

## Diocesan Synod Presentation

I am delighted to speak today, because what I think we have before us is an exciting vision for our life together.

### Slide 1



As +Nicholas and David have stated we have been on a journey of review. Since the Renewing Hope Vision was adopted in around 2014 we set some mission and ministry priorities which we communicated in 2016. It was then agreed last year that it was time to review where we were as a diocese.

Thanks to +John Gladwin consulting with a good many people, and engagement with +John's report at a number of levels we have been able, I think, to draw up a vision which would enable us all to continue to renew hope where God has placed us. To be the people that God called us to be, to be the communities which God wants us to be.

Many people have fed into this process, which has been discussed in deaneries, by this Synod, by our boards and committees, by our rural deans and gradually we have discerned what our priorities in going forward should be.

Together with the responses to +John's review, there have also been other things to consider, reviews of aspects of diocesan work, consideration of our finances and the need to see where we have come from.

We wanted a vision which was succinct, understandable, which applied to all levels of our life together – life in the parish, life in the deanery, life in Church House, Salisbury and the Board of Education and with which we can all connect.

So we bring you today one side of A4.

Slide 2

**Renewing HOPE**  
Pray • Serve • Grow

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
DIOCESE OF SALISBURY

## Ministry and Mission Priorities 2016

Developing Disciples

Nurturing Vocations

Sustaining Ministry

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Let me take you back to those three ministry priorities for 2016:

Developing Disciples

Nurturing Vocations

Sustaining Ministry

In a paper produced at the time we pledged:

We will provide assistance and resources to parishes and benefices, for example in relation to different forms of prayer and discipleship programmes

We want to explore with you how diocesan teams can help individuals and groups to explore their discipleship.

And since that time Debbie Orriss has been appointed to lead on this, working with us, our lay leaders and others to further discipleship and learning; the Pray Forum has continued to promote

pilgrimage and drawn us to pray together during Lent. A network of around 100 spiritual accompaniers has been drawn together to resource individuals in their spiritual life.

There is still more to be done.

Secondly we said that we would nurture vocations. With a network of vocation advisers we have been able to increase the numbers of those going forward for ordained ministry, and next year there will be an increase in the number of stipendiary curacies we offer.

We have recently appointed Ronnie Crossman to develop this work, building on that which Benny started.

There is still more to be done,

because thirdly we said that we would sustain ministry. We said in 2016 “If, in 15 years, we want to have even the same number of clergy as in 2015, though their work will be different, we will need to identify and train 60 priests in addition to the current expectation of 80 stipendiary and 40 self-supporting priests from 2017 – 2027 – and that is our aim. We believe that is essential to achieving our goal of growing church membership by 10% over the same time.”

This is interesting, because we have not been able to sustain the number of self-supporting ministers because fewer are coming forward, we have not been able to grow the number of Licensed Lay Ministers, because again God appears to be shaping things differently.

In the last few years though God’s call has increased the number of Lay Worship Leaders, to assist particularly the rural church in its ministry, God is raising up a new generation of pastoral assistants to assist the church with pastoral ministry, and God is going new things:

People are being called to a more entrepreneurial and pioneer ministry, we have recently launched a new lay pioneer course; people are coming into the diocese as self-supporting ministers with pioneering gifts; people are discovering the joy of being lay and ordained chaplains – volunteers, or often paid by others and those receiving their services because of their value.

This is not about therefore keeping the show on the road in the way it has always been on the road. This is about doing things differently, about finding out where God is at work in the lives of our local churches and communities and joining in!

Recognising that we need flexible structures; to free up lay and ordained to do what God is calling you to do, to train those we he calling, to ensure the wellbeing of all at a local level. There is more work to do.

Slide 3



I think it is good to remind ourselves too what else has been happening in the last few years:

The development and funding of Rural Hope has shown us that there are new ways of working. We are successfully developing what we hope to be a legacy of leaders called to work in our rural areas. The number of people training at Sarum College has increased this last year, with people attracted to the rural pathway as part of their training.

Placements have given our curates a taste of rural ministry, and I am pleased to say that this has seen a number of our curates over the last year move into a first incumbency in the rural church, often as incumbent of a multi parish benefice.

People are being attracted to posts here from other dioceses because they can see that we are supporting rural ministry, and particularly resourcing those who are ordained. This is hopefully helping them to thrive, rather than survive.

Rural Hope is also showing us new ways of working, with part-time field officers, lay and ordained, two combining rural ministry with this role. There is an energy which we hope is trickling down to the local church. Back to the word 'thrive', the THRIVE Course is aimed at local leadership teams of lay and ordained working together to further local mission.

As I have said we have had to review our financial sustainability, because the reality is that whilst we have seen an increase in Fresh Expressions of church, there continues to be a decline in Usual Sunday Attendance. Discipleship takes time, but those who we have relied upon to give regularly are decreasing. 'What should we pay for?' has become an important question. And this is forcing

archdeacons and bishops to have strategic conversations within deaneries about priorities and resources, about challenges and opportunities.

Alongside this we have had to address support for our statutory responsibilities as a diocese; putting resources into safeguarding for example, it has been a tremendous feat that over the last two years we have systems to ensure that all our clergy both licensed and active retired have up to date safeguarding training. All of this however effects our priorities.

And finally on this slide we have had significant developments in our schools work. Incumbents with schools, or academy trusts in their localities are now ministering in two places, not only building the bridges between school and church, but being the Holy men and women in the school; sharing the good news with children week in and week out, alongside lay teams, involved in programmes like Open the Book, or opening the church for afterschool and holiday clubs.

Our churches are becoming community hubs, providing meals in the holidays to families, linking agencies, sharing with the schools in caring for the whole needs of our young people. It is great at the moment to have two of our final year curates job sharing as Chaplains at Bournemouth University.

Recently the diocese has been chosen as a pilot for a national programme called Growing Faith, which aims to Grow Faith in Schools, Churches and Households, this is exciting stuff, and calls us to work together differently.

Slide 4



As David has mentioned a Core Group has been pulling all of this together. Its work has been to ask questions:

Responding to the call to serve the local church, asks questions of the centrality of our work, as a Board of Finance and as a Board of Education. How can we localise it?

We have needed to be realistic, about what God is doing and about what resources we have and how best they should be shared: How can we be sustainable, and what should we give priority to?

We want to continue to have an impact, so how can we as a diocese be more effective – working in the centre, or enabling you as the local church be effective in what you would like to do, how can we create greater collaboration?

And then because the Holy Spirit tends not to just work through our plans, how can we create space for innovation, the new things of God? How can our structures encourage creativity and flexibility? For example, we have heard in the past how this has been the case in Hamworthy, a place where we have done things differently and are now attracting further ministry to that place. Where we have moved from two stipendiary clergy working in quite a traditional way, to the community of Hamworthy and Turlin Moor, being served by one stipendiary priest, a number of self-supporting pioneers (one funded by the Baptist church), lay ministers and teams of lay people.

Slide 5

Renewing **HOPE**  
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 Discipleship & Evangelism

 Dynamic Collaboration & Leadership

 Transforming lives & communities

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So I bring you today three priorities:

### **Firstly, Discipleship and Evangelism.**

We need to continue to make connections, and share the good news and in doing so need help and encouragement at every level. Faith Sharing should be at the centre of all we do; and that continues to be hard for people.

It was great to have 45 people be confirmed at the Cathedral last weekend, and each person there had a story to tell, and someone who had introduced them to Jesus. Friends who had given them a nudge, or shared their story and helped them reach a point where they could make a decision and say 'yes' to God. I believe the Lord wants to continue to add to our number daily, we just need the courage often to reach out and meet them.

People disciplined into faith is a joy, but we all know that is not the end of the journey, again individuals finding faith, need help in understanding how to live a Christ filled life – affecting their giving, their living, their using their gifts and discovering their part in the body of the Church.

Our young people in schools need help in understanding the Christian story and why it still makes sense for today.

**Secondly, Collaborative Leadership** – we searched for a challenging word here – 'confident' did not seem active enough, and so we agreed on 'Dynamic'.

This is leadership at all levels, encouraging and equipping children and young people in our schools to be the best they can be as leaders of the future; to work in our locality lay and ordained together, we may have different callings however there is a common task of being Church, of building community; it means departments at church house working together – schools, young people, mission and ministry, so we are all equipped to be leaders in church and community for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It is great to go out to parishes and to see teams working well together, churchwardens, lay ministers, community leaders, clergy, all working together and making a difference. We can do more of this.

**Thirdly, Transforming lives and communities.** Ultimately that is what we are called to do, to make a difference for Christ. It was great this week to be able to give away over £30,000 of our Aldhelm Mission Fund, a fund that has originally come from the Church Commissioners but seems never to be used up. We have a limited amount to spend currently £50,000 a year and we don't spend all of that by far. However, over the last 14 years that fund has helped 113 projects. This week it went to two rural churches, and two urban ones where people are wanting to make a difference, not only in the church, but to life outside it. This is what mission is all about, making a difference. Our environmental work, our social action, our own spiritual lives of faith all contribute to this.

So I am excited,

Slide 5



Discovering  
new ways  
of being  
Church

Re-  
envisioning  
patterns of  
ministry

Growing  
Faith in  
Churches,  
Schools and  
Households

Partnership,  
Service,  
support and  
simplification

Leaving room  
for God to do  
new things

Discipleship,  
leadership,  
collaboration

We will grow in faith, number  
and impact

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because by hearing your own aspirations and vision, and getting the building blocks right, we have great possibilities ahead of us.

With an emphasis on discipleship, leadership and collaboration, with the continuation for a few years of the Rural Hope programme, with Growing Faith in schools, we already have things in place on which to build.

In response, the diocesan central structures need to be of service to you the local church, they need to offer support and simplification, which I believe we are committed to.

Last week we held a really inspiring morning looking at innovation in creating Christian community, bringing together many of our pioneer ministers and others doing new things; that's another building block as we develop new ways of being church together.

The re-envisioning of patterns of ministry, fit for purpose for each place, joining in and affirming who God is raising up and where, all contributes to this.

In Proverbs we read:

*Many are the plans of a human heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that will prevail.*

In going forward there also needs to be enough room for the God of surprises to do new things. Flexible structures, swifter ways of working And then we can have not only the possibility, but the expectancy of all of us growing in faith, in number and in impact, building a flourishing Christian presence in every Community.



And therefore bringing together all of this, I believe that piece of A4 paper in front of you becomes a lively vision for us to be excited about. My hope today is that as we consider the review and the journey we have been on, bearing in mind that there is a great deal of work before us in rearranging ourselves to changed cultures and ways of working, we can adopt this direction of travel, and together continue to renew hope as we pray, serve and grow.

*Rt Revd Karen Gorham*

*November 2019*