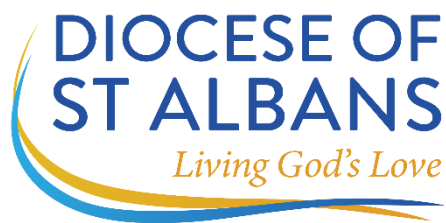


ANNUAL REPORTS
of
DIOCESAN BOARDS AND COMMITTEES
FOR 2022
(excluding the Diocesan Board of Finance)

CONTENTS

1. THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL
2. THE DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
3. THE DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION
4. THE BOARD FOR MISSION AND MINISTRY
5. THE VERULAM HOUSE FUND TRUST
6. THE BOARD OF PATRONAGE



Bishop's Council and Standing Committee of the Diocesan Synod

Annual Report 2022

Terms of Reference: The Council has a dual role and function, acting as the Standing Committee of the Diocesan Synod and giving advice to the Bishop on any matter about which he consults the Council. The Council also exercises the role of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee. During the year the Council met four times, the Policy Sub-Committee met once and the Agenda Group met five times.

Joint Meetings with the Diocesan Board of Finance - In January and March, joint meetings with the Council and the Diocesan Board of Finance took place to discuss the common vision for the life of the Diocese. The January joint meeting discussion centred on the strategic priorities for the development of the Racial Justice Action Plan, the Diocesan Environmental Policy, the Alban Way proposal and Diocesan finances. The joint meeting received two presentations on the Racial Justice Action Plan, one from the Chair of the Racial Justice Group, the Reverend Jo Burke and one from the Reverend Jairo Nyaongo (Bishop's Adviser for Minority Ethnic Concerns). The Racial Justice Group were encouraged to continue to implement the action plan. The joint meeting also discussed the Diocesan Environmental Policy and received presentations from Mrs Rachel Johnston (Diocesan Environment Officer) and Mr David Lambert (Chair of the Diocesan Environment Group) and the comments received from the joint meeting were fed into the Environment Policy to be discussed at the March 2022 Synod. The Director of Mission and Ministry reported on the opportunity to bid for innovation funding from the Strategic Development Fund for the Alban Way proposal, a leadership pathway for children, young people and young adults.

Diocesan Finances - In July, the Council noted that there could be a deficit for 2022 of up to £550k, with around sixty parishes who were behind in paying the Parish Share. The Council noted that the budgeting for 2023 had been a challenge, mainly as a result of inflation. The Council acknowledged that the excellent and clear presentation at the October Synod from the Director of Finance had showed the challenges and uncertainty and agreed that it was helpful to receive this type of upfront communication to ensure everyone was aware of the issues.

Safeguarding - During the year, the Council received regular reports and noted that the safeguarding team continued to promote safeguarding policies and practice whilst dealing with a substantial workload and a large amount of 'in person' and online training. The Council noted that an additional full-time Safeguarding Officer had been recruited, together with extra administrative support, to enable the safeguarding team to continue to support parishes and meet national church training requirements. The Council noted the joint recruitment process which had resulted in a closer working relationship between the Diocese and the Cathedral.

In July, the Council discussed **Opportunities for Strategic Investment** to agree how £642k of additional income in 2022 resulting from adoption of a Total Return investment policy could be made available to fund applications for Net Zero Carbon and mission initiatives. The Council noted that there were also significant historic designated funds no longer required for the purpose for which the designation was originally made which amounted to approximately £750k which could be redesignated to support deficits against budget if required.

Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee – the Council acting as Mission and Pastoral Committee continued to receive regular reports from the Mission and Pastoral Executive Committee and considered draft proposals for pastoral reorganisation to promote appropriate models of ministry to support mission in each part of the Diocese. In March, the Council received a presentation from the Bishop of Bedford and the Pastoral and Advisory Secretary on the Pastoral Reorganisation Principles and Overview of the Pastoral Processes. It was emphasised that pastoral reorganisation was driven by legislation and the statutory process needed to be followed. The Council agreed that the Diocese needed to be confident and courageous to become a flourishing and sustainable Diocese.

The work of the **Closed Churches Uses Committee (CCUC)**, on behalf of the DMPC Executive Committee, is undertaken against the background of risks associated with closed churches being born by the DBF. For the first time in 10 years, the CCUC was tasked with two new cases. **Luton, St Matthew** was closed when the parish was united with the parish of Luton, and the CCUC was able to recommend to the Church Commissioners that the building should be leased to the Romanian Orthodox Church. Due to safety concerns, **Letchworth, St Michael** had been closed for two years. In October 2021, the building was formally closed and vested in the DBF, with the CCUC initiating a use-seeking period to identify the best possible future use for the site, including marketing for similar community based uses. The CCUC continued to identify new uses and work with local communities of the closed churches at **Thundridge, Old Church Tower**. Preparatory work for a conditions survey was underway to enable the management of the site to transfer to a local group. **East Hyde** continued to work with the Greek Orthodox Church including the sale of the northern piece of church land.

The Council continued to receive updates on the work of the **Development Plans Monitoring Group** which included progress reports on new housing developments in the Diocese and parish responses to new opportunities for growth.

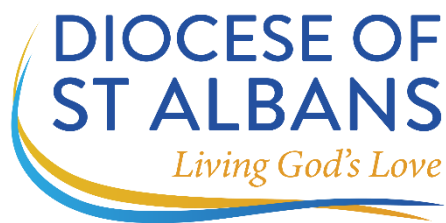
In October, the Council discussed papers on a 'Youth and Children's Review' and 'Growing Younger' and during discussion agreed that the updated report should be entitled 'Growing Younger and more Diverse'. It was acknowledged that future development of work with children and young people needed to be integrated with the Diocesan education team .

Racial Justice Action Group – following the discussion at the joint meeting of the Council and the Diocesan Board of Finance in January, and a presentation at Synod in March, at the October meeting Council members were asked to reflect on three points:

- grass roots – more work needed to be achieved from the parish level upwards;
- training for clergy appointments – parish based training for parishes, parish representatives and church officers and
- the need for ‘white privilege training’ for curates, clergy and senior staff.

Following a round table discussion, the following responses were received:

- more self-awareness for the whole parish;
- focus on how to manage PCCs in the vacancy process;
- replace the word ‘training’ and use ‘to raise awareness of diversity and diversity issues’;
- to ensure that clergy were equipped to raise awareness and
- to engage across different cultural groups.



St Albans Diocesan Advisory Committee

Annual Report 2022

Chair: Dr Christopher Green

The DAC is a statutory body whose functions are set out in ecclesiastical legislation. Its role is to advise the Chancellor and parishes on proposals for works to church buildings and churchyards and church furnishings, and to advise more generally on the care and development of churches. In line with statutory provision and the priorities of Living God's Love, the Committee has regard to churches as local centres of worship and mission, in which:

- *people can encounter God and be drawn into a worshipping community*
- *parishes can reach out in mission*
- *local communities can be transformed.*

A view from the Chair

2022 saw parishes recovering from the covid-19 pandemic with many taking the opportunity to review mission and ministry within their communities. New challenges emerged and in response some parishes provided essential services to the community while others showed great resilience. The DAC provided advice to parishes to help reduce energy bills when faced with huge increases in prices. Some churches used their buildings for food banks and pantries, demonstrating how churches can be used to transform local communities. The DAC has provided help, guidance and support to enable parishes to use their buildings for such purposes, alongside its usual casework which started to return to pre-pandemic levels. In particular, there were more than twice the number of site visits carried out by DAC members and staff than in 2021, enabling the Committee to provide valuable in depth support and advice to parishes.

There were some important changes in the people who support the work of the DAC. The DAC Team said farewell to David Bevan as Historic Church Buildings Support Officer, a role through which he supported and guided many parishes through funding and projects for development and repairs. In September, the team welcomed Ann Wise into the Historic England supported role. Through the last few months of 2022, Ann had already started to work closely with several parishes, providing them with her expertise in heritage, engagement and funding. Her input has ranged from advising volunteers on lone working for stewards and security issues in keeping church buildings open, and understanding the benefits of inclusion in a High Streets Heritage Action Zone, to researching possible grant funders for individual parishes to approach, and writing a Diversity Statement to support a parish's grant bids.

The Committee was reappointed for a new 6-year term from August 2022. Enormous thanks are due to all members and consultants who served during the previous term – some for considerably longer – who contributed their skills and experience free of charge to assist parishes in the care and development of their church buildings. Sue Flood retired as a member and then consultant on records, books and manuscripts. Judith Evans is moving away from the area, but plans to continue to act as a champion for the Living Churchyards Project for the time being. Mike Popper (heating and sustainability) and Chris James (ecology) were appointed as new consultants.

One of the biggest areas of work of the DAC was continuing to work towards the Church of England's Net Zero Carbon target by 2030. This will continue to be one of the main priorities of work for 2023 and the upcoming years. The DAC will also begin to explore other environmental issues that will have an impact on our churches, as demonstrated by the newly established working groups on biodiversity and climate resilience.

Achievements

Net Zero Carbon was a major ongoing theme of the DAC team's work and changes to the national Faculty Rules in July 2022 meant that there was a legislative requirement for the DAC to consider the environmental impact of proposals. In practice, this was already happening, as demonstrated by the Chancellor's decision in an application for external floodlights before the new Rules came into effect. The team's work relating to net zero carbon included:

- Rolling out advice to parishes based on the DAC's strategy to support them in respect of their church buildings
- Giving advice to at least 36 churches on heating options and renewable energy
- Guiding parishes through the Faculty Rules changes, including the new requirement for churches to consider all the options before replacing a fossil-fuel boiler
- Conducting a consultant-led heating case studies project with national grant funding, using four churches in the Diocese to find common themes in deciding on appropriate and affordable options for replacing heating
- Sharing the heating case studies project findings with parishes in a webinar
- Updating DAC advice on solar panels

Completed projects can demonstrate the transformative nature of church buildings and their potential to be places where people can encounter God and be centres of mission and ministry:

- Major extension projects were completed at **Bromham** and **Ickleford** which had both faced building delays during the pandemic. The new parish halls at **East Barnet** were officially opened, the culmination of around 15 years' work from initial dream to completion. These spaces will be valuable for the worshipping communities for worship, welcome and mission, as well as for the wider community
- Internal reordering and introduction of facilities at **Langford** and **Blunham** has enabled these churches to increase space for their own activities, as well as meeting community needs
- Four years of immense work and the frustrations of being out of the church building ended in **Royston** when the church building re-opened for worship and community events in late November. As well as being fully repaired following the devastating tower fire in 2018, the church has now also been reordered to improve accessibility throughout the building and to provide a flexible space and facilities to enable the church to be used as a community hall alongside its continuing worship and hospitality functions
- The Lottery-funded project to refurbish **Rectory Lane Cemetery, Berkhamsted** (a detached churchyard) as a place for reflection, commemoration and community events officially came to an end, but the body of volunteers built up as part of the project is working hard to ensure that activity continues

Like the completed projects, the **casework** considered by the Committee represented the range of issues facing parishes across the Diocese and that creative solutions can enhance the building and people's experience of it:

- At **Bedford, St Paul**, the longstanding and hotly-debated matter of the future positioning of statues of St Peter and St Paul – which were taken down from external niches some 40 years ago during repair

works – was finally settled when the Chancellor granted a faculty for the development of the north porch to become a welcoming additional entrance to the church and for the statues to be fixed within the porch

- The DAC gave detailed advice on schemes to provide glazed inner entrance doors at **High Wych** and **Hatfield, St Etheldreda**, in consultation with the parish and external organisations such as Historic England, the Victorian Society and the Church Buildings Council and, as a result, supported amended proposals at High Wych, which are now moving forward through the faculty process
- In February, Storm Eunice caused damage to a number of churches and churchyard trees, including at Sundon, Woburn, Marsh Farm, Barley and Royston. The DAC team offered immediate advice and is developing guidance for parishes on planning for this and other types of emergency
- Development work at **St Albans, St Peter** continued, including proposals for major internal reflooring and reordering. The project for reflooring and reordering at **Great Wymondley** also moved forward, based on many years of fundraising, including the sale of jams made by former churchwarden Cherry Carter
- The DAC recommended proposals for a new entrance at **Stevenage, St Peter, Broadwater** to improve welcome and accessibility for all
- **Chorleywood, St Andrew** acquired the premises of former Hillside Baptist Church, a grade II Arts and Crafts building with a complex of halls, and has plans to refurbish the Hillside centre with a focus on youth work
- The DAC supported the parishes of **London Colney** and **Rickmansworth** in dealing with encroachment onto churchyard land by developers on adjacent sites. The DAC also supported a number of churches in providing advice about upholding the Churchyard Regulations, and specifically reviewed a number of applications involving unusual requests or family disputes.

The DAC team were involved in presenting and supporting a range of **training events** for parishes either as DAC initiatives or in partnership with colleagues in other departments, covering matters such as churchyards, heating options, understanding church buildings, opening churches during the day, making the most of parish-owned buildings, and using the online Portal for DAC applications and the Energy Footprint Tool.

Future plans

The DAC will continue to respond to the needs of parishes throughout 2023 and beyond through regular casework, site visits and circulating advice and guidance. There will be a particular focus on helping parishes to meet the Net Zero Carbon target by helping to administer diocesan grants for energy audits, providing general advice and resources, and specific advice at site visits or in response to applications. The Committee will continue to build up work in other areas of the environment, especially biodiversity and climate resilience, to ensure that parishes are well-prepared for the effects of climate change. The DAC team will also resource and support parishes in the care and development of church buildings by updating content for the new website and Resources Centre. This will be informed by parishes and build upon work already started in 2022, such as updating the DAC's advice leaflet on electrical wiring following complications in the high level wiring at Royston.

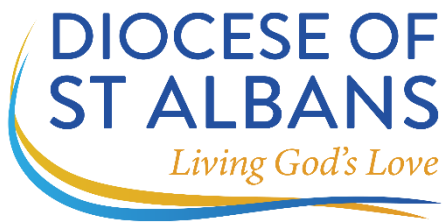
Appendix: 2022 Statistics (2021 in brackets)

- **6** (6) DAC meetings, 4 of which took place virtually using Microsoft Teams
- **50** (24) visits by DAC members and staff
- **375** (324) cases completed

Notifications of Advice for Faculties	162 (137)
Archdeacons' Letters of Authority	210 (182)
Archdeacons' Temporary Re-ordering Licences	3 (5)

For matters including:

Extensions/New Build	2 (1)
Re-ordering/alterations	14 (19)
Repairs	77 (79)
Furniture/fittings	47 (24)
Services/M&E (mechanical and electrical)	51 (61)
Churchyard (incl. trees, benches, signage)	148 (95)
Other (e.g. bells; organs, clocks)	36 (44)



Diocese of St Albans: Board of Education

Annual Report 2022

Living God's Love in Education: Flourishing together

Introduction

Against a challenging political, financial and educational backdrop, the DBE has sought, across 2022, to provide the schools it supports with stability, clarity and confidence as they seek to continue to flourish as Church of England educational communities. Adjusting and adapting its key priorities to meet the needs of schools the DBE, through its Schools Team, has prioritised the pastoral and professional care of headteachers and school governors, high-quality resourcing to support Christian character, and a comprehensive training and development offer blending online and face-to-face sessions. Alongside this school-facing, resourcing role, the DBE continues to support school re-organisation and rationalisation across the Diocese, maintaining strong working relationships with key delivery partners. Feedback from schools continues to reference the quality of the nurture, support and pastoral care the DBE provides to its school communities and the reassurance this brings when navigating a complex and increasingly challenging educational landscape.

Church schools *Living God's Love* in new ways

In Living God's Love, church schools in the Diocese are increasingly focusing their activities around a unique Christian vision for education that reflects the community they serve and their historic Christian foundation. In January, the children at St John's Infant & Nursery School in Radlett explored their Christian vision. The following Bible verse had been chosen to represent their purpose: 'Start children off on the way they should go and even when they are old they will not turn from it.' Proverbs 22:6. The school were thankful to have their local vicar, Revd Oliver, begin their special morning with a talk about going on a pilgrimage. Partnership with parishes continues to enrich schools' Christian vision.

The establishment of a unique Christian vision for education impacts all areas of school life, including collective worship and spiritual development. St Valentine's Day provided St Augustine's Academy in Dunstable with the perfect opportunity to celebrate with a special Wild Worship in their Forest School. As part of their worship, they searched for heart-shaped leaves. Pupils held them up to their own hearts, feeling their heartbeat as they listened to a scripture reading from Corinthians 1:13. Whilst pupils at St Ippolyts Primary responded to the conflict in Ukraine by writing prayers for peace. Every child's prayer was hung outside school, providing a focal point of reflection for the local community.

Through the exploration of their unique Christian vision, many pupils are finding ways of demonstrating courageous advocacy. Children at St Michael's Primary, Bishop's Stortford, have always been passionate about 'making a difference'. Following work undertaken on global warming and environmental care, pupils had the idea of establishing a litter-picking club. Donations from the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) helped to purchase equipment and soon the task of clearing litter from a local street began. Members of the public who met the group thanked them for making a difference to the local community.

As a Christian vision for education embeds itself in the life of a school, opportunities arise for pupils to share in the leadership of spiritual development activities. Potten End Primary currently have six pupil Spiritual Leaders who are beginning to help deliver collective worship and are considering spiritual wellbeing across the school. In 2022, Year 5 and 6 children met up with pupils from other local church schools to talk about what they might do to promote spiritual awareness. The Board of Education offered them a goody bag containing resources to help them do this, such as prayer-dice, a notebook, stickers and the book 'Flippin' Praise'. They have since begun to plan collective worship using this resource.

The Diocesan Board of Education *Living God's Love in Education: Enabling Life in All its Fullness*

2022 saw the Board of Education continue to prioritise the resourcing of the schools it supports. The Training and Development programme provided by the DBE continues to offer a comprehensive package of online and in-person courses. Across 2022, the Board has noted a shift in preference to online training and has responded to this. Similarly, a quick response to the developing financial pressures in schools saw good uptake for specialist financial management training offered in the autumn of 2022.

The development of high-quality resources for schools, particularly in the area of Christian character, ethos and vision remains a focus of the Board's work. 'Heart for the Earth', a two-year curated resource to help schools reflect theologically on the issues surrounding climate change and the need to move to a carbon neutral position was launched in September/October 2022 at the Diocesan Headteacher Conference and the Schools' Harvest Festival services in St Albans Cathedral. This has been well received and has recently seen partnerships develop with local providers, including Anglian Water.

In supporting the work of schools and school leaders, the DBE chooses to use some of its discretionary funds to facilitate access to national and regional courses that promote a Christian vision for education. In the summer of 2022, team members attended presentations from delegates on three courses, part funded by the DBE, the *Church School Leadership Course*, the *Racial Identity and School Leadership* course and the *Church of England Professional Qualification for Headship*. Each was inspirational, combining honest reflection, quality of engagement with Christian vision and wisdom and compassion. In a similar manner, the DBE chooses to fund access to The Young Leaders Award (run by the Archbishop of York Youth Trust) and similar pupil leadership schemes. Children at a number of schools, such as Leverstock Green Primary School for example, took part in a range of leadership activities across 2022, including planning to create a greener environment in the churchyard, organising a Grandparents Tea Party, planting bulbs in the churchyard and sending thank you letters to people in the community.

In sadder news, July 2022 saw the closure of Wareside VC Primary School. The DBE had supported this very small school closely over the previous four years, working alongside senior leadership and the governing body to try to ensure a future for a school much valued by parents and members of the local community.

Organisational and financial management

Following a number of years operating through single-year development plans, the DBE introduced a three-year strategic plan in January 2022, covering the whole of the 2022-2024 triennium. Aligned to the core priorities of the national church and the Diocesan Board of Finance, the strategic plan ensures

that, alongside its core educational activities, work in areas of synergy such as racial justice and carbon reduction has the greatest impact possible.

2022 saw the DBE continue to focus on ensuring its financial stability. The introduction of new contracts of employment for DBF staff and the adoption of the DBF's total return policy significantly increased confidence in the stability of the DBE's budgeting. An end-of year surplus will be used to establish a designated fund to support the creation of new Church of England schools and the formation of new Church of England multi-academy trusts. Predictions over the next five years show the DBE in a stable financial position.

With a stable financial basis to work from, the DBE initiated, in late 2022, a review of its financial governance including strategic development, scrutiny and oversight. This work will be undertaken across 2023 by the Chair, the Director and Board member Tim Fleming, who will be supported by the Diocesan Secretary and Director of Finance. The aim of the process will be to ensure that financial decision-making is transparent and is based on the best evidence possible, and that key decisions taken by the DBE, as a statutory committee of the DBF, are monitored and scrutinised effectively and are based on advice received from the DBF's Director of Finance.

In maintaining the following strategic priorities for 2022-24, the DBE has ensured it has sufficient capacity to respond to unexpected situations and therefore maintain its high standards of service to schools:

- Work to ensure that a minimum of 90% of schools are deemed to be good or excellent church schools (as defined by SIAMS)
- Support the development of Christian pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning
- Deliver diocesan-wide initiatives which promote a shared understanding of Living God's Love through community, worship and prayer
- Extend and develop work to promote the wellbeing of the whole school community
- Promote and facilitate outstanding leadership and governance which supports excellence in church schools
- Develop Church of England provision across the Diocese of St Albans.

The Revd Canon Tim Lomax – Director of Mission and Ministry

- 2022 has been a significant year for the department, following a full independent review at the end of 2021. Recommendations have been put in place to provide a more effective spread of responsibilities and duties, to improve on administrative support and utilise the skills of all members of the staff team.
- Key priorities have been collaboratively set to clarify the aims, vision and values of the department, with more focussed and streamlined measuring and reporting to the Board for Mission and Ministry of activity and achievements in line with the eight diocesan objectives.
- A further independent review was carried out on diocesan support for work with children and young people. Recommendations were to adopt a more radical approach with an emphasis on participation, rather than central provision. This would involve further developing partnerships with external organisations like Launchpad and Youthwork Essentials; substantial investment in local projects which help young people to grow in faith; embedding activity within existing parish Mission Action Plans and setting up a young leaders programme – the Alban Way.
- The proposed three team departmental structure was further divided into four teams – Ministry, Vocations, Flourishing Churches and Growing Younger and More Diverse. The core leadership of team leaders was established to ensure cross-departmental working and the integration of all activities in support of church leaders, parishes and chaplaincies.
- The teams moved to a new purpose-built office and meeting space in what was the Diocesan Office Reception, with flexible working and hot desking for all officers and administrators.
- Bishop Michael moved to a new role and Archdeacon Jane took on the chair of the Board for Mission and Ministry in September in the interim period.

Ministry Development team

The Revd Kate Peacock, Deputy Director of Mission and Ministry

- It has been a good year for the Ministry Development Team. The first Clergy Wellbeing Survey was issued in February, and the newly formed Wellbeing group has continued to meet regularly under the chair of Will Gibbs.
- Phil Bryson left his post as Lay Ministry Officer in July and two job-sharing 'Growing Vocations and Lay Ministry Officers' have been appointed to begin in the new year – Ruth Dennigan and Simon Moore.
- The ongoing programme of training and development has had good take up and feedback. Highlights were 'Celebrating Wisdom', a residential course for those long in ministry, the 'New to Post', 'Incumbency Skills' and the 'Rural Deans' course which are run regionally with our neighbouring dioceses. All had excellent feedback as having made a significant impact on people's ministries.
- The online 'New Incumbent's group' has grown and offers mutual support to those at this critical stage of their ministries.
- We have continued the work with improving our culture of diversity and inclusion and have trained eight more people to deliver the 'Conscious Inclusion' training across the diocese. This year also saw a new training in 'Active Bystander' which is focussed on equipping people to

respond well when they are witnesses or victims of micro-aggressions. This was well received and is now a key part of the regular annual programme.

- Eighty-five clergy and lay leaders attended the first Mission and Ministry Day Conference in October, with five excellent speakers focussing on 'Into Deep Water'. The feedback was universally good or excellent, as providing inspiration, theological input and useful practical insight.
- All of this, and the other events and workshops, were geared to working towards the vision of seeing our people and places flourishing in God's purposes and achieving our eight diocesan objectives.

Vocations team

The Revd Tim Bull – Director of Vocations

- In July 2022, nineteen people were ordained Deacon – twelve were stipendiary and seven SSM. This was the largest number for several years. The matching of curates with parishes and benefices continues to be a core element of the Vocations Team's work.
- Fifteen people were ordained Priest at various locations around the Diocese – twelve were stipendiary and three SSM.
- Due to greater financial prudence, there will be a limit of ten new stipendiary Deacons each year from 2023.
- As of December 2022, twenty-six candidates were in conversation with a DDO or Assistant DDO. We are encouraged by the way in which God seems to be moving in the lives of these people.
- Forty-two ordinands were training for ministry across three year-groups. Of these, 14% are of non-white heritage. This compares favourably with the diocesan target of 15% of our ordinands to be of non-white heritage.
- Barbara Young moved on from her role as Vocations Administrator and Charles Burch stepped down from his role as Diocesan Vocations Officer at the end of the year. We are grateful for all that they both contributed to the vocations work of the Diocese.
- Barbara has been succeeded by Ann Rogers. Charles' successors as Growing Vocations Officer will begin a new role which also includes Growing Lay Ministry.
- We appointed and trained four new voluntary Assistant DDOs in September. This extra capacity is making a positive impact on the Vocations Team as the number of candidates grows.
- The Vocations Team is also ably assisted by a dozen voluntary Vocations Advisers who meet with candidates in the early stages of the process.
- The Vocations Team continues to run events to encourage vocations, and also to support those in discernment and training. In 2022, these included: *Seeking the Way* (over three Saturdays) and *Will You Take the Call* (one Saturday), as well as speaking engagements at Deanery Synods and Clergy Chapters around the Diocese.

Flourishing Churches team

The Revd Kate Peacock – Deputy Director of Mission and Ministry

- Revd Harry Steele stepped down from his role as Church Growth Officer and Revd Kate Lomax joined the team in March.
- Focussed work continued to help reduce the number of out of date and inadequate Mission Action Plans (MAPs) and to increase the quality and effectiveness of MAPs.
- The team facilitated teaching on Mission Action Planning for final, third year curates.
- Action Learning Sets were started to enable leaders to engage in the Mission Action Planning process more effectively with the support of peers.
- Plans developed for the Leading your Church into Growth 2023 Diocesan Conference and places having been filling quickly.

- At the beginning of the year Archdeacon Jane and Kate Peacock hosted 117 Churchwardens attending online training to equip them to achieve the vision of flourishing and healthy churches as welcoming places for people to encounter God in worship and fellowship.
- An interactive workshop on Growing Generous Giving was attended by representatives of twenty churches around the diocese in July.
- The team supported three Treasurer Round Table meetings throughout the year with Archdeacons on digital giving and stewardship.
- Further advice, support and teaching on giving and stewardship was provided for leaders and churches. The diocese received national Church of England funding for a Giving Advisor post to begin in 2023. Kate Ford was appointed as Giving Advisor with a brief to support parishes in growing generous giving. Kate will also provide practical advice on digital and legacy giving and running giving campaigns.

Reaching New People / Growing Younger and More Diverse

The Revd Daniel Drew – Reaching New People team leader

- The work of the Reaching New People project continues, with pioneering, new worshipping communities and a more general change of culture becoming embedded into the work of the Mission and Ministry Department. Alison Jackson and Sue Hughes left their roles at the expected end of the strategic funding. Further SDF funding has extended the work to June 2023.
- Dave Pickett had been working with Tricia Humber on social media, communications and the development of the new diocesan website and resources hub. Dave has now moved to a role in the Communications team.
- The awarding of over 150 small grants to parishes in all contexts have helped to launch or re-launch missional initiatives post-pandemic. Further funding was made available specifically to enable parishes to set up warm and welcoming spaces in response to the energy crisis.
- Strategic longer-term work has also begun in larger urban areas and new housing estates. Larger grants have been made available to projects with the potential for long term sustainability and for growing younger and more diverse.
- Transforming Conversations coaching continued with a total of nearly 150 having completed this training. Coaching became further embedded into the work of the department as mandatory for all new curates and their Training Incumbents. The first cohort of twelve accredited advanced level coaches began training in the autumn with the expectation that they make use of their skills to benefit the wider diocese.
- A successful bid for innovation funding from the Vision and Strategy Team at Church House has enabled the set-up of the Alban way project for young leaders aged 18-35. A cohort of twelve began at the end of the year and will meet regularly throughout the next year to develop a rule of life, spiritual practices and to pray as a community. Further cohorts for younger school-aged groups are planned for 2023, in partnership with the Diocesan Schools team and local parishes.
- Further major funding was made available by the Church of England for strategic Mission and Ministry projects at diocesan level. A funding consultation with local leaders was conducted in the autumn to begin to identify potential projects with vision, good leadership and deanery support in urban, town and rural contexts. Funding would be available for nine years.
- Dan Drew had been heading up work of Reaching New People in the interim and was appointed as team leader for the Growing Younger and More Diverse team in December. Phillippa Harding began an internship with the team in the autumn, focussing on the Alban Way.

- The team continues to support churches in developing and growing New Worshipping Communities which aim to reach children and families – for example, Messy Church and Outdoor Church.
- A series of networking events is planned for paid youth and children’s leaders as well as others passionate about young people. Following this the work of the team will focus more on recruiting and supporting new and existing volunteers.
- The Growing Younger and More Diverse team will recruit an administrator and further roles to support funding bids and the Alban Way in the new year.

The Environment

Rachel Johnston – Environmental Officer

- Rachel Johnston continues to work in a voluntary capacity as Diocesan Environmental Officer. This involves supporting parishes towards Net Carbon Zero by 2030.
- 107 churches have registered and are working towards Eco Church awards. Thirty-seven have been awarded bronze awards and four have silver awards.
- Further national funding will be made available by the national church in the coming year.

Tim Lomax
Director of Mission and Ministry
February 2023

The Board of Trustees comprises the Chair who is nominated by the Bishop of St Albans, a representative of the Diocesan Board of Finance, and a lay and ordained representative for each of the three Archdeaconries.

The trustees met online, in person and in a hybrid format a total of four times during 2022 to consider requests for financial assistance for individuals in the form of bursaries and grant applications from parishes and chaplaincies.

The objects of the trust are:

- a) To support diocesan, deanery or parish projects promoting spirituality, education, service or witness and/or
- b) To grant bursaries to individuals for the development of spirituality, education, service or witness.

The trustees pay close attention to the performance of their investment portfolio in order to grow the capital sum, and therefore maintain its value in real terms, whilst at the same time yielding interest which can be used for disbursement as bursaries and grants. Given the ongoing global uncertainties, the trustees invited a CCLA fund manager to attend their October meeting in order to give a detailed presentation and appraise the trustees of their financial position and the performance of their investment funds.

The overall financial position remains healthy and, despite the drop in capital value over the course of 2022 of £235k to £2.2 million, there was an increase in distributable reserves of £85k at the year end. This is due to a reduction in the number and value of awards made during the pandemic. In addition to the accrued reserves, the trust depends on income from four funds supplemented with a small amount of interest from a deposit account. Despite the fall in capital value, the dividends actually increased slightly in 2022 to £42.4k as compared to £38.8k in 2021. The trust has only small administrative costs and the very large majority of investment income is therefore available for disbursement. Requests for the year which are detailed below totalled £33.4k. In 2021 this was much lower (£18k) as many projects had been postponed due to the pandemic and extended study leave and training opportunities were also likely to have been severely affected.

18 bursaries were awarded in 2022 compared to 8 in 2021. This increase reflects a resumption to many of the pre-pandemic activities that had been postponed or limited and included assistance with extended study leave, retreats and training courses and academic study. Despite more than double the bursary applications received, the reserves from previous underspend allowed the trustees to continue to be generous in terms of the typical size of the awards made. The total expenditure on bursaries was **£17,671** as compared to expenditure in 2021 of £5,879. The majority of bursaries continue to be granted in support of ministerial education, lay training and assistance with extended study leave for clergy.

The Trustees also made grants totalling **£15,800** to 7 projects within the Diocese, as compared to £12,500 to 6 projects in 2021. The range of activities supported is shown below.

PROJECTS

Project Name	Project nature	£Amount
Oak Church, Stevenage	Radiant Project working with teenage girls	3,000.00
Bedford Deanery	Barbecue for clergy and churchwardens as thanks for their efforts and innovation during Covid.	400.00
St Paul's Church, Bedford	Citizens of Bedford project	4,000.00
St Peter's Church, Watford	Assistance with costs for a Children and Families Worker to lead The Nine project	2,000.00
Hitchin Deanery	Summer event for clergy and churchwardens	400.00
Bridge Builders Christian Trust	'Reach' online project sharing the Christian faith with primary school children	3,000.00
St John's Church, Bishop's Hatfield	Assistance with costs for a part-time (0.6FTE) Children and Families Worker	3,000.00

There were no trustee changes during 2022 and I record my thanks to them for the time and care they give so generously to consider the applications received and to conduct the business of the Verulam House Fund Trust, very diligently and professionally supported by our Clerk, Elizabeth Pazzi-Axworthy, and Deputy Clerk, Wendy Cruickshank. We are also indebted to Glyn Barker, Director of Finance, for his work in overseeing the finances of the Trust.

Two additional pieces of work were undertaken in last twelve months. The first was to consider the work of the Trust and how it can best be aligned with the Diocesan Strategy towards becoming Net Carbon Zero by 2030. This item is now a standing item on the Trust's agenda for all meetings. Responses to date include making our meetings hybrid to reduce travel, supporting applications that have an environmental focus, discouraging applications that involve unnecessary long-distance travel and going paperless through the use of a Trustee online portal. The second piece of work involved making our application forms available to complete online via the Diocesan website to reduce postage and improve accessibility, and we have also undertaken a modest rebranding exercise and introduced a new logo for the Trust.

The Trustees are committed to supporting the three strands of "Living God's Love". The objects of the Trust align well with the objectives set out in Living God's Love. Specifically:

- (a) Going deeper into God – the Trustees have consistently supported courses of study for

both lay and ordained applicants which both help the individuals concerned to gain greater insight into theological issues and also benefit the wider Church when the benefits are disseminated and result in teaching and shared insights with congregations.

- (b) Making new disciples – the Trustees made awards to support two projects working with children and young people in the parishes, another with teenage girls in secondary school and also supported work sharing the Christian faith with primary school children.
- (c) Transforming communities – the Trustees were pleased to support the innovative Citizens of Bedford project working for the common good in local communities.

The Trustees will continue to make grants in line with the objects of the Trust and, in so doing, will aim to fully support the objectives of Living God's Love. As always, much depends on the nature of the applications received and we especially welcome diversity and new applicants.

*The Reverend Will Gibbs
Chair of Verulam House Fund Trust
February 2023*

Chairman: The Reverend Susannah Underwood

Terms of Reference

To exercise any right of patronage held by the Board in relation to (currently 22) benefices across the diocese.

Living God's Love

The Board engages with Living God's Love through participating in the appointment process and seeking to appoint high calibre clergy who are able and ready to engage fully with the diocesan vision of Living God's Love. In making appointments and in continuing contact with the benefices in its gift, the Board supports the outcomes of spiritual and numerical growth.

New appointments

The Board was involved with making appointments to Aldenham, Radlett & Shenley (team vicar), Dunton, Wrestlingworth & Eyeworth (priest in charge), Flitwick (Vicar), Oxhey St Matthew (Vicar), St Albans St Luke (Vicar), as well as supporting the appointment of a team vicar in the Langelei team, and welcomed the priest appointed in each case from within and outside the diocese. The Board was glad to support the Reverend Linda Washington's appointment as incumbent of Toddington and Chalgrave following a period of pastoral reorganisation and her work to rebuild the worshipping communities.

The appointments variously allow the parishes and benefices to engage in a fresh way with their local priorities for worship, mission and outreach, in some cases after a long or very short incumbency, a long vacancy or a period of change.

Stories from recently-appointed clergy

Claire Harald, Vicar of Flitwick: *Life and ministry in St Peter and St Paul's have taken off at a pace!! Having emerged from the pandemic in vacancy, there was great enthusiasm for bringing forward existing ministry and starting new initiatives. A new 'All Together Service' was launched in September which has seen families return to church and engaged with new people of all ages. Using puppet ministry for our 'All Together Service', we have grown a small group of young people who serve through puppeteering. Christmas was a perfect opportunity for engaging with our community and through this connection we are currently running Alpha for the first time, as well as continuing to run 'Flitwick Food Extra', which provides meals for families during the school holidays. Wonderfully we are seeing people return to church and new people come. Our outdoor 'Sunday Celebration' services are held every week at 9am (from Easter to Harvest) and our Open the Book Team go into all our primary schools every half term. There is great hope and excitement in God's vision for our church as we take each step forward.*



Liz Lavelle, Dunton, Wrestlingworth & Eyeworth: *We are very excited about the growth of our weekly Community Café at St Mary Magdalene Church in Dunton. Having focused on the Café as an outreach priority - to provide a warm and inviting space for the surrounding community - it is positively thriving, with a full range of all ages, church family, and many from the wider community gathering together. This also includes people from our other two churches, which is very encouraging as we strive to bring the church families together as a more united benefice.*

With a lack of any mother and baby/toddler provision in the village, creating links and networking, both through our monthly Messy Church and the Village School, has encouraged young families to attend, and numbers are growing all the time. Several new families who then attended family events and services over the Christmas period spoke of how much they valued the welcome and fellowship at the Community Café. With soft play facilities for youngsters, hot drinks, cake, and a friendly welcome for all, it is wonderful to see the church full and buzzing each week.

Current vacancies

As at 31st December 2022, there were vacancies in the Board's livings at:

- Aldenham, Radlett & Shenley (team rector)
- Arlesey with Astwick
- Barkway, Barley, Reed and Buckland
- High Cross (from 1/1/23)
- Sarratt and Chipperfield

Pastoral Reorganisation

The Board was consulted on proposals for possible changes to ministerial provision or suspension of presentation in a number of cases.

Membership of the Board

The Board welcomed the news of the Archdeacon of St Albans' appointment as the next Bishop of Hertford and said farewell to longstanding Board member and Vice-Chair Clive Richardson.

Appendix

The Diocesan Board of Patronage is a patron of the following benefices:

Aldenham, Radlett & Shenley Team; Arlesey with Astwick; Barkway, Barley, Reed & Buckland ; Chellington Team; Dunton with Wrestlingworth & Eyeworth; Eaton Bray with Edlesborough; Flitwick; Harpenden, St. John; High Cross; Holwell, Ickleford & Pirton ; Houghton Regis; Hunsdon with Widford & Wareside; Langelei Team ; Ouzel Valley Team; Oxhey, St. Matthew; Rye Park, St. Cuthbert; St. Albans, St. Luke; Sarratt & Chipperfield; South Mymms & Ridge; The Stodden Churches; Toddington & Chalgrave; Wilden with Colmworth & Ravensden