



## Introduction

'Shaping for Mission' is a programme, launched in October, which will involve all of the Deaneries in Lichfield Diocese. Its aim is to strengthen our life of **discipleship, vocation and evangelism**, the three priority areas which support our Diocesan vision, that:

**"As we follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad, we pray that the two million people in our diocese encounter a church that is confident in the gospel, knows and loves its communities, and is excited to find God already at work in the world. We pray for a church that reflects the richness and variety of those communities. We pray for a church that partners with others in seeking the common good, working for justice as a people of hope."**

As many will already know, Deaneries are groups of neighbouring parishes within a particular area, which often serve as a bridge between the Diocese and individual parishes. Deaneries offer the Diocese a 'unit' that is varied and large enough to be flexible and creative, able to offer a range of mission and ministry between them, and yet still small enough to feel local. They can act as a support network for one another: sharing ideas and concerns and being able to share gifts, pool resources and work together to achieve more than parishes could do separately.

The Diocese wants to work with Deaneries to 'shape' mission that is not just sustainable, given the challenges we face in terms of resources and finances; but, more importantly, is fit for purpose for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and better suited and equipped for the times we live in and the people we are seeking to reach. The report "Mission Shaped Church" supports this collaborative way of working: 'Few parishes can survive alone and none should have to. Once the need for a network approach is recognised, the Deanery becomes an essential unit for mission.'

Through 'Shaping for Mission', each Deanery will develop a vision that will help it be an effective body for developing discipleship, encouraging vocation and inspiring evangelism; a vision that will be worked out through parishes, Fresh Expressions of church, schools and chaplaincies, depending on the context of each Deanery.

The team coordinating this process for Hodnet Deanery currently comprises: Christine Simpson (Rural Dean); Catherine McBride (Asst Rural Dean); Jane Morris (Priest-in-Charge, Christ Church Little Drayton); Hannah Garside (Youth Church Enabler). We also hope to be able to call on others from the Deanery during the process. Our Diocesan Facilitator is Simon Foster.

Our first step is to undertake a review of where we are currently as a Deanery and where we see God at work in our churches and communities. The framework for this review is focussed around the priorities of discipleship, vocation and evangelism (DVE) and we want to hear views and ideas from the whole Deanery.

***This review will result in changes in how we work together as a Deanery, so this is an important opportunity to have an input into this process and have your voice heard.***

The review phase will need to be completed through the remainder of winter 2020/2021, so that we can work towards formulating our vision by the end of Spring 2021. We understand that these timings are challenging and we will need everyone's help to meet these.

We also appreciate that the current restrictions imposed by the pandemic will make the process more difficult and complicated. However, we also hope that the current challenges will help to focus our thoughts on what it means to be a Deanery that can respond and adapt creatively to changing circumstances.

For more information about the 'Shaping for Mission' programme, please see:

<https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/about-us/our-vision/shaping-for-mission/shaping-for-mission.php>

## **How Can You Help?**

Deanery Synod Representatives have been asked to canvas opinion from their churches using our Deanery Review Survey. To complete the survey churches could use one of the following approaches, depending on what circumstances will allow:

- Online meeting(s) to go through the questions together.
- One-to-one conversations by phone or online.
- Give people a copy of the survey and ask them to complete it and return it to them.
- Ask people to complete the survey online using the link we will provide.

Things to bear in mind:

- Don't feel you have to stick slavishly to the questions. Use them as a framework for your conversations. However, the questions do cover areas which the 'Shaping for Mission' Team are asked to consider in their feedback to the Diocese, so we would be grateful if you could address them in some way or another.
- Whichever approach is used (and it could be a mixture of any of the above), we want to ensure we get input from a cross-section of different people from our churches and those involved in different areas of church activity and ministry and encourage people to be as honest as possible.
- As you consider the questions, you may have examples of things that happened before the pandemic, things that started during lockdown and things that are emerging now.

***If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact your Deanery Synod Representatives or a member of the Hodnet Deanery Shaping for Mission Team (contact details are at the end of this leaflet)).***

Please e-mail responses to [HodnetDeanerySalop@gmail.com](mailto:HodnetDeanerySalop@gmail.com) or send hard copies to your Deanery Synod Representatives or Revd Catherine McBride, The Vicarage, Mount Lane, Market Drayton, TF9 1AQ **by the end of January 2021.**

## Survey Questions

In each of the areas of Discipleship, Vocations and Evangelism we are really interested to hear **what is working well** at your church and **where you see God at work** in the things that are happening. When you consider each area, **what seems to be missing** or **what could be improved**; alternatively, are there things which might have run their course and **could now stop** to release time and energy for new things?



We also want to hear about **your hopes for the future of our Deanery**. If you were to cast your mind 5 years from now, what would you hope to see happening in the areas of discipleship, vocations and evangelism and how would you hope to see our Deanery working together to achieve this?

Here is an outline of the survey questions and some pointers on the areas we'd like to encourage people to think about for each:

### **Discipleship: In what ways does your church help and encourage its members to grow in their faith, both in understanding and practice?**

*In response to this question you might like to consider: how people are supported in their worship, prayer, spirituality, study and theological reflection; how new Christians are nurtured and how people are encouraged in their stewardship. You could also mention any partnerships for mission and outreach that your church are involved in locally and globally. When considering these areas consider how well different ages, abilities and ethnicities etc are provided for.*

### **Vocations: In what ways does your church encourage and support people in discovering and following their callings/vocations?**

*In response to this question you might like to consider how people are encouraged to explore their gifts and calling and/or specific vocations and how are these nurtured. You could consider how lay people are encouraged in their involvement in leading worship, prayer and study. You should also consider where church members may be active vocationally in serving the wider community (e.g. in politics, campaigning for justice or caring for the environment).*

### **Evangelism: In what ways does your church encourage and enable evangelism?**

*In response to this question you might like to consider how: people are encouraged and equipped to share their faith appropriately; whether those with a particular gift of evangelism are identified, equipped and used; whether you have a 'culture of invitation'; how relationships are built with those on the fringe of the church and in the wider community and whether there are opportunities for people to explore questions of life and faith. You could also mention what Fresh Expressions of church you have or where one might be needed. You could also note where you have partnered with other churches in the Deanery to share ideas and resources for evangelism.*

### **Other Areas of Church Life: What are the other factors in church life that are having a positive or negative impact on your effectiveness in mission?**

*In response to this question you might like to consider: church finances; governance structures and teams; buildings; service patterns; your digital presence; geography and/or demographics.*

## Important Information

When responding, don't forget to let us know:

- Name of your church:
- If your feedback is from a group of people; how many were involved?
- What were their ages (approx.)?
- What are their roles or which areas of your church life are they involved with?

## Next Steps

Once we have your responses, the Shaping for Mission Team will work on a Deanery Vision and Mission Action Plan which will be shared with the Deanery by Spring 2021.

Finally, but very importantly, we are being encouraged by the Diocese to be 'radical' in our plans and vision for our Deaneries; however, these need to be God's plans, not just our good ideas. Therefore, ***please pray that His voice will be heard throughout this process and in all our deliberations.***

## Contact Details

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*Thank you for time in helping us to conduct this review.  
We really are grateful for your input.*