Gloucester, Worcester and Wales. More formal planning and cross-diocesan contacts are required. Some joint activities already exist, such as the “rural day” with Lichfield Diocese, and many of the Support Ministers work across boundaries with colleagues from other dioceses, but there is no comprehensive assessment of what could be achieved together and, often, no effective cross-border dialogue.

4.2.4 With their permission we wish to highlight that the combined Hereford City & Hereford Rural Deanery is willing to engage with the diocese as an experimental area to try out new possibilities. They will have three priests retiring in the near future which represents a significant proportion of their stipendiary resource. They are, therefore, already beginning to engage in discussions about deployment, boundaries etc.

4.3 Multi-parish benefices

4.3.1 There were particular issues relating to Multi-Parish Benefices (MPBs), and it was felt that the diocese needed to recognise the huge disparities that existed between them. Some had a critical mass of people and were well placed to respond to initiatives such as Local Ministry, others were hampered by a lack of skilled people (or those with time and energy) and by their geography, and needed a different approach to move forward. This reinforced the view that developing a Parish Development Advisory role (see para 2.7.3) would be beneficial.

4.3.2 The legal structures relating to MPBs were not always helpful. For example if parishes are put together to form a united benefice then more emphasis needed to be given to an appropriate pattern of governance, so that benefices might work to one PCC throughout. Evidence was given of a situation in Dorset where a parish priest had taken the decision that he would not chair the PCC meetings but instead had instituted quarterly churchwardens’ meetings. He expected to be kept informed and would turn up for important issues, but the day-to-day business was left to the parishioners. One of the problems was even if informal arrangements were developed, once a benefice fell vacant the default position was to revert to separate PCCs etc. The legal framework needed to develop to support the practicalities of the multi-parish situation.

4.3.3 Help was required with administrative tasks across MPBs. As one member of the clergy commented, “The priestly function should not be about chasing defaulters who had failed to pay their parish share!” It was felt that more could be done to encourage parishes to share financial information so that people were not secretive or defensive about their resources, but willing to engage for the good of the benefice as a whole. However, even though a few people supported benefice accounts, most parish representatives wanted to retain control of their parish funds! Even though benefices existed as “units of mission” they rarely operate coherently when it comes to financial arrangements and wide inequalities exist between individual parishes within benefices.

4.3.4 In almost all deanery responses it was acknowledged that there could be important differences between parishes within the same deanery and some were clearly struggling. It should not be left solely to individual PCCs to determine their future and they needed help, such as external facilitation and support to move to the next step. However it was felt that there was also a largely untapped resource within the diocese. Many of the laity had the skills to assist in parish audits, training, mentoring etc., but the continuing (or perceived) emphasis on clerical ministry often ignored them.

4.3.5 It was broadly felt that the multi-parish benefice had reached the end of its sustainable development, and had probably exceeded it in many cases. Further development of MPBs may be entering a period of being counter-productive, when the continuing addition of parishes resulted in an unwieldy and largely meaningless geographical entity that offered no coherence or recognisable unity to ministers or people, and where the administrative burden on the incumbent was a major additional workload. One of the major conceptual gaps was to understand what models existed in addition to the parochial model. It was felt that many churches no longer conformed to this model anyway (“multi-parish” was testimony to this) but that there was no clarity about alternatives. Some questioned whether the parochial model *per se* was sustainable any longer. It was also acknowledged that as a diocese we were often at the “extreme” end of rurality, and that patterns of ministry that worked in other dioceses would not necessarily work in this diocese. Therefore, flexibility of approach was required and the need to re-write the “rule book” with “local solutions to local needs.”

4.3.6 The Vacancy Consultation Process, used when a parish is seeking to attract a new priest, would be a useful tool to address some of these questions. Can the range of questions be extended to include discussions on the boundaries between parishes, the opportunities for joint administration etc? Often, where there is a comprehensive Statement of Needs, there is no monitoring afterwards to assess whether the issues raised have been properly addressed, and/or the new priest helped to address them. The Statements of Needs should have implications for the diocese and the deanery and be tied into the longer term strategic planning.

4.4 Church buildings

4.4.1 Throughout the consultation, the future of church buildings remained “the elephant in the room”. The 2015 report had not addressed the issue, and many deaneries were reluctant to raise it in public discussion. Nevertheless, everyone agreed that the future of church buildings needed to be addressed. People applauded the diocesan initiatives to make the buildings more conducive to community use, but it was acknowledged that many of the buildings were no longer fit for purpose, particularly for an elderly church-going population, they were often located in the wrong place and they lacked necessary facilities. When the issue was discussed, then predictably the responses were very mixed. Some favoured a programme of planned closures, whilst others were adamant that every building needed to be retained. There was no agreed method of determining what buildings should be retained and which should not, or any sort of consensus of how one made such decisions. **Recommendation 18. There should be a strategic assessment of our buildings and their long term sustainability.** Furthermore, the assessment should include discussion about appropriate new facilities, for example in conjunction with the housing provisions outlined in the county Local Development Frameworks.

4.5 2015 at a parish level

4.5.1 One encouraging feature of the 2015 consultation is that it has helped to begin a process of strategic thinking where it may not have existed previously, albeit for many the perception is that it is taking place in response to a developing crisis rather than as a “normal” part of diocesan activity. Increasingly individual benefices and parishes are beginning to develop their own responses, adopting 2015 as their time frame. Members of the working party have participated in some of these discussions but they do not have the capacity to engage very deeply in this, however we wish to encourage this trend. If a cyclical approach to strategic planning is adopted (see para 1.1.5) then “parish planning” would become a natural part of the deanery planning process.

4.5.2 Whilst it was broadly felt that a process of parish audits would be helpful this had to be achieved without putting additional pressure on parish resources. A formal approach such as “Mission Action Planning” (MAP) was not thought to be helpful if it imposed a layer of additional bureaucracy, though the methodology could be adapted. It was felt that the emphasis should be on allowing something to develop more in tune with local capacity. Again, this suggests that a Parish Development Advisory role would be beneficial (para 2.5.3). There is clearly a need for the diocese to develop tools that individual benefices/parishes could use to progress their strategic planning. This is wider than a discussion on the future of the church building (“church re-ordering”), at its most extreme it might result in the closure of a church building!, and perhaps most closely mirrors the strategic thinking that lies behind the development of a Local Ministry Team. There is also the need to share best practise, those parishes which had begun to engage in the process had developed considerable resource material, and ideas about engaging with people, that could be shared elsewhere.

5.1 Allied Organisations

5.1.1 The diocese encompassed, or benefited from, other organisations which retained independence from diocesan structures, but which contributed to its mission and ministry, and some are listed below. However, implementing a diocesan strategy would also benefit from other expertise available locally, but held by “secular” organisations. For example, training people to work more effectively with volunteers is a common training programme run by the Voluntary and Community Sector; techniques in spatial planning used by the Local Authority would help us understand our geographical and social context etc. We have the contacts but we rarely use them to progress diocesan objectives.

5.2 The Mothers Union

5.2.1 The image of the Mothers Union (MU) is changing. By 2015 there will be more “diocesan” members and fewer local branches. The MU has developed expertise in the fields of marriage, family life and parenting and in working with families and is a significant resource for the diocese. It also exercises pastoral care and support through its members and formal schemes such as the Holiday Scheme. MU has overseas links and is part of a world-wide network. Structurally, the MU is the 5th instrument of unity within the Anglican Communion.

5.2.2 MU provides formal training through, for example, its “Loving for Life” courses and training is an area that could be expanded. It has trained facilitators that help with parenting issues, and is linked to social services in some areas of its work. However there is no formal link between the MU and other aspects of training within the diocese, such as the development of LMTs or the work of Ministry Development and Training. **Recommendation 19. More formal links be established between the MU and the Board for Training and Ministry.**

5.2.3 More could be done to encourage parish priests to see the MU as a resource. The MU is emphatically not a “catering corps” and there needs to be a better “conversation” between the MU and parochial clergy. The diocese could help facilitate this dialogue by ensuring opportunities within clergy

training to highlight the work of the MU. It is important that people know that the MU is not exclusively female, Church of England, or just for married people. The MU branch structure already enables involvement in worship and the MU is, therefore, also a potential resource for parish worship. It is important that the MU is viewed as a partner in the mission and ministry of the diocese. MU availability is high, it is an important prayer resource and it has practical skills. For example, MU provides visitors to schools, and members take assemblies. There have been initiatives such as “Messy Church” and “Open the Book”, MU can provide information and advice on a range of topics, and members could be involved in formal chaplaincies such as hospitals, hospices etc.

5.2.4 Of particular significance to a rural diocese such as Hereford with the demographic challenges that it faces is the MU’s work for the elderly. Some branches already provide parish lunches for elderly people and visit residential homes, they shop, get prescriptions etc. There are guidelines that govern this work so that “oversight” is built into the system. Nationally also there have been MU projects, for example, with mothers with babies in prison. There has also been work with female refugees and social service departments hold discussions with the MU to ascertain what needs it can meet. This could be reflected in the diocesan relationship as well. This aspect of “doing” has a broader appeal to the younger membership as well.

5.2.5 There has been little formal relationship that involves the MU in diocesan planning. Although there is an MU representative on the Council for Social Responsibility (CSR) and the President of the MU has been a member of Synod there is no formal link between the MU and Bishops Council. When the MU has made presentations to Bishops Council and Synod on aspects of its work these have been *ad hoc* and not part of a regular pattern of dialogue. New Synod members should be briefed on the work of the MU as part of their induction, there should be an MU page on the diocesan website and a diocesan link to the national MU website.

5.3 The Church Army

5.3.1 Partnership arrangements already exist between the diocese and the Church Army for some posts within the diocese. These represented a different way of working and one that could actively be explored with other organisations. They also represented additional resources for the diocese, for example as part of the “Fresh Expressions” movement. Training requirements for Church Army Officers represented opportunities for the diocese to engage in, for example, youth mission or social regeneration.

5.4 Kairos Partnership Ltd

5.4.1 The diocese has formed an independent company, Kairos Partnership Ltd, which is also a registered charity, to enable it to carry out activities concerning the regeneration of local communities with particular emphasis on working through faith groups. In practise the diocese has found it difficult to bid for funds in situations where the church’s charitable objects, “the advancement of religion,” has been barred from receiving public money, or where the diocesan accounts suggest that finance is not required. Kairos can supply management expertise to local, faith-based, projects and is therefore an important vehicle for implementing parish and deanery responses to 2015.

6.1 Summary of Recommendations

[paragraph numbers are in brackets]

1. The diocese engages in strategic planning on a three-year cycle. [1.1.5]
2. Bishops Council take responsibility for the change management required by the diocese. This should be a standing item on the Council's agenda requiring reports from deaneries, boards and committees. An annual report should be presented to Synod on progress achieved, and an "enabling group" should be established to oversee the process. [1.1.7]
3. More opportunity should be given to joint training and discussion between all types of accredited ministry, with clearer guidelines of their respective roles, leading to greater appreciation of the resource that is to hand. [2.1.3]
4. The diocese examines ways of reducing the managerial and administrative burden on stipendiary priests, and experiments with alternative ways of maintaining the fabric and functionality of church buildings that does not require an incumbent having the legal responsibility. [2.2.5]
5. More attention is paid to developing greater theological awareness of modern practices of priesthood. [2.2.6]
6. A "hand-over" book is prepared for those who are new to the diocese including a diocesan directory, information on the role of support ministers, together with key diocesan contacts, and a mentoring system is adopted to support those newly in post. [2.2.7]
7. The diocese licenses SSMs to the widest possible role reflecting the diverse nature of their ministry. [2.3.2]
8. Guidelines be developed and implemented so that ministers seeking PTO status have the best possible fit with the needs of their receiving parish(es). [2.5.2]
9. The Diocese should appoint advisers for retired ministry development whose role is to engage in an exploration of ministry with all clergy seeking PTO status. [2.5.3]
10. The diocese undertakes a comprehensive mapping exercise of Reader skills and aspirations and explores how this resource can be more effectively deployed. [2.6.3]
11. All Readers should have a working agreement that is monitored by the diocese, and this should be aspirational - outlining how the post-holder wishes to develop their ministry and what they require to achieve this. [2.6.4]
12. Raising awareness of SSM and Reader vocations should be encouraged with suitable supporting material prepared and circulated, perhaps on a specified day during the year. [2.6.5]
13. The Lay Development and Local Ministry Officers work to raise the profile of locally delivered and accredited courses. [2.7.1]
14. The diocese creates a network of Parish Development Advisers who can work with parochial clergy, providing additional capacity to support parishes to take their next step(s), whatever may be appropriate. 2.7.3]
15. The report "*Administration and Your Parish*" be reviewed, updated and re-issued. [2.7.5]
16. The diocese produces a clear, accessible, report which explains what it is, how it works and what it does. [3.1.1]
17. The diocese undertakes a comprehensive review of deanery boundaries to assess whether they represent the best way of grouping our parishes, both geographically and socially. [4.2.1]
18. There should be a strategic assessment of our buildings and their long term sustainability. [4.4.1]
19. More formal links are established between the Mothers Union and the Board for Training and Ministry. [5.2.2]

7.1 Appendix – Diocesan Support Ministers and Advisers

Continuing Ministerial education/Post Ordination Training Officer (CME/POT)

Youth Officer

Lay Training Officer

Local Ministry Officer

Missioner for Environment, Agriculture and Rural Life

Chaplain working with Deaf People (voluntary)

Community Partnership and Funding Officer

Diocesan Communications Officer

Diocesan Director of Ordinands

Diocesan Interfaith Officer (voluntary)

Social Responsibility Officer

Council for World Development and Partnership Adviser (voluntary)

Disability Officer (voluntary)

Clergy retirement Officer (voluntary)

Child Protection Officer (voluntary)

Adviser on Women in Ministry (voluntary)

Advisers for Non-Stipendiary Ministry (2) (voluntary)

The diocese also employs specialists within the Board of Education.