



# Impact Report | 2021/22

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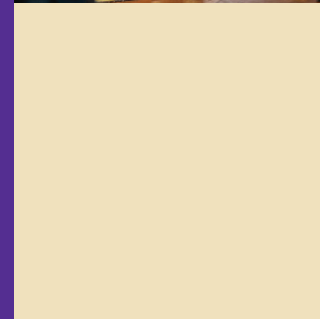
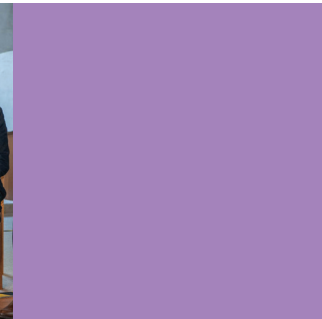


# What does Hereford Diocese do?

Our vision is for everyone to Proclaim Christ and Grow Disciples. We know that inspiring each generation is the key to how we will help our families, friends, neighbours, colleagues, and the people we meet to follow Jesus Christ.

Our focus is on creating an intergenerational church through the work carried out every day in the parishes and communities of our diocese.

We support, encourage, and equip people to share the Good News of Jesus and our Generous God, instilling a prayerful approach to sustaining life in our parishes so that lives and communities are changed and God's kingdom grows.



Please visit [www.hereford.anglican.org](http://www.hereford.anglican.org) and follow us on social media to read more about our work.

Inspiring *each* Generation



# Welcome from our Bishop

Welcome to our diocesan Impact Report, which reflects on 2021, a year of false starts. We learned how to navigate a path through successive changes to social distancing rules and several lockdowns. Hope is a key theme of this report and it's clear there is much to give us hope for the future. However, we are facing many contradictions as we steady the boat and determine our strategic direction, but I take comfort that God is in our midst. He remains at work in our diocese and is the constant in our everyday lives.

My weekly message, which began as we entered the first lockdown in March 2020, continued to provide me with an opportunity for reflection each week, which I have cherished. I have been greatly heartened by your encouragement and the comments you have shared with me, both in person and online. We all need to hear encouragement about how the Spirit has transformed our inner lives or how Bible study and prayer make a difference.

At our last Synod, in early 2022, we celebrated the work of our Intergenerational Missioners, who have had a significant impact on the communities they serve. With the removal of COVID restrictions, more face-to-face gatherings happened as the year drew to a close. We welcomed Messy Churches restarting too. This is now where most of our weekly church attendance happens for children.



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In 2021, we made some excellent appointments, including bringing the full senior leadership team back to capacity with the appointment of Dean Sarah and Fiona Gibson as Archdeacon of Ludlow.



However, there is no doubt that COVID has hit us hard financially and in the number of those attending church each week. It's not so much fewer people are coming as they are coming less regularly. There is tiredness out there both in clergy and lay leaders that our strategy needs to be aware of going forward.

During the autumn, I embarked on a series of listening events, visiting over 10 locations across the diocese and engaging in a series of online conversations and seeking feedback online. We heard from over 500 of you, who shared your thoughts and reflections about aspects of life together and the spiritual matters affecting our diocese. This was a valuable opportunity to read the mood of the community. The anxieties people expressed around finance, buildings, our demographic profile, and numbers were no surprise. Some of these issues are difficult to address with a central strategy. There were contradictions in the feedback, but I took comfort in hearing how keen people are for more significant opportunities for lay ministry. I sensed a greater preparedness to work collaboratively with other churches and the wider community.

In 2021, we made some excellent appointments, including bringing the full senior leadership team back to capacity with the appointment of Dean Sarah and Fiona Gibson as Archdeacon of Ludlow. I was delighted to welcome several new clergy and to appoint Elizabeth Wild as the Local Ministry Team Leader to our diocese. Her primary role will

be providing training and equipping people for lay ministry.

We are also participating in the pilot of a national project to raise non-stipendiary vocations in a broader age range of people; the first candidates will be coming forward for ordination in July 2022.

What we must avoid amid our challenges is anxiety. In the Bible, 'Do not fear' is a command, not advice! We do not know what the future holds, but we do know who holds the future. If our worries drive us to greater dependence on God in prayer rather than just our own strategic ingenuity, we will be well placed to set our sails and be blown by the wind of the Spirit. Jesus said the fields are ripe for harvest. By that, he meant that spiritual hunger is a universal fact of the human condition. We still believe the Gospel is the best news in the world. May God help us to be fruitful as we share it.

I hope you enjoy reading this new Impact Report and feel encouraged by the message of hope and the examples of how God is at work in lives and communities here in our diocese. I hope that it will encourage us to continue to pray for the future God has planned for our diocese.

With best wishes,



+Richard



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# Successes and achievements in 2021/22

Our 2015 'Proclaiming Christ, Growing Disciples' strategy identified three priority areas: Spiritual and numerical growth – growing Christians of all ages and backgrounds; Contributing to the common good; and Reimagining ministry. This year, we have seen a number of successes in various aspects of our work, from schools and community to clergy appointments.

## Education



The improvement in school Ofsted results in 2021 is a notable achievement (see Section 4: Church schools for more information). This, alongside an external consultant's report and changes to the relationships with the Board of Education, demonstrates big steps forward.

The recruitment of the full team at St Peter's in Hereford and the beginnings of the project/engagement with the city's new university, NMITE, have been a real encouragement.

Our Intergenerational Missioners are also doing some excellent work, especially with schools. These projects, alongside some other total return funded projects, will be significant for the diocese going forwards.

## Staffing and operations

The successful recruitment to the local ministry team leader role and parish advisers has been a huge achievement this year, and we look forward to seeing how this develops in 2022.

We now have a strong senior leadership team with real coordination and unity amongst the main diocesan decision-makers. Over time, this will have a significant impact on our work, but we are already seeing a very different approach at the parish appointment level, with positive results.

Diocesan communications continue to be strong: e-news, the Bishop's messages, better internal communications, and the more accessible Impact Report have all played their part in this.

Our ability to manage hybrid/remote working more effectively is delivering greater consistency and offering better ways of working that benefit all. The development of the diocesan staff team into new areas of skill has been expanded. Most notably, this year has been about increasing skills in communications, human resources, finance, property, the environment and safeguarding.

The sale of house and land plots has helped us to exceed our development plan targets.

## Community

We were approached again by Hereford council to re-launch our Home Safe from Hospital service, and have had meetings with the Police about crime prevention. This demonstrates the regard that the statutory agencies hold us in at a local level and is an opportunity to build stronger and wider links between our churches at a local level in communities.



## Church schools (education)



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At the start of 2022, for the first time in over three years, we had no Church of England schools in special measures throughout Hereford Diocese.



**While it has been a year of further uncertainty and challenge for our schools, it has also brought some milestone achievements for education work in Hereford Diocese. We have seen the transition from a recovery phase (which began in January 2019) to a new chapter of growth and the development of a much stronger education network.**

At the start of 2022, for the first time in over three years, we had no Church of England schools in special measures throughout Hereford Diocese. The Hereford CE Academy achieved the first outstanding Ofsted judgement in its history (Personal Development). St Thomas Cantilupe CE Primary had been in special measures since December 2018. It was the first school to secure a 'good' judgement for

Quality of Education and Overall Effectiveness after the pandemic suspension of Ofsted inspections.

Many of our maintained schools achieved positive inspection outcomes too. Last summer, the Bishop of Hereford Bluecoat School and its 1,000 pupils reached a 'good' judgement in all areas of its Ofsted inspection. We also experienced the first church-school (SIAMS) inspection within the new (nationally run) inspection process. We have only had a handful of these inspections so far, but it is heartening that all our schools inspected so far have been judged as at least good. St James' CE Primary in Hereford secured the exceptional achievement grade of 'excellent' just before Christmas.

Most importantly, our 78 church schools are places where children and adults can find God and where spiritual development is a built in part of daily life. Through the dedication of teachers, leaders, and support staff, our schools inclusively serve the whole community. Families from all faith backgrounds and those with none flourish in our CE schools. We value, nurture, and protect all God's children in our care, and we pass on His message and good news to a new generation.

## A view of our diocese from Diocesan Secretary, Sam Pratley

2021 was, to a large extent, much like 2020. Constant COVID limitations impacted church attendance, created uncertainty, and consequently affected the level of Parish Offer we received. We had more internal disjointedness resulting from remote working. We successfully re-formed a new senior clergy team with the appointments of Dean Sarah and Archdeacon Fiona joining the diocese.



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With pressure on costs, the central team will need to focus on efficiency while rebalancing the demands of being visible and finding hope for the future despite the uncertainty.



There can be little doubt that we are starting 2022 in a relatively fragile state. Finance and parish viability information is hugely worrisome, made worse by the clergy's general feeling of anxiety and tiredness. Central staff morale is also on the low side.

The central teams have been reacting to a larger-than-average volume of work throughout the year. The reductions in staff numbers combined with the

volume of financial transactions, faculties, clergy moves, people issues, parish complaints, building closures, pastoral schemes, and safeguarding cases has left everyone tired and feeling more reactive than strategic.

As the financial year drew to a close, we have focused on rebuilding staff morale within the central team. A series of monthly staff wellness activities

in 2022 aims to lift spirits and enable a greater sense of ownership and purpose around a re-developed diocesan strategy once the listening events have concluded.

With pressure on costs, the central team will need to focus on efficiency while rebalancing the demands of being visible and finding hope for the future despite the uncertainty.

This doesn't mean that we were not effective in 2021. Despite the fragility of Parish Offer, the diocese is still not at a crisis point in cash terms and won't be for a few more years. Our balance sheet benefits from asset growth, property development plans, and sound investment management. This approach has sat alongside a continued culture of reducing expenditure and re-evaluating posts. We achieved our development sales target and are in a solid position to do the same for the next two years.

As a general rule, we run an effective and efficient central administration. At times, I worry that we are not as impactful as we might like, especially around big-picture sustainability, but we are doing the basics well. Our governance is (mostly) effective, and we get slightly better each year that passes.

I am hopeful that, as we look to the future and emerge from the restrictive period of the pandemic, there are many opportunities to rebuild and renew relationships that will transform lives and help more people come to faith in Christ.

Sam Pratley



# Intergenerational mission

As our communities emerged from lockdowns, the Intergenerational Team developed new ways to reach out with the Good News of Jesus.

## LUDLOW

In Ludlow, Intergenerational Missioners supported families by giving them access to the resources they needed, and over £8,000 was raised and distributed.



## LUGWARDINE WITH BARTESTREE WITHINGTON & SUTTON

This is our 6th location for IM ministry in the diocese and is covering the areas of Lugwardine with Bartestree, Withington and Sutton.

New services, shaped around the needs of families, such as the 4th at 4 in Withington, are enabling families exploring faith for the first time to feel welcomed and part of broader church life. As we enter the last year of this strategic project part-funded by the national church, these new expressions of local church, created alongside our existing congregations, enable us to work together to support the future faith journeys of younger generations across our diocese.

## SOUTH WYE

In South Wye, a new group of volunteers set up and helped with the collection and distribution of food for Food Share. By serving in this way, they have developed a relationship with the local church.



## SUTTON HILL

In Sutton Hill, support of the local community has included developing opportunities to share faith through discipleship Bible studies, two new Muddy Church congregations, and a Youth Church.

## BRIDGNORTH

In Bridgnorth, the leadership team worked together to support schools across the area through class assemblies and the launch of a new mentoring scheme.

## ABBEYDORE

In Abbeydore Deanery, Intergenerational Missioners set up two toddler groups, giving practical support, including health and early intervention visits, and providing spiritual support as the families shape church for them.

## Leadership and ministry during a global pandemic

Leading parishes in ever-changing times has called for an extraordinary degree of resilience and adaptability among our clergy and lay leaders. COVID cases in our part of the country were higher in 2021 than the previous year, so the burden of managing risk in situations still in flux has been a heavy one. We want to acknowledge the hard work of clergy and lay leaders, including Churchwardens, in this period and express our thanks.

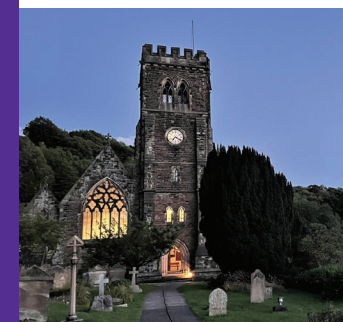
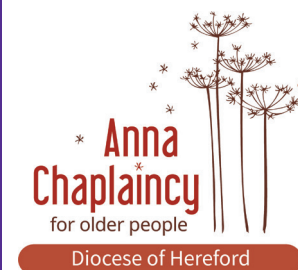
Among the day-to-day challenges of pandemic life, we have been able to make good appointments to several posts in the diocese, including rural multi-parish benefices. We look forward to seeing the fruit that will come from those appointments in God's good time.

In September 2021, 14 clergy began the Servants & Stewards project, a year-long leadership programme co-run with CPAS, which included input from a variety of speakers including Bishop Richard, the Dean of Westminster Abbey and our own Archdeacons.

Given the impact of the pandemic on clergy, we have been keen to do what we can to support their wellbeing. Many said that getting together with fellow clergy and the senior team was something they had missed during lockdowns. So we were pleased to reinstate the Sacred Synod at Leominster Priory in November 2021, when Bishop Richard shared his reflections on leadership in challenging times.



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We were delighted that, alongside the ordination of five deacons to the priesthood at Petertide 2021, 11 people were ordained deacon – a sign of hope for the future.



In September 2021, 14 clergy began the Servants & Stewards project, a year-long leadership programme co-run with CPAS.

## Generosity in our parishes

We are encouraged by stories of generosity from across our diocese. The small acts of kindness can be too easy to underestimate or take for granted, but they continue to make a difference in people and places.

Communities have responded generously to those in need to give their time and money to support the ministry and enable the church's broader mission to contribute to the common good, provide welcoming spaces for reflection, support food banks, and good neighbour schemes, or maintain churchyards.

A significant success in 2021 has been the take-up of contactless and online giving, making it easier for people to support the church financially in an increasingly cashless society. This approach, enhanced by positive and proactive communications, explains how the church is funded and how we spend our money.

We are intentional in thanking people too, which is an integral part of reinforcing a culture of gratitude. Technology plays a significant role, enabling broader participation in training workshops for clergy and laypeople on the spirituality of fundraising and how generosity transforms both the gift and the giver.

**Thank you for your continued support.**



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# How we spend our money

We spent £4.89m on frontline parish ministry, which includes clergy deployment, housing and ministerial development, as well as training programmes for teachers in our 78 church schools, and support ministers' salaries.

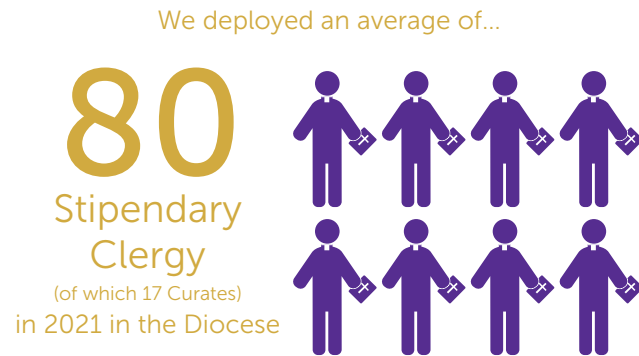
In 2021 we released £0.22m of 'total return' funds for parish-based intergenerational mission and outreach projects. Other operating costs were £0.64m, excluding the contribution to national church.

Parish contributions towards stipendiary ministry totalled £3.26m in 2021, £0.24m below prior year as COVID-19 restrictions continued to impinge on regular services and community fundraising events. Other income from statutory fees, rental and investment income, and miscellaneous grants was slightly above budget at £1.37m.

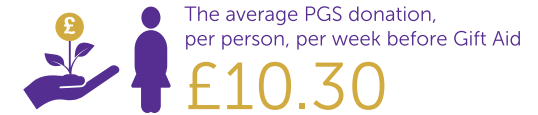
Overall, there was a general fund operating loss of £0.90m before investment gains and losses.



## How did we fund Parish Ministry in 2021?



## Resourcing the local church through the Parish Giving Scheme



including Gift Aid through PGS to their local parishes in 2021

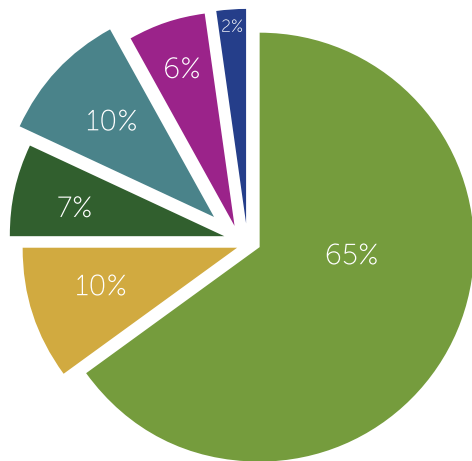
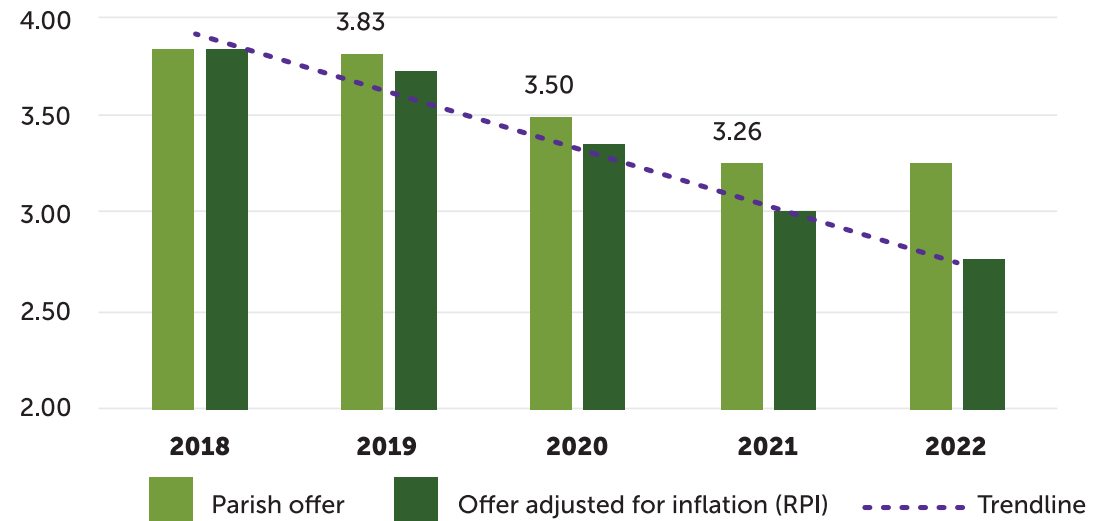


### Renting out those not used by Clergy

There were a further 31 active self-supporting ministers across the diocese.

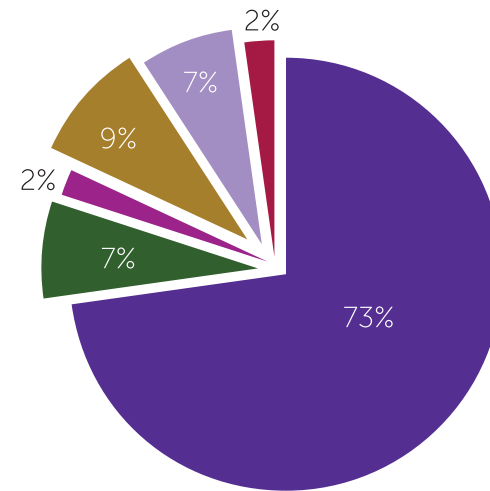
We have observed a 15% decline in Parish Offer compared to the pre-pandemic level:

### Parish contributions to Ministry (£m)



### 2021 income

- Parish giving
- Central CofE funding
- Statutory fees
- Investment income
- Rental income
- Other grants & donations



### 2021 expenditure

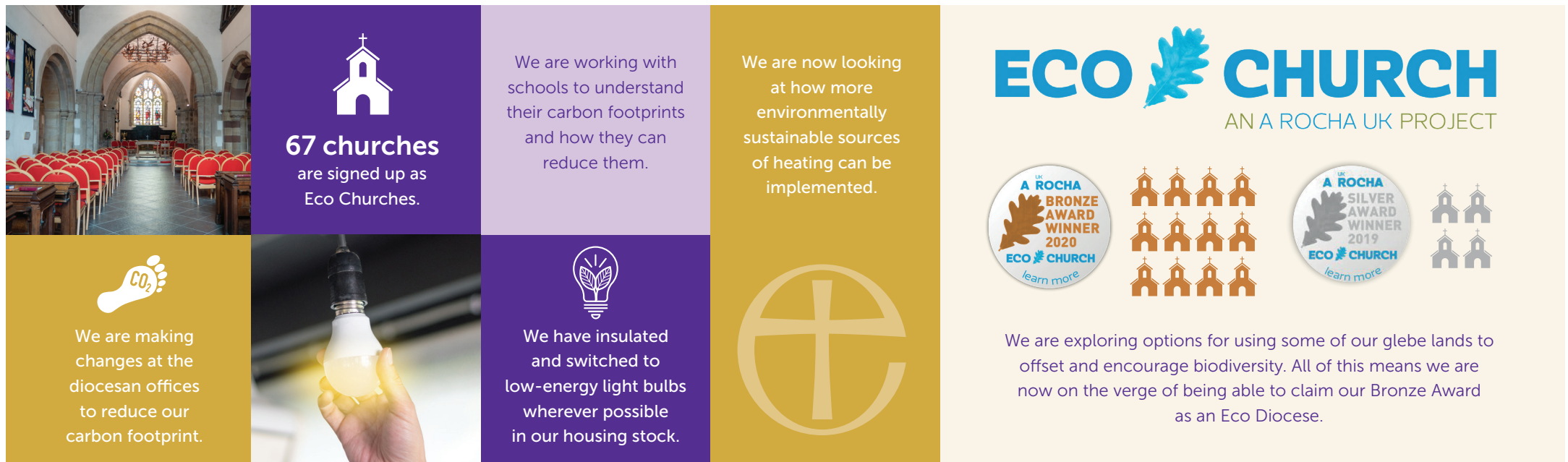
- Parish ministry
- Parish support & grants
- Education
- Diocesan support
- Central CofE costs
- Generating funds

# Caring for the environment and Social Action

## Environmental sustainability

God has generously given us a wonderful, beautiful world full of abundance with enough resources for all.

Following the Diocesan Synod's commitment in September 2020, we have been working to understand how we can tread more lightly on the earth.



**67 churches** are signed up as Eco Churches.

We are working with schools to understand their carbon footprints and how they can reduce them.

We are now looking at how more environmentally sustainable sources of heating can be implemented.

We are making changes at the diocesan offices to reduce our carbon footprint.

We have insulated and switched to low-energy light bulbs wherever possible in our housing stock.

**ECO CHURCH**  
AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT

**A ROCHA BRONZE AWARD WINNER 2020**  
ECO CHURCH  
learn more

**A ROCHA SILVER AWARD WINNER 2019**  
ECO CHURCH  
learn more

We are exploring options for using some of our glebe lands to offset and encourage biodiversity. All of this means we are now on the verge of being able to claim our Bronze Award as an Eco Diocese.

A significant focus has been on supporting churches to work with broader community partners (e.g., schools, parish councils). In Almeley, Herefordshire, a community-wide Green Group has been set up with around 20 members. It has taken part in the Churches Count on Nature, approached the Parish Council to discuss joint working, initiated a project to clear and rejuvenate one of the parish commons, started a recycling project, and is working towards the Bronze Eco Church Award.

## Social Action

As churches, one of the ways we can most visibly show God's love in action is to help and support our communities in times of need and help people feel loved, cared for, and supported. There are hundreds of examples of this across the diocese.

Three new projects that started this year are: a highly successful Wellbeing Café, Talk Community Hub and local history project at St Peter, Lugwardine & Bartestree, which has supported people who had become isolated by COVID to re-engage; 'The Nave' project at St Peter's & St James, Hereford, which is providing fellowship and support for anyone and everyone who wants to turn up on a Wednesday evening for pizza and games, wellbeing, or a chat about God; and a new youth club at St Nicholas' Church House, Hereford, which developed a beautiful Christmas tree with young people's reflections on the meaning of Christmas. Such projects make a huge difference to people's lives.



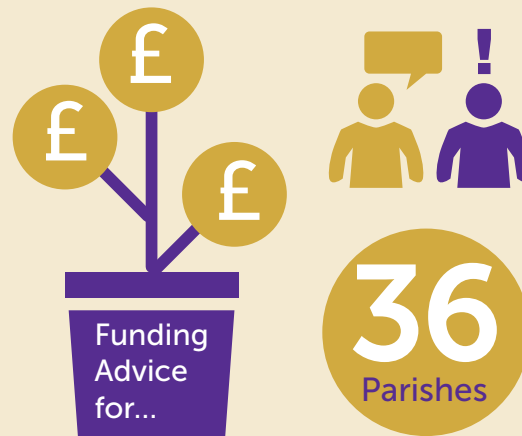
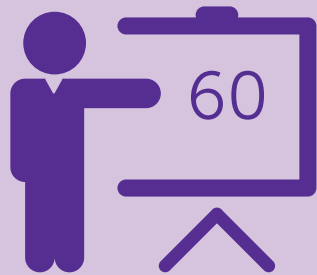
A major focus for our Church & Society work for the next year will therefore be on coming alongside churches to support them in identifying needs in their local communities, and how they can play a role in 'loving their neighbour' to meet these needs.

# Caring for our buildings and church communities

As parishes have steadily emerged from restrictions of lockdown and activity has increased, church tourism has been increasingly important to many churches keen to welcome back visitors and pilgrims.

The Church Tourism Project continued to work directly with parishes, offering training on visitor welcome and how to explore digital platforms for engagement and income generation.

This training has reached 60 people.



We continued to give initial and ongoing project development and **funding advice to 36 parishes** in all. Despite what continues to be an extremely challenging funding climate, the team has been able to work with parishes to **secure at least £220,000 of funding**, with over £120,000 of that coming from the local historic churches trusts.

**£220k**  
**Funding secured**







Significant church projects completed this year have included Kingsland St Michael – HLF funded major repairs to roofs, masonry, and pointing and including internal works, accompanied by an exciting programme of community events and activities.

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Work on Festival Church has progressed, offering support and advice to those parishes wishing to explore this approach.



**Hentland St Dubricius** – Heritage Lottery (HLF) funded major repairs to chancel roofs and high-level masonry and restoration of the J W Walker pipe organ; and finally **Kimbolton St James** – relocation of the ringing chamber to the tower's first floor, to allow installation of WC facilities in the base of the tower and a catering point, meaning the church is now being widely used by the local community for a range of events.

Finally, after research into the effects of the pandemic on worshipping communities, York University is working with the diocese to update the Crossing the Threshold Toolkit, making sure the resource includes new chapters on Festival Church, Community Businesses in Places of Worship and training modules for clergy and laity on how to develop local projects for mission.

## Safeguarding

Many people see the church as a place to go to feel safe, welcomed, and listened to. They choose to join us, seeking sanctuary, a warm welcome, and a listening ear. They may be stepping inside to appreciate our beautiful buildings. They may have had experiences that troubled them and sought help. This may be related to safeguarding; it may not. We need to know how to respond in the right way when needed.

We all have a responsibility to safeguard in the church. This may differ depending on what our role is. Church of England policy gives specific responsibilities to the clergy and PCCs. It also has expectations of those who help out in leading services such as retired clergy and licensed lay readers. Every individual in a leadership role or in any church activity needs to know how to respond to a safeguarding incident or concern. It is vitally important that we understand our safeguarding responsibilities.

The Safeguarding Team has been busy working to support parishes and ensure they are doing all they need to regarding their safeguarding responsibilities.

**The team has delivered training to over 200 church officers, including clergy, retired clergy with permission to officiate, licensed lay readers, and Parish Safeguarding Officers. They have a similar number of people to train this year.**



The team maintains an informative section of the diocesan website, supplemented with a twice-yearly newsletter of current developments, including information and guidance on new safeguarding policy.

Last year, several new policies were launched: Safer Recruitment and People Management Policy; Safeguarding in Religious Communities; Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse; and Safeguarding Children, Young People, and Adults. The diocese has purchased an online safeguarding tool called Parish Dashboards. This is a simple, effective online portal that parishes can use to assist them in managing safeguarding. The system is slowly rolling out across the diocese. To help with this, the team is currently facilitating a number of safeguarding drop-in sessions across the diocese where anyone from the PCC can arrange to meet a team member.

The team facilitates the diocesan DBS checking service, an intrinsic part of a safer recruitment process. In 2021, we carried out 700 checks. In 2022, the diocese is looking to move to an online service.

The team is currently managing several safeguarding complaints against church officers.



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# Thank you

Without the generous giving of all our parishes, we would not be able to meet the practical needs and share hope with individuals and communities across our diocese.

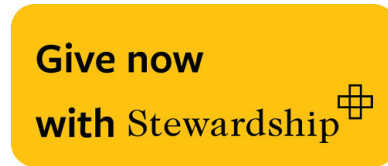
The communities and churches of our diocese are full of people who give generously of their time, skills, and money, and we are hugely grateful for this support. Generous Parish Offer contributions from every PCC are crucial to our diocese being able to resource our excellent frontline clergy in their mission and ministry.

Our preferred way to do this is to invite you to join the Parish Giving Scheme. You can choose to give online, by phone, or via a paper gift form.



PARISH GIVING SCHEME

One-off donations are very welcome too. Please consider a gift via our Stewardship or Give A Little online platforms.



Whichever way you choose to give, thank you for your incredibly generous support.





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