

## Renewing your Church Development Plan: a 'how to' guide for parish leadership teams

### 1 Introduction – building on what we have learned together

The Mission Enabler Team (MET) is very much looking forward to supporting your parish through the second round of the Parish Needs Process (PNP). We hope and pray that this will be a time of great encouragement as we celebrate progress made since the first round of the PNP and support you as you prayerfully discern the next steps God is calling you to take on the journey.

Prayerfully renewing your Church Development Plan (CDP) and building on what has been achieved so far is a core part to this process.

We hope this guide will be helpful. It draws together what the ME Team have learned about the effective preparation and use of CDPs from the first round of the PNP, and provides an introduction to CDPs for those new to the process.

Click on the headings below to read about it.

### 2 The role of the CDP – what it is and what it isn't

The CDP, a sample of which for a fictitious parish is appended, does **not** aim to encapsulate all that your church does on an ongoing basis. It seeks to identify priorities for action over the next two years and detail how you will move towards those priorities.

Your CDP is about the progress you hope to make. It encapsulates the **changes** this will entail as you develop existing activities and launch of new projects.

Depending on your circumstances, your CDP may span many aspects of church life including prayer, current and new worship services, discipleship, giving, engaging with all age-groups, serving your community, developing new worshipping communities, bringing people to faith in Jesus, finance, recruitment and development of your current and potential team (paid and unpaid) and, in some cases, capital projects to reconfigure or build churches or erect new buildings.

Your CDP will:

- Help you stay focussed on the important
- Give you permission to prune activities
- Enable you to identify and celebrate progress
- Give thanks to God for all He is doing amongst you and through you.

### 3 Renewing, or revising, your CDP

For some parishes it may be that you have continually updated and revised your CDP since it was first prepared, or that you have completed every action on it. Many have found that this is not the case.

It may be that you want to build on your existing CDP from the first round of PNP.

However, it is likely that the circumstances will have changed significantly since your last CDP was written and, rather than tweaking the details, it may be helpful prayerfully to review the big picture, your vision of where you want your parish to be, before focusing on individual activities and projects.

It may be that you feel you have yet to define a 'big picture' vision for your church, a statement of what you want your church to become (eg a thriving intergenerational church actively engaging with schools and the local community 'etc), in which case this needs to be the first step, after which you can identify the 'priority goals' and 'specific action points' which will help you to make that vision a reality.

### 4 A living document, continually updated

Your renewed CDP will be a key resource for your leadership team/PCC to plan, allocate resources and chart progress. It is a living document, not something carved in stone. Many churches have continually reviewed and adapted their plan to reflect progress achieved, changes in circumstances and future decisions.

Some parishes have found it helpful to assign to the PCC Secretary or other member of the PCC the task of keeping the CDP updated, circulated and periodically discussed.

### 5 Keeping the main thing the main thing – 'priorities' first

It is sometimes tempting to start the CDP renewal process by listing lots of specific activities which the parish could engage in.

Since no parish can do, or is called to do, everything, it may be helpful to begin by reviewing the big picture – the overall 'priority goals' towards which you seek to work.

These priorities are set out in the first column (left to right) of the attached CDP template and, in reviewing these, we would encourage you to bear in mind the key priority areas which we have discussed as a diocese and which you can identify in the third column, entitled 'TCTL priority area'. (see below point 6)

Every current or potential activity can then be assessed against the overall priorities you are seeking to achieve. Activities that contribute to your priorities can be entered in the fourth column as ‘specific action points’. If an activity does not contribute towards your priority it may be you need to ‘prune it’ or adapt it so that it does.

## 6 Transforming Church, Transforming Lives – the three priority areas

Our diocese vision statement commits us to being ‘a diverse, growing, intergenerational church at the heart of each community, working alongside our chaplaincies and schools in living and proclaiming the Good News of God in Jesus Christ’. This is reflected in our three *Transforming Church, Transforming Lives* priorities:

- **growing disciples** (both taking your existing congregation deeper in following Jesus and making new disciples through your outreach activities),
- **growing diversity** (especially becoming more age diverse) and
- **growing community** (engagement as a church with our local community through social action projects and hospitality).

Detail on each of these priorities and some suggestions as to how they might be reflected in priority goals and specific action points is set out in Appendix 1 together with a sample completed CDP (Appendix 2)

## 7 Ensuring your ‘specific action points’ get actioned

Finally, our review of the first round of the PNP suggests that the key to success is to ensure your specific action points:

- are realistic, measurable and sufficiently immediate (eg over the next 12 months) to be achievable.
- are owned by a named leader (not always the vicar!), building a team where necessary
- and are periodically updated as circumstances change and/or as progress is made.

We hope you find these guidelines helpful and look forward to working with you.

## The three priority areas

Below is further detail on the three Transforming Church, Transforming Lives priority areas and suggestions about you might reflect them in your priority goals and specific action points.

## Priority 1 - Growing disciples

We are called both to:

- lead our own congregation deeper in faith
- and make new disciples through our outreach activities.

These are inextricably linked for, if each church can become, as Jesus modelled with His followers, a community of disciple-making disciples, this will lead to sustainable growth.

During this second round of the PNP, we are encouraging a particular focus on deepening discipleship including of those who are more mature in faith. This may well include those who currently share in the leadership of your ministries and those who may have the potential to do so in the future. These more mature disciples are then better equipped to catalyse and lead witness in their daily lives.

### *Leading your existing congregation deeper in faith*

The New Testament, 'church Fathers' and church history shows us that the most important priority of all is learning to follow Jesus increasingly closely as a church and as individual Christians, in whatever ways best fit your church tradition. All else flows from this.

All church traditions show us that this includes engaging in prayer as individuals and as the church gathered, reading the scriptures, worshipping together including partaking in the sacraments, sharing our faith with others wherever God has placed us through speech and acts of service, and giving generously of our time and money to resource all aspects of the ministry and mission of the church.

Specific activities which may help you to take your existing congregation deeper in discipleship include:

- forming new small groups / home groups, which can help ensure we are all encouraged and accountable to others as we go deeper in faith;
- helping existing home groups, which can at times be internally focussed, to go deeper in faith and undertake some missional activities together;
- running an enquirers / early discipleship course such as Alpha, Christianity Explored or Pilgrim, initially for *both* the church congregation and any guests they may wish to bring.

**Encouraging generous giving** is also a core part of discipleship and we encourage parishes to include a 'specific action point' in relation to this, such as introducing or further developing an annual stewardship/renewal of giving campaign – especially if you are having difficulty covering your costs.

## Making new disciples

Evangelistic initiatives which bore fruit during the first round of the PNP broadly fell into three categories:

- running enquirers' courses like Alpha, Christianity Explored, Pilgrim, Start! and Being With, some of which can both take your existing congregation deeper in commitment and provide a space for enquirers to explore faith
- equipping members of your congregation to share their faith, through preaching and courses such as Talking Jesus and use of the Growing Faith resources.
- participating as a parish in our CPAS Leading in Evangelism Learning Hub, which enables a team from your parish to work with teams from other parishes as you work to create a more courageous evangelistic culture.
- ensuring those delivering your social action projects are confident in building relationships with those you serve and gradually introducing them to faith
- introducing more evangelistic content into existing activities, such as running Hymns we Love at your seniors' gatherings or having a Bible-based discussion as part of your men's events
- door to door visits in your parish with invitations to events and to offer prayer
- creating invitational outreach events
- mapping your existing activities and ensuring there is always a follow-on invitation for those attending each activity, taking them deeper into exploring faith.
- Starting a fresh expression of church in the parish (support for this is available in The Greenhouse Learning Community; for more information contact the Diocesan Mission Enabler Team).

## Priority 2 - Growing Diversity

### *Engaging with children and families*

89% of parishes have Engaging with Children and Families as one of their priorities. Parishes seem to be hoping to do one of three things:

1. Engage better with children and families living in the parish who have little or no connection with the church. Activities that might help with this are:
  - a) Partnership with your local school.
  - b) Seasonal family activities linked to church festivals (e.g. Harvest Christmas etc.)
  - c) Specific follow-up with families who come for baptism.

2. Create pathways to faith for those children and families who have some connection with the church, often through a toddler group or engagement with the school and are part of the 'contact' or 'crowd'. Activities that might help with this are:
  - a) Deepen partnership with local school to include parents and others.
  - b) Reshaping a toddler group or after school club to be more focussed on creating a pathway to faith.
  - c) Prioritising activities that build relationships and always providing the next invitation.
  - d) Starting a new worshipping community aimed at families e.g. Bubble Church, Messy Church etc.
  
3. Deepen discipleship with families who attend church, often by becoming more intergenerational in approach. Activities that might help with this are:
  - a) Partnering with parents and grandparents around discipling their own children/grandchildren
  - b) Enabling the voices of children to be heard and including them in decision making.
  - c) Enabling children to serve both inside and outside the church in meaningful ways.
  - d) Reshaping church activities and services to build relationships between different generations and enable children to be fully involved and included.

### Engaging with young people

Parishes that are seeking to effectively engage in ministry with young people might include goals such as:

1. Starting a youth ministry from scratch. Activities that might help with this goal could include:
  - a) Signing up for the Diocesan Launchpad Programme
  - b) Beginning a simple outreach youth drop-in
  - c) Starting a dedicated small group programme for young people
  
2. Developing deeper discipleship pathway where there is already some youth ministry. Activities that might help with this goal could include:
  - a) Establishing an effective small group programme for young people
  - b) Training youth team members in effective discipleship methods
  - c) Developing a youth leadership programme that equips young people to grow and serve as leaders
  - d) Hosting or running youth worship events in the parish

- e) Creating a working relationship, and introducing discipleship and missional activities, at a local secondary school / college.
3. Employing a Youth Ministry staff member to develop a growing youth ministry. Activities might include:
    - a) Looking to employ part-time minister to develop activities for this age group
    - b) Looking to employ a youth catalyst trainee to invest in this ministry
    - c) Looking to employ an experienced full time minister to deepen discipleship and create a pathway of activities.

### Priority 3 - Growing Community

Some 80% of parishes will have Growing Community, engaging with the local community in loving service and Christian witness, as one of their CDP priority goals. Specific action points might include:

- initiating intentional, sustained prayer to identify how God is calling you to serve your local community and prayer for each project as your programme develops
- research into the demographics and needs of the local community, in order to serve those needs well and build a congregation is representative of the local community
- engage with other stakeholders in the community, sharing ideas and action, and taking time to understand the role of statutory, charitable, community, and ecumenical groups.
- equipping church members for community mission, including providing signposts to community training programmes and the Potting Shed (add description of Potting Shed and link to webpage?).
- provide training to help those engaged in community action projects to build relationships and share their faith, in whatever way is appropriate to their community, and further stepping stones to help new Christians grow in faith
- building a culture of community service and mission through Sunday services, sermons and courses teach the theology and biblical imperative for developing community mission
- training to help all members of the church to engage with their community as a matter of faith
- specific training for leaders in community mission including FiM, Lams and, for some, exploring ordination.