

GROWING IN HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY THE CHANGE FRAMEWORK

Supporting Our Vision

To grow as Kingdom People, sharing the good news of Jesus' love in Worcestershire and Dudley. As the body of Christ, we join together to worship God creatively, make disciples, share hope, and transform communities.

Characterised by

Love Compassion Justice Freedom

Our Programme Aim

Prayerfully enabling church communities across the Diocese
to grow in health and sustainability

Enabled by

Inspired and creative local church communities
Purposeful equipping and resourcing
Clergy and lay people working and leading together.
Wise and generous stewardship

Achieved by

Parishes and Deaneries delivering local growth responses.
Planting and reinvigorating congregations
Building new patterns of ministry and leadership skills
Calling young disciples
Linking Parish Share to ministry costs.
Supporting smaller churches

GROWING IN HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

THE CHANGE NARRATIVE (EXPANDED)

Our Vision...

To grow as Kingdom People, sharing the good news of Jesus' love in Worcestershire and Dudley.

As the body of Christ, we join together to worship God creatively, make disciples, share hope and transform communities.

Our Growing in Health and Sustainability programme supports this Vision with the aim of...

Prayerfully enabling church communities across the Diocese to grow in health and sustainability - so that we more fully engage with God's mission in the world.

The Guiding Principles that underpin this programme...

- Putting God first – relying on, and trusting in Him, seeking to be Christ centred and Jesus shaped, and being led by the Spirit.
- Encouraging individuals, churches, and the Church, to become all God wants us to be - treasuring what we have been given, and not clinging on to what we no longer need.
- Being the Church of England, and a Church for England - a church which;
 - embodies the values of love, compassion, justice, and freedom,
 - is committed to a Christian presence in every community,
 - welcomes everyone, praying and caring for all, whether they attend, or not,
 - seeks to be younger and more diverse.
- Providing support and development for all those who lead and support ministry and mission.
- Clergy and laity working collaboratively and creatively together to enable effective ministry and missionary discipleship, within the parish and beyond.
- Making good decisions on local and central responsibilities: Empowering local churches to discern local vision and vocation and move towards it, served by a central team that is relevant and effective.
- Adopting appropriate approaches for the diverse parts of the diocese - honouring what we have in common, treasuring our mixed ecology, and welcoming the development of local growth responses.

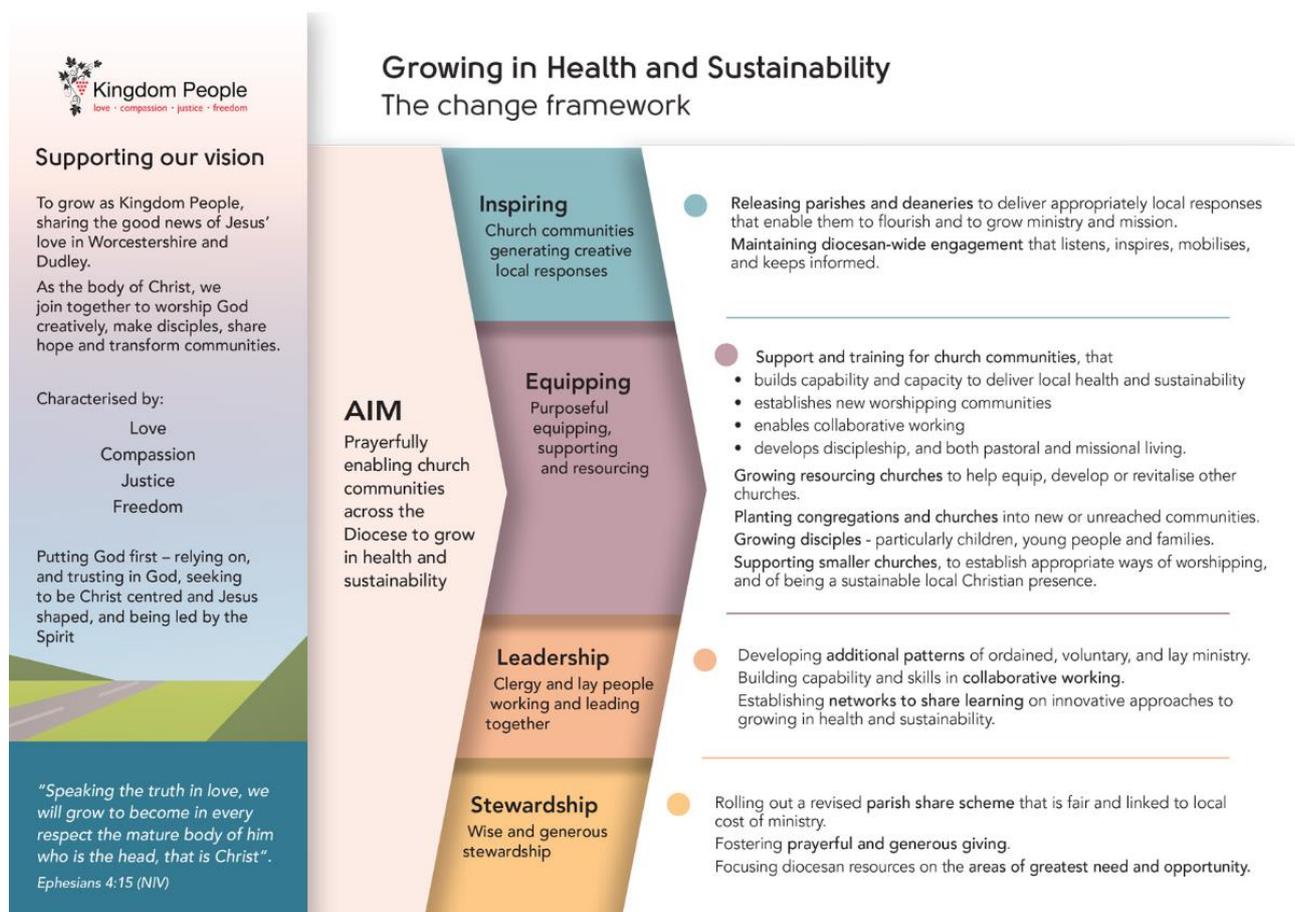
The key enablers of the programme...

1. **Inspiring local** church communities to be ambitious in generating appropriately local responses that enable them to flourish and grow.
2. **Equipping** and strengthening church communities by providing training, and by establishing new approaches and forms of support.
3. Adopting **Leadership** models that support and develop ordained and lay leaders in enabling local church communities to be adaptive, and to grow spiritually, numerically and in depth of discipleship.
4. Promoting **Wise stewardship** that ensures financial stability and provides the space to deliver a robust growth programme, that increases the number of healthy and sustainable churches.

The specific activities to achieve the programme...

- Encouraging renewed creativity within parishes and deaneries to cultivate ministry and mission growth in the local area.

- Providing support and training to church communities to grow congregations, especially in:
 - building confidence, capability, and capacity to deliver a local vision,
 - establishing new worshipping communities,
 - working collaboratively,
 - developing discipleship, and both pastoral and missional living.
- Growing a number of resourcing churches to help equip, develop, or revitalise other churches, or plant new congregations and churches into new or unreached communities.
- Developing additional patterns of ordained, voluntary, and lay ministry.
- Growing disciples – particularly children, young people, and families.
- Establishing local and contextual networks that share learning and work collaboratively to implement innovative approaches to ministry and mission.
- Rolling out a revised and fair parish share scheme and fostering generous giving by individuals and parishes.
- Providing support to smaller churches, so that they can establish new and appropriate ways of worshipping, and of being a sustainable local Christian presence.
- Ensuring diocesan resources are focussed on the areas of greatest need and opportunity, giving healthy and sustainable churches the opportunity to grow.
- Creating an engagement plan that listens to, inspires, mobilises, and keeps informed - all stakeholders and communities.
- Establishing a theological framework of growth and change.
- Implementing a measurement system that tracks a number of key indices of church health and sustainability.



Appendix – Context and Comment

1 Great Commandments and Great Commission.

The love of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is at the centre of the Church's life. Receiving and responding to that love is what Jesus described as the greatest commandment. This love transforms us, and overflows into love of our neighbour (i.e. everybody else) and of our self – Jesus' second commandment. And love for others leads onwards into Jesus' great commission, to go and make disciples, helping others to be drawn into the fullness of life that God desires for all. These two commandments and the great commission thus belong indivisibly together, and point to where God leads us.

2 Kingdom People: Love, Compassion, Justice and Freedom

The diocesan Kingdom People vision describes church life shaped by the great commandments and great commission: life lived with love and compassion, with action for justice and freedom. The eight Kingdom People Characteristics were articulated to help local churches work out in practice what this looks like in each church community.

The current transformation programme sits within the Kingdom People vision, rather than replacing it. It focuses on how to prioritise energy and action over the next few years, as we seek to grow as Kingdom People, joining with God in his mission of reconciling all of creation to himself.

3 God and the Church: A Partnership, but not of equals

God gives to the Church, and to each particular church, vital roles to play in working out his mission. This is always a relational partnership between God and the church - though not one of equals.

God does not expect of any church or Christian more than they have the capacity to do or to be. Often, God is at work beyond the church, and without its direct involvement. Sometimes, sadly, the church and its members can be a barrier to the work of God - through what we fail to do, or by actions or attitudes that fall short in whatever way. However, often – and what a privilege! - it is through the church that God is pleased to work. This is sometimes through church-organised initiatives, sometimes through relationships that grow up around the edges of church life, and sometimes through other aspects of the lives of church people. Ongoing discernment of how we can best participate in God's work is thus a crucial priority. Such participation is characterised by both obedience to how God leads, and by trust that all is in God's hands.

4 Healing and growth

God is the source of all that is good. The Church is to be continually receiving healing and sustenance from God. As it does so, it can be a conduit of that healing and sustaining for others. Moreover, its own health and sustainability arise from and depend on what it is receiving from God.

This generous sharing of God's life will overflow in desire and action towards spiritual and numerical growth – people coming to faith, and growing in faith. The church and its people will never be the *direct* cause of such growth. Nevertheless, they will often have a genuinely essential supporting role, enabling (through actions and attitudes) conditions that stimulate growth, inspiring and supporting journeys of faith.

5 Cultural context.

It is important to view our current experience in its broader context. The decline that the Church of England has experienced over a long period of time is not simply a result of failure, and if only we had different strategies, better plans and better ministers, all would have been well. We have undoubtedly failed many times. There are things we should have done differently. But it would be foolish to ignore the huge shift in the tectonic plates of European and world culture that have shaped the world in which we serve and witness. This is not a reason for complacency, but we should not carry burdens of perceived failure that are not ours to bear. [Much of this paragraph is taken from a recent short piece by Archbishop Stephen Cottrell.]

6 The people of the Church of England.

We are all gifts of God (to the Church, to each other, to the world) and are all imperfect. Each has maturity, wisdom, gifts and skills; each has weaknesses and limitations. Each is infinitely precious to God. We affirm that:

- Each of us are called to co-operate with God in developing our maturity, wisdom, gifts and skills
- God continues to work in and through our weaknesses and limitations
- We all share the same primary baptismal vocation, and are all called to bring our distinctive and complementary contributions to the rich life of the Kingdom of God

7 'Both/And': Integration and Discernment

The life of the church is to be united rather than uniform. It often involves integrating together different emphases, held in different balances at different times, or in different places. 'Both/and' is frequently needed, for instance with:

- Integrating both *prayer* and *action*, so that each informs and infuses the other.
- Integrating both *passion* and *patience*, and discerning appropriate pace accordingly.
- Integrating the *universal* aspects of our faith, with how they can best be expressed in each particular *context* – with these people in this place
- Integrating both *speaking* of faith, and also *listening* deeply. Such attentive listening is also an expression of our love, a guide to action, and informs our discernment of where God is already at work, inviting our joining in.
- Integrating both our *being* and our *doing*; what we do, and the manner in which we do it.
- Integrating both ongoing *faithfulness* (people & activities), and what is *new*, radical, innovative
- Integrating attention to service and renewal *within* the life of the church, and attention to serving the needs of God's *wider world*

8 **The transformation programme** could be seen as prioritising the new and innovative. What it actually seeks is appropriate response, in each setting, to God's guidance and local needs and opportunities. We expect to see appropriate breadth and variety, both within deaneries and across the diocese. We will affirm and value God's work in that which is continuing, as well as in that which is new.

9 A Biblical Image: the Vineyard and the Vine.

Many of these facets are integrated within the recurrent Biblical metaphor of a vine and a vineyard, an image of which forms part of our Kingdom People Logo.

- Growth and fruitfulness come from God - and are enhanced by human care and labour.
- A long-term vineyard includes both the tending of vintage vines, and the planting of new ones.
- Regular pruning is called for, both of the vines themselves, and of invasive other species.
- Digging around vines, offering appropriate enrichment, will be part of what enables flourishing.
- There will be both ongoing work of care, and particular seasons of re-design.
- The work needed will be different in different places. This is not a wholesale re-planting.
- Our role, within the terms of the image, can be seen in (at least) three different ways.
 - We are called to be responsible under-gardeners with God, tending the vines
 - We are invited to dwell in the vineyard, enjoying its beauty, its atmosphere, and its fruit
 - And we are called to be branches within the vine, grafted into the very life of God

Within the transformation programme, in many places it will be local communities that are best placed to discern their own next steps within their local vineyard. The diocesan team's role, if needed, will be to offer appropriate support and encouragements to do so. The Transformation Programme has an important role, building in this season on what is already in place. But it forms just one part of a much broader, ongoing narrative.

10 Some Specific Commentary expanding on some of the concise phrases used within the transformation programme:

a) *Growing as Kingdom People.*

This includes people growing in the depth of their existing discipleship; church communities growing in their relationships and actions; and others beginning a pilgrimage of discipleship.

b) *Growing in health and sustainability*

This includes spiritual and organisational health, rooted in the life of God (para 4). It includes both externally visible aspects of health, and the quality of our hearts and relationships. Sustainability, again, relies on ongoing rootedness in God. It also involves vital practical considerations, including of buildings, finances, and how we organise ourselves. We are called to discern God's current call on how best to use in God's service the resources we have been given.

c) *Worshipping God creatively*

A key emphasis here is on finding creative and appropriate ways to help more people engage in the worship of God. It's not that each service/act of worship must be memorably unique. Nonetheless, part of our calling under God is to shape a range of worship, such that explorers are offered accessible ways in to engaging with God and with Christian faith.

d) *Making disciples*

Our own journey as disciples is never completed: we always have more to learn and receive, being formed by God's ongoing work and love in our lives. The church is called to nurture and inspire the faith and practice of existing Christians, and to help others come to faith and journey with God. Our relationships and spirituality should be invitational and missional – recognising that, although we cannot *make* anyone a disciple (para 4), we may have a crucial

role in enabling that journey. Our churches are called to be incubators of faith, and schools of the Lord's service.

e) *Sharing hope*

This will include explicit faith-sharing and evangelism, through testimony, courses and other forms of proclamation. It will also include the hope that is shared and received, often implicitly but still tangibly, as we treat neighbours and colleagues as people beloved of God.

f) *Transforming communities*

This will include faithful service, sometimes in an organised way as one or more churches, and also expressed in the lives of many worshippers in diverse areas not formally connected with the church. It will include the vital areas of raising children, caring for neighbours and relatives, campaigning for justice, and acting in line with the interests of the poor. Our calling to be agents of transformation will sometimes mean serving and acting *for* others. It will often mean being *with* them, coming alongside them in their navigation of life. It will also include working in partnership with others. The visible scale of community transformation will vary from place to place. What God values most isn't always the most obviously impressive.

11 The calling of the church is to continually turn to God in adoration; to receive love, forgiveness, healing and sustenance; and to co-operate with God's transforming work in our lives and relationships. This ongoing seeking of God's face is the fount of our life and our motivation, and our primary focus.

12 To conclude, a paragraph from Archbishop Stephen Cottrell in full:

"As a final preliminary we also need to remind ourselves that renewal very rarely comes from the centre. Even though we face huge financial challenges and must respond to these, when it comes to our mission we must not let downward sloping graphs, burning platforms or melting icebergs [metaphors sometimes deployed in the context of change management] be our motivation. It is the vision of the abundant life we have in Christ, and a desire to share that with everyone and to live it joyfully, that is the purpose we serve."

Transformation Programme – Delivery Groups and Meetings

Transformation Steering Group (TSG)	
Chair	Nikki Groarke
Core Members	+Martin, Archdeacon Nikki, Archdeacon Robert, John Preston, Sam Setchell, Claire Lording, Hugh Richards, Jonathan Kimber, Rob Quarton. +John periodically (and aligned with PCG timings) - for programme strategy overview, successes, and lessons learned
Scope / Purpose	To steer the Diocesan transformation programme including Programme Planning – Set, Progress, Review Stakeholder Mobilisation / Momentum Plan Diocese Comms Plan Measurement System & Outcomes monitoring Risk / Issue Management System Learning / Review & Challenge Group Connection
Frequency	Bi-Monthly
Administration	Meeting set up - Nikki, Notes - Sam Setchell

Deanery Growth Network (DGN)	
Chair	Nikki Groarke
Core Members	Area Deans (6), Archdeacon Nikki, Archdeacon Robert, John Preston, Jonathan Kimber, Rob Quarton. Every third meeting - +Martin, Deanery Lay Chairs
Scope / Purpose	To release, enable and provide support to parishes to generate and deploy local growth responses and plans. Healthy Church support approaches and deployment. Ordained and lay leadership training, and collaboration. Learning and support networks. Local initiative log and tracking/sharing
Frequency	Monthly for initial 3 months - then to be reviewed
Administration	Meeting set up - Nikki, Notes - Rob Quarton

Church Planting Group (CPG)	
Chair	Bishop Martin
Core Members	+Martin, Rich Johnson, James Treasure, Rob Hill, Kalamtha Brewis, Rob Quarton
Scope / Purpose	Strategy and deployment Plan for Church Planting, New Congregations and revitalisations - including enabling, supporting and realising requirements. Promote and champion the potential of New Congregations. Mobilise and grow collection of resourcing churches across the Diocese.
Frequency	Monthly - moving to bi-monthly from June 2021
Administration	Meetings set up - + Martin, Notes - Rob Quarton

Strategic Programme Group (SPG)	
Chair	Bishop Martin
Core Members	+Martin, Nikki Groarke, Allison Davies, Hugh Richards, Rob Quarton. Projects: Top Church - James Treasure, All Saints - Rich Johnson, Archdeacon Robert, CYD - Simon Hill / Ruth Walker, Jonathan Kimber
Scope / Purpose	Strategic Overview of SDF projects. Project team support and alignment of Diocesan resources to deliver deployment plans. Risk and Issue Management. Outcomes monitoring. Finance tracking. Interface / reporting management with SDF
Frequency	Termly (preceded by individual project meetings)
Administration	Rob Quarton

Deployment Planning Group (DPG)	
Chair	Nikki Groarke
Core Members	+Martin, Archdeacon Robert, Archdeacon Nikki, John Preston, Rob Quarton
Scope / Purpose	Deployment Planning for deanery / parish appointments - ie: overview of which roles and where. Development and implementation of new patterns of ordained and lay leadership Use of the disposition process
Frequency	Monthly
Administration	Meeting set up - Nikki, Notes - Rob Quarton

Programme Challenge Group (PCG)	
Chair	Steven Skakel
Core Members	Group: Steven Skakel, John Bryson, Alan Cruickshank, Lynn Fox, Matthew Frost, Andy Todd, Theological Consultant (tdc) SDF Transformation: +Martin, Nikki Groarke, John Preston, R Quarton
Scope / Purpose	To provide an additional overview of overall Transformation effort. To access a range of experiences and skills, in order to provide healthy challenge to the TSG on strategic aspects of the programme. To enable the TSG to consider wider viewpoints, to think different and deeply
Frequency	Periodically - (next event around March 2021)
Secretary/Administration	Meetings set up - John P/Hill Q, Notes - Rod Skene

SIMPLER

BOLDER

HUMBLER

