**Oswestry Deanery - Shaping for Mission**

*Where we started…*

How might we work with other churches across the deanery?

* As a church we are ‘knowledge and experience’ heavy but ‘energy’ light…
  + We have people…
    - who enjoy church governance
    - who are spiritually mature and wish to offer mentoring
    - who have significant musical skills
    - who have administration skills
    - who can teach and train others
  + **but…** who are getting older and many have less energy
* We have a large building with good facilities and community links
* The town is an obvious focus for resourcing the deanery resource
  + Could St Oswald’s act as a hub, providing signposting and Admin/IT support? Bring together people with different theologies/skills/interests to create a ‘deanery school’ of mission/prayer/discipleship etc
  + How can that be enabled to support the deanery churches without undermining them?

But there are issues…

* How do we create a vision across all the churches which is both meaningful and achievable?
* Need for a brave and honest debate about the significant differences in theology and church across the deanery and how we can work with/around them
* How could we resource an admin hub?
* Where do we find the resources and the energy?
* What will the Diocese allow us to do... how brave and radical will they be?

*Where we are now…*

Shaping for Mission – our vision

RENEW, RELEASE, RE-ANIMATE

*Overall Statement of our Vision*

Our mission is centred on giving God the place he deserves in our lives, both individually and collectively. Oswestry deanery is called to create and grow a sustainable network of Christ-like, diverse and flourishing Christian communities which are effective in making disciples and are seeking to transform our society and God’s world.

We aim to do this by growing into maturity as disciples who love God, life and each other. We will work this out in outreach, in faithful study of Jesus’s words and actions, in prayer. We seek to be characterised by our inclusive diversity, our humility and forgiveness. To achieve this we will pray together, train, teach and encourage one another.

*The outcome of our vision is a deanery in which we:*

RENEW: Our dependence on the grace of God for the fruitfulness and effectiveness of our deanery mission strategy.

RELEASE: Discover and liberate the potential of individuals and congregations to release the whole people of God for the whole mission of God, and as far as possible, parishes from current administrative constraints and demands.

RE-ANIMATE: Grow the church younger and more diverse in membership, leadership and where necessary, grow and plant new churches alongside established ones.

In working out the vision we recognise that the main agent for change in the deanery is the parish, the incumbent and PCC. Whilst we recognise that re-inventing the deanery such that it can lead and manage change is probably beyond our reach, we are prepared to challenge those structures or resources that impede our mission.

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|  | *Change to deanery by 2025* | *What needs to happen for that to be possible? (see initiatives below)* | *How will this be resourced?* |
| 1 | Individuals and congregations will be actively growing in their discipleship | School of Prayer  Annual Deanery training day  Parish/Deanery Discipleship course(s)  Parishes to identify mission priorities and resources/support required | Parish  Deanery facilitator  Diocesan courses/support |
| 2 | Christians at all stages of maturity will be nurtured and mentored effectively | Informal mechanisms in local churches?  Vocations courses exploring individual & corporate gifting  Activities offered by the church (praise and play, youth groups, Messy Church etc) used as an extension of the church not as a community offering. | Parish  Deanery facilitator  Diocesan courses/support |
| 3 | Local leadership will be based on new models, including authorised lay ministry and people in training | Possibility of identifying ‘one minister’ per church  Continuation of local Pathways to Ministry courses. | Use the ‘Setting God’s People Free’ agenda to encourage and equip all people to identify and use their gifts to serve God’s Kingdom. |
| 4 | Churches will be working towards being inclusive of all generations, especially of the rising generations, and reflect the diversity of the local demographic. | All forms of communication, including adverts, publicity and services need to be accessible to all and use a range of media. | Clergy supported through chapter/diocesan resources |
| 5 | New forms of church will have grown | Some expressions of church may need to ‘die well’ whilst others may need to evolve to travel light.  Increased confidence in moving beyond the building and creating fellowship (worship) in the community. | Diocese  Parish |
| 6 | Parish churches will be free of excessive administrative burdens | Parish PCCs will be replaced by benefice councils where appropriate.  A central deanery data base of resources will be created and maintained including those resources local parishes are willing to share – training courses, people, joint events. Also details of clergy willing to take funerals and weddings across the deanery to allow local clergy to focus on discipleship and mission to the community. | Parish  Diocesan resources/support  Volunteer administrator |
| 7 | Churches will be intentional in identifying and encouraging young people to serve the church and wider community. Including but not exclusively the delivery of a Sunday service | Young people need to be consulted and their opinion taken seriously and acted upon using appropriate discernment processes. | Clergy  PCC/benefice council chairperson |

*Important questions to continue to reflect upon…*

1. Will there be more congregations or fewer? Specialised or general?
2. How do we move from declining or stagnant attendance into growth?
3. What is the place of continued virtual gatherings, especially for prayer?
4. How do we encourage Christians to be more broadly active in the community and serve them better?
5. How do we stop doing the things that are distracting and slowing us down?
6. How can we grow our own authorised ministers - priests and lay readers/preachers?
7. How can we grow and resource prayerful and serving communities of motivated and enthusiastic disciples?
8. Who is going to lead and manage the ongoing work of Shaping for Mission?
9. How do we achieve a welcoming, non-judgemental culture with language appropriate to the context?