

STROUD DEANERY STRATEGIC PLAN

REPORT TO DEANERY SYNOD 11TH MAY 2022

Introduction

Accompanying this covering report are two ways of expressing our proposed Deanery Strategic Plan (DSP) at its current draft stage – diagrammatic and written. It has been developed through three day-long sessions of the Standing Committee, extended with representatives of all the teams/benefices in the Deanery as far as practicable. It also draws on some, though not yet all, of the ideas shared at the last Deanery Synod. Many of those more detailed ideas will be very relevant in taking forward the plan when agreed.

Purpose of Discussion

What is now needed is for the whole Synod's reactions to this draft to be gathered and discussed:

- What excites you about what's presented?
- What is really important?
- What troubles you or is unclear?
- Is it yet a document we can all take out to our PCCs?

Context

We all know the challenges facing the church locally and nationally so, as mentioned at the last Synod, one of the key exercise in these preparatory sessions was to look ahead five years and imagine the position if we change nothing. This picture was not encouraging overall in terms of mission, local church leadership, funding and wider activity.

So the plan focuses on things we need to do together to create a more positive five-year outcome and beyond. It aims to be positive but realistic, expecting in many respects that small incremental changes will make a longer term difference but also proposing some bolder moves that may take us forward more quickly. There will be times of transition before we arrive at whatever we agree are our goals.

Stroud Deanery Strategic Plan - Second Draft April 2022

OUR VISION

The Deanery seeks to inspire, resource and support renewal; to set a higher bar in holiness and service; to release and enable worshipping communities to be what God has called them to be.

We aim to achieve:

- **We will encourage a narrative of abundance rather than scarcity**
- **We will seek to have mutually flourishing and viable worshipping communities**
- **We seek to have our clergy resourced and released for ministry**
- **We need buildings that serve our ministry and mission**

And to do this through engagement and consultation with the people in the pews so that the vision is owned by all and actions are locally generated or locally informed.

What can be done together to help achieve the vision?

1. A narrative of abundance rather than scarcity

- Start the conversations being hopeful and trusting, rather than pessimistic and negative
- Small incremental changes can have a long term effects
- Notice what God is already doing
- Vision Sharing' time at Chapter
- Share positive stories on the website and on social media of successful things already happening around the Deanery
- Celebrate our different riches
- Some Sundays – all churches to focus on one particular theme – collectively working together, aligned with shared actions
- Dedicated Prayer time – encourage our worshipping communities to actually seek God

2. Mutual flourishing and viable worshipping communities

- Chapter to lead on thinking through what that looks like, encouraging and supporting one another
- Re-introduce 'Green Shoots' item at Deanery Synod in some form that links to the vision
- Sharing accountability for resolving the Parish Share deficit
- Deanery financial champions' group – develop collegiate responsibility and shared solutions through quarterly or six monthly meetings supported by Area Dean, Lay Chair and Finance Lead Asst Area Dean
- Engaging with Stewardship/ Parish Giving Scheme; sharing good practice; helpful ideas
- Talk about money

3. Clergy resourced and released for ministry

- Consider more joint functions at Deanery level or groups of benefices e.g. hall bookings, funerals, weddings
- Possible Deanery Funeral Project from one central point within the next 5 years
- Joint contracts on general church maintenance, trades people, gutter cleaning etc or at least sharing information about good sources.
- More Deanery events such as Confirmation preparation, Day of Prayer, Lent course, Stewardship course and/or sharing of resources for courses.
- Consider where and how to deploy clergy, rethinking the way stipendiary clergy are supported and resourced
- Share tasks so clergy and laity all do what they are called to do, and are trained in those shared roles
- Think about function rather than place
- Diversity within the leadership team

4. Buildings that serve our ministry and mission

- Develop a Deanery Vision for our physical buildings that thinks creatively about how we get our buildings to serve our purposes for mission and ministry
- Set out the options for all our buildings in discussion with the local communities which might include
 - Continuing in current pattern of use
 - Identifying additional uses
 - Identifying alternative uses where current pattern can't be sustained
 - Building closure
- Consider identifying a Deanery Buildings Advisor (voluntary)
- There needs to be a Diocesan Corporate Strategy to support delivery of this approach.