



Derby Diocesan Board of Finance  
**Impact report 2025**

**The Kingdom of God - Good News for All**  
Transformed lives | Growing Church | Building community



# Opening words

## Rt Rev Jackie Searle

### Acting Bishop of Derby



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*For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another*

Romans 12: 4-5 (NRSV)

These words from Romans are particularly apt for the season that we are in as you read these pages. Whilst I wasn't in the Diocese of Derby for the period that this report covers, I can see so well how different parts of the body work together, drawing on one another's gifts and experience, with different perspectives and traditions – all in pursuit of our common goal to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in our communities.

We do not do this on our own. We have our partners in ministry and mission and each other, and we have the Holy Spirit sustaining and inspiring us as we seek to serve the body of Christ, which is the Church, and the world around us.

Please read this report prayerfully and be encouraged in the work that we do together to bring about the kingdom of God in the places where God has called us.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**+Jackie**



Mundy Thursday Chrism Service, Derby Cathedral

# Thank you for reading

This Annual Impact Report describes the work of the Parish Support Team – those employed by the Derby Diocesan Board of Finance – during 2025. But the impact described in these pages does not belong to one team alone.

What you will read here has grown out of the shared life of churches, leaders and communities across our diocese. It reflects the faithfulness of local churches responding to their contexts, the care and courage of lay and ordained leaders, and the quieter work of those whose role is to support, resource and hold things together.

Different parts play different roles, but all belong to the same body. When one part is strengthened, others benefit. When one part is under strain, the effects are felt more widely. This report tells the story of how we have sought to play our part well, so that mission and ministry can flourish in every place.

**Will Hagger**  
Diocesan Secretary



# What we are here for

What we do in every part of the diocese is shaped by our God-given sense of purpose and calling as his people. We are seeking, together, to join in with what God is already doing as His Kingdom grows in our communities. That shared direction helps us stay clear not only about what we are trying to do, but also about how and why we do it.

The Parish Support Team uses a simple, shared way of talking about this. It helps us be deliberate and consistent in our decisions, planning and use of resources, and it gives us common language to use across very different contexts.

At its heart, this approach holds three things together. First, it focuses on what we are here to enable. This includes missional outcomes like making new disciples, deepening relationships with God, serving local communities, and challenging injustice. But it also includes some of the pillars of what it means to be good stewards of what God has given us: sustaining our resources, equipping our people, and shaping our structures and culture. These are not abstract ideas. They describe the kinds of change we hope to see taking

root in our central support team and in parish life over time.

Second, it pays careful attention to how we do our work. The way we act, make decisions and relate to one another matters. Planning well, working collaboratively, acting with care and honesty, and paying attention to people and context are all part of working in a way which is faithful to our values as an organisation.

Third, it helps us stay connected to why we do this at all. Everything points back to our shared vision of the Kingdom of God being good news for all.

We want this sense of intentionality to take root across the whole diocese, in every bit of this ecosystem, organism, body - however it's helpful to think about it. That includes PCCs, deaneries, schools and chaplaincies, senior clergy, all of us. Using shared language helps us see how different roles and responsibilities fit together, so that together we can resource mission with confidence and purpose.



Hall Leys Park, Matlock

# Our diocese

When we use the word “diocese”, people hear different things. Some think of a central office, or the Bishop’s team. Others think of the geographical area we cover. Both those things are true in part, but they don’t get to the heart of what the diocese is.

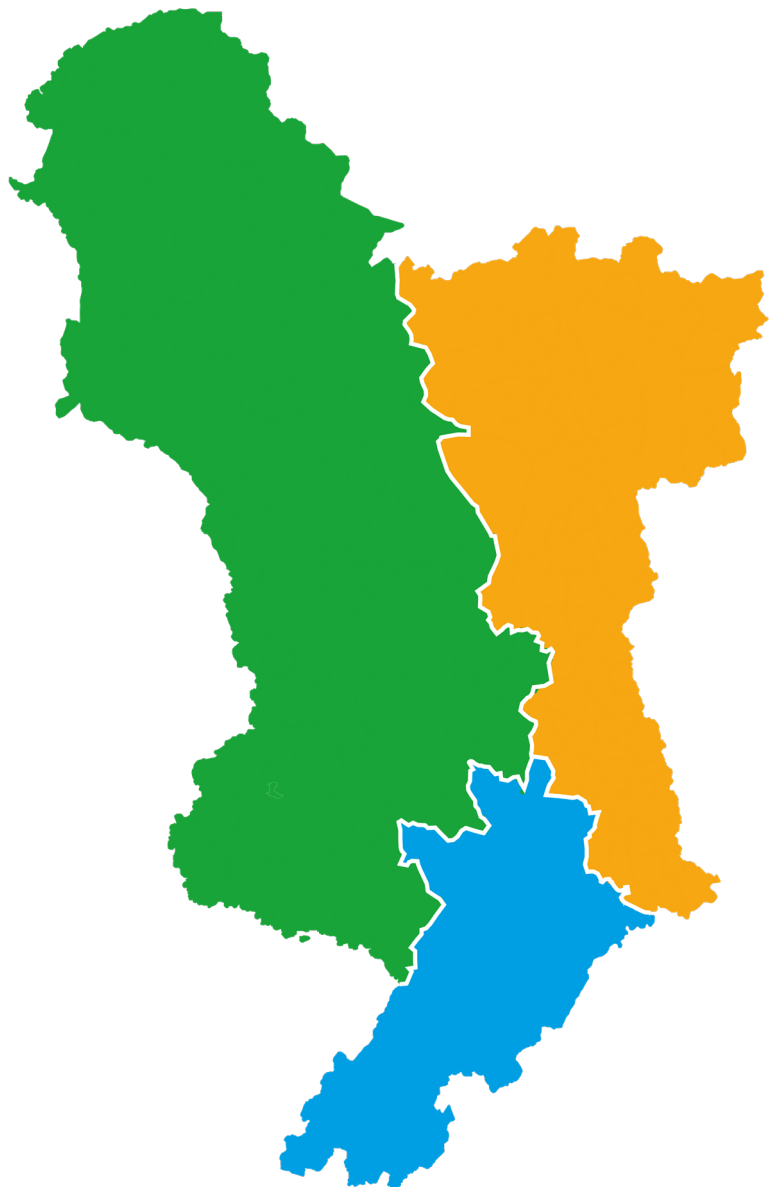
The Diocese of Derby is the whole Church of England ecosystem in this region. It is the rich patchwork of local parish churches, schools, chaplaincies, volunteers, clergy and lay leaders, PCCs, synods, and so on – all supported pastorally and practically by bishops and archdeacons and the central Parish Support Team. Each part and each person has a different role in making the whole ecosystem work well.

Churches serve local communities, grow leaders, and share the Kingdom of God with those around them. The Parish Support Team carries shared responsibilities on behalf of the whole diocese, including safeguarding, finance, housing, governance, legal processes, church buildings support, communications, mission support, and more.

These are not separate worlds. They are parts of one body. Local ministry depends on shared systems and processes working well in the background. Central support only exists to enable confident, healthy leadership and growth in local churches. When one part is strengthened, others benefit too.

This Impact Report focuses on the work and impact of the Parish Support Team. But to do this, we also celebrate the flourishing of local mission and initiative. This isn’t to claim credit for what happens in local churches – it’s to tell the story of how shared support, structures, and resources help create the conditions in which local mission can flourish.

When churches are able to respond to their communities, when leaders are supported, and when safeguarding, finance and buildings are working well, those are signs of a healthy diocesan ecosystem. This report is about how we resource mission together.





Confirmations on Holy Saturday, St Werburgh's, Spondon

# Making new disciples

In 2025, we focused on supporting parishes to share faith beyond the people already our churches, and to do so in ways that felt realistic, relational and sustainable.

We invested in new worshipping communities and 'mixed-ecology'. A "New Worshipping Communities" training pathway was developed for Licensed Lay Ministers (Readers), alongside training delivered for LLM(R)s, curates and the estates network.

We supported groups of leaders to start [Fresh Expressions – movements of Christians who establish and grow new Christian communities where they don't yet exist](#) – in Mercia and Derby City Deaneries, including facilitator training for three people. We also brought leaders together

## At a glance

- 100+ leaders engaged through Growing Younger conference and deanery wide training
- 2 deaneries supported to develop Fresh Expressions through Greenhouse training
- 55 GodSend manuals distributed and 100 per cent Statistics for Mission data achieved

through two diocesan mixed ecology events attended by 57 people. We strengthened confidence in everyday evangelism. We distributed 55 GodSend training manuals to parishes, supporting local leaders to talk about faith in clear and accessible ways. We reinforced shared learning and accountability by achieving 100 per cent completion of Statistics for Mission data across the diocese.

[Our Growing Younger priority](#) was a central part of disciple making. A Growing Younger Conference brought together over 100 clergy and lay leaders, supported by six deanery wide training sessions. Ten clergy took part in Youthscape Launchpad training, and young adults were embedded in local churches through the Ministry Experience Scheme, contributing to worship, outreach and community life.

This work focused on equipping people and creating shared pathways, rather than running programmes from the centre. It depended on parishes offering time, leaders sharing learning, and resources being held in common so that confidence and capacity could grow across different contexts.

More about Fresh Expressions at [bit.ly/dd25freshexpressions](https://bit.ly/dd25freshexpressions)  
More about Growing Younger at [bit.ly/dd25growingyounger](https://bit.ly/dd25growingyounger)

# Deepening our relationships with God

In 2025, the Parish Support Team focused on supporting prayerful, attentive faith in ways that strengthen discipleship, leadership and long-term ministry across the diocese.

Churches across the diocese marked the Thy Kingdom Come season, and these efforts were supported by the Parish Support Team. This included bishop visits to parishes and schools in places such as Carsington, Bonsall, Wirksworth, Elton and Kirk Ireton, alongside a diocesan day of prayer and reflection on the Lord's Prayer held at St John's Walton in June. The Parish Support Team enabled this work through planning, coordination and shared resources, allowing participation across different contexts.

[Discerning vocation was a significant part of deepening faith](#) during the year. The vocations team responded to 36 new enquiries and welcomed 19 people to a Vocations Exploration Day at Darley Dale. Across the year, 69 candidates were supported through shared discernment

processes, including 40 exploring ordained ministry and 23 discerning licensed lay ministry. Eight candidates were recommended for ordination training at national selection panels, all of whom took up places at theological colleges in September. Alongside this, 16 people attended pre-Stage 1 discernment evenings and eight were supported through practice Stage 2 panels. All this is significant because it's bucking the national trend of decreasing numbers exploring vocations.

[The Diocesan Spirituality Group](#), supported through diocesan structures, also contributed through daily and monthly prayer prompts, two Quiet Days, a 24-hour online retreat, and an Art of Spiritual Accompaniment course attended by 15 participants.

We also promoted the Church of England's Living Hope Lent resources, and Growing Younger work supported spiritual depth across generations through intergenerational worship and faith at home.

## At a glance

- 69 candidates explored their calling through shared discernment processes
- 8 candidates were recommended for ordination and took up places at theological colleges
- 15 people trained in spiritual accompaniment by Diocesan Spirituality Group, supported by 6 experienced directors

More about vocations at [bit.ly/dd25vocation](https://bit.ly/dd25vocation)  
More about The Diocesan Spirituality Group at [bit.ly/dd25spirituality](https://bit.ly/dd25spirituality)



Christmas Lunch on Jesus, St Peter's in the City

# Challenging injustice

Challenging injustice is a vital expression of our commitment to the Kingdom of God. In 2025, the Parish Support Team focused on areas where injustice is particularly visible in our context: climate injustice, racial injustice, and barriers faced by disabled people and those with additional needs.

Much of this impact is indirect. The Parish Support Team does not run most local projects. Our role is to enable churches and diocesan groups to act with confidence, clarity and care.

Climate change continues to affect poorer communities most severely. In response, we [supported churches to engage with the Church of England's Net Zero programme](#). This included training for curates and diocesan staff, practical guidance on reducing energy use, and hands-on support for churches planning decarbonisation and grant funding. In 2025, 63 per cent of parishes engaged with the Energy Footprint Tool. This work helped churches reduce costs, lower environmental impact and strengthen their local witness. Improvements were also made to houses owned by the DDBF, including the delivery of the diocese's first fully net zero vicarage in Melbourne.

Racial justice work also progressed during the year. We secured just over £245,000 of national funding to support a three-year project working

with children and young people in the least diverse parts of the diocese. While this work will be delivered through schools and churches, the Parish Support Team's role has been to secure funding, employ staff, ensure safeguarding and governance, and embed this work sustainably rather than as a one-off initiative.

Removing barriers to participation remains a shared priority. The [Disability Inclusion Action Group \(DIAG\) plays an important role in shaping diocesan practice](#), including leading nationally-funded work on accessibility symbols to help churches communicate clearly how accessible they are. The Parish Support Team supports this work by providing governance, staff time, safeguarding oversight and system support that allows groups like DIAG to function well and have impact across the diocese.

## At a glance

- 63% of parishes engaged with climate action through the Energy Footprint Tool
- £245,000 secured to invest in racial justice work with children and young people
- First fully net zero vicarage delivered in Melbourne

More about environment and net zero at [bit.ly/dd25creationcare](https://bit.ly/dd25creationcare)  
More about DIAG at [bit.ly/dd25disabilityinclusion](https://bit.ly/dd25disabilityinclusion)

# Serving our local contexts

Churches across Derbyshire continued to respond in practical ways to the pressures facing their communities throughout 2025. Much of this work focused on meeting immediate need, often quietly and consistently, through food support, warm spaces, debt advice, pastoral care and community activities.

This work belongs to local churches and partners. The Parish Support Team's role sits largely behind the scenes. We support ordained ministry, carry safeguarding and legal responsibilities, manage finance and housing, [provide grants and funding](#), and maintain the shared infrastructure that allows local response to continue over time.

Examples help make this visible. In Derby, churches working together through Alvaston Churches Together partnered with Jubilee Debt Advice to provide food support, debt and benefits advice, and activities for families. Across the city and county, churches offered warm spaces and community living rooms, providing safe places with hot food and practical support during the colder months. Public directories such as Feeding Derbyshire show that many foodbanks and pantries are hosted in, or supported by, parish churches.

The DDBF also provided £25,000 of funding during the year to [Derbyshire Rural Chaplaincy](#), helping sustain pastoral care and mental health support within agricultural communities facing isolation and pressure.

These examples are illustrative, not exhaustive. They show how local churches are serving their communities in many different ways. The Parish Support Team's impact lies in holding the shared systems, safeguarding, governance and finance that allow this local service to continue safely and sustainably.

## At a glance

- Churches across the diocese supporting communities through food provision, warm spaces and practical care
- £25,000 provided to support Derbyshire Rural Chaplaincy
- Parish Support Team enabling local response through safeguarding, legal, finance and housing support

More about funding at [bit.ly/dd25grants](https://bit.ly/dd25grants)  
More about Derbyshire Rural Chaplaincy at [bit.ly/dd25ruralchaplaincy](https://bit.ly/dd25ruralchaplaincy)



## Spotlight on safeguarding

Safeguarding is integral to the health, credibility and mission of the Church. In 2025, strengthening safeguarding remained a central priority for the Parish Support Team, not as a standalone function, but as part of our wider commitment to protect the vulnerable, challenge injustice and build safer cultures across the diocese.

Safeguarding is not the responsibility of a single team or role. Safeguarding is everybody's business, and it depends on shared vigilance, confidence and trust at every level of church life.

During the year, we received and managed 300 new safeguarding concerns, with a noticeable increase in higher threshold cases requiring oversight through the Safeguarding Case Management Group (SCMG). This increase does not simply reflect rising levels of harm. It is also a sign of progress. As the safeguarding team has become more visible, accessible and trusted, people in parishes have been more willing and able to raise concerns, seek advice and act early.

This is a vital marker of a strengthening safeguarding culture.

In response to the complexity of casework, we strengthened team capacity and embedded the Managing Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations Code of Practice, which came into force in September 2025. This has ensured consistent, robust practice across all casework, aligned with national expectations. Safeguarding oversight continued to be embedded within diocesan governance, with regular reporting through advisory and decision making bodies.

***“Throughout the year, we continued to prioritise victim and survivor support”***

# Safeguarding update

Hannah Cliff  
Safeguarding Support Officer

Parish Support Team meeting

Alongside casework, we focused on strengthening systems and support for parishes. A significant development during the year was the transfer of DBS processing to Thirtyone:eight, streamlining processes and improving support for local churches.

Working in partnership with Clearly Simpler, we also developed a Safeguarding Hub for the Parish Support Team, bringing DBS and training data into one place for licensed clergy, those with Permission to Officiate and Licensed Lay Ministers (Readers), with further staff groups due to be added in early 2026.

Supporting Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) remained a key priority. Uptake of PSO induction training increased, alongside monthly meetings and bespoke sessions focused on areas such as fraud awareness, dashboards and use of the Safeguarding Hub. This reflects our commitment to equipping and valuing those who hold safeguarding responsibility locally.

The diocesan Safeguarding Sunday, held at St John's Walton in November 2025, further reinforced safeguarding as a core part of discipleship and community life.

Throughout the year, we continued to prioritise victim and survivor support, providing a robust response in line with national guidance and actively incorporating survivor feedback into our developing practice. Work progressed on a diocesan Survivor Strategy, due for launch in early 2026.

Strengthening safeguarding in 2025 has been about more than compliance. It has been about building trust, increasing confidence to act, and embedding the shared understanding that safeguarding underpins mission, credibility and the flourishing of all.

**Read more about safeguarding, including details about safeguarding training and how to report a safeguarding concern at [derby.anglican.org/safeguarding](https://derby.anglican.org/safeguarding)**

# The unseen work that holds everything together

The Outcomes described above depend on work that is often less visible, but no less important. The Pillars describe the shared responsibilities that help the whole body remain healthy.

Parishes carry significant responsibility, often with limited time and capacity. Clergy and lay leaders hold complex roles. Trustees make weighty decisions. The Pillars are about how we care for what is held in common, so that mission can be sustained not only where capacity is strongest, but everywhere.

In 2025, much of our work focused on people, money, buildings, systems and culture. This was not additional activity. It was the essential work of keeping the diocesan system functioning well enough for local mission to continue.

The sections that follow describe how we focused on equipping our people, sustaining our resources, and shaping our structures and culture.

## Equipping our people



We supported clergy development at scale, with 76 per cent of clergy attending the annual Clergy Conference, and 41 per cent accessing Continuing Ministerial Development support through discretionary CMD, retreat or sabbatical grants. All our curates who completed End of Title Assessment portfolios were signed off into their first posts of responsibility.

We invested in lay leadership. Licensed Lay Minister training led to 12 new licensed Readers and five new students beginning training. Across the Certificate in Theology of Mission and Ministry pathways, we supported 32 students, with 98 per cent positive engagement reported. Ongoing CMD for LLM(R)s included a focused online workshop, with an average of eight participants each month.

Alongside clergy and lay development, we invested in nurturing future leaders through vocations discernment. During the year, 69 people were supported through discernment for ordained and licensed lay ministry, with eight candidates recommended for ordination training and all taking up places at theological colleges.

We also equipped leaders for work with younger generations. A Growing Younger Conference brought together over 100 clergy and lay leaders, supported by six deanery wide training sessions. A Growing Younger mailing list reached 162 subscribers, with open rates of up to 62.7 per cent. We supported 10 clergy through Youthscape Launchpad training and backed local youth placements through the Ministry Experience Scheme.



## Sustaining our resources


Sustaining ministry across the diocese depends on careful stewardship of shared resources. In 2025, parishes contributed £3.7 million to Common Fund. This is the DDBF's main unrestricted income stream and is essential to sustaining ministry.

Common Fund supports the cost of ministry and diocesan life. This includes stipends, pensions, housing, safeguarding, training, governance and the Parish Support Team functions that serve local churches. Investment income from historic assets also plays a vital role, particularly in funding stipends, alongside Common Fund contributions.

During the year, we began work on a ten-year financial sustainability strategy, supported by the creation of a Financial Strategy Group. We also adopted a Total Return Accounting approach, enabling historic assets to be used more effectively to support ongoing ministry.

Alongside this, work continued on clergy housing and church buildings. Three clergy houses were purchased and surplus properties sold to reinvest in better-fit homes. PCCs were supported with buildings for mission funding and Raymond Ross grants, helping unlock additional external funding for local church buildings.

At parish level, giving through the Parish Giving Scheme and contactless giving continued to grow. These trends matter because they support confidence, planning and the ability to sustain ministry over the long term.



In 2025, we made deliberate changes to structures and culture, recognising that how we work together shapes trust and sustainability.

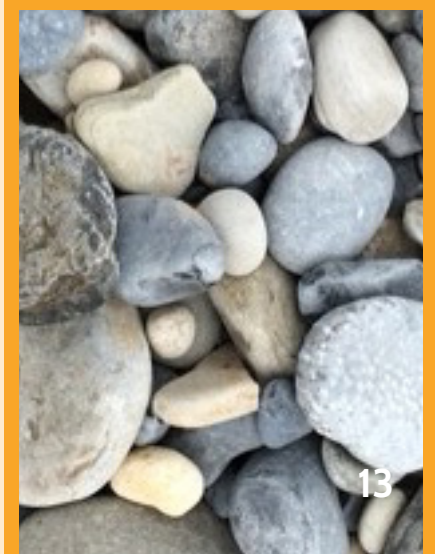
We combined Strategy and Communications into a new Strategy and Engagement department, supporting more joined up working and clearer engagement with parishes.

We invested in organisational culture. Our first Parish Support Team staff survey took place in early 2025, with 93 per cent participation. We acted on the findings, focusing on trust, openness and transparency, and feeling valued, and committed to running the survey annually.

We also strengthened governance. A full governance review of the DDBF began in late 2025 to assess whether structures are fit for purpose, proportionate and supportive of strategy. We implemented a Strategy Committee to oversee major programmes and monitor progress against strategic objectives.



## Shaping our structures and culture



# Tough lessons

2025 was a year of significant learning as well as delivery. Some plans did not unfold as expected, and the scale and pace of change placed real pressure on people and shared ways of working. These experiences sharpened our understanding of readiness, sustainability and pace, and reminded us that lasting impact depends on realistic ambition, resilient foundations and shared responsibility.



Worship at Diocesan Synod

## 1. Diocesan Investment Programme did not progress as expected

### What happened

Much of our early 2025 planning assumed the submission of a substantial Diocesan Investment Programme bid, with Growing Younger activity at its heart. Changes in the national process, combined with a much smaller funding allocation than anticipated, meant this bid was paused and ultimately not submitted. This required a significant reset partway through the year, after considerable preparatory work had already taken place.

### What we learned

National funding processes can shift rapidly and late, even after extensive engagement. Strategy needs to remain viable when external funding assumptions fall away. This reinforced the importance of holding ambition alongside financial realism, and of prioritising work that can proceed sustainably without dependence on large national grants.

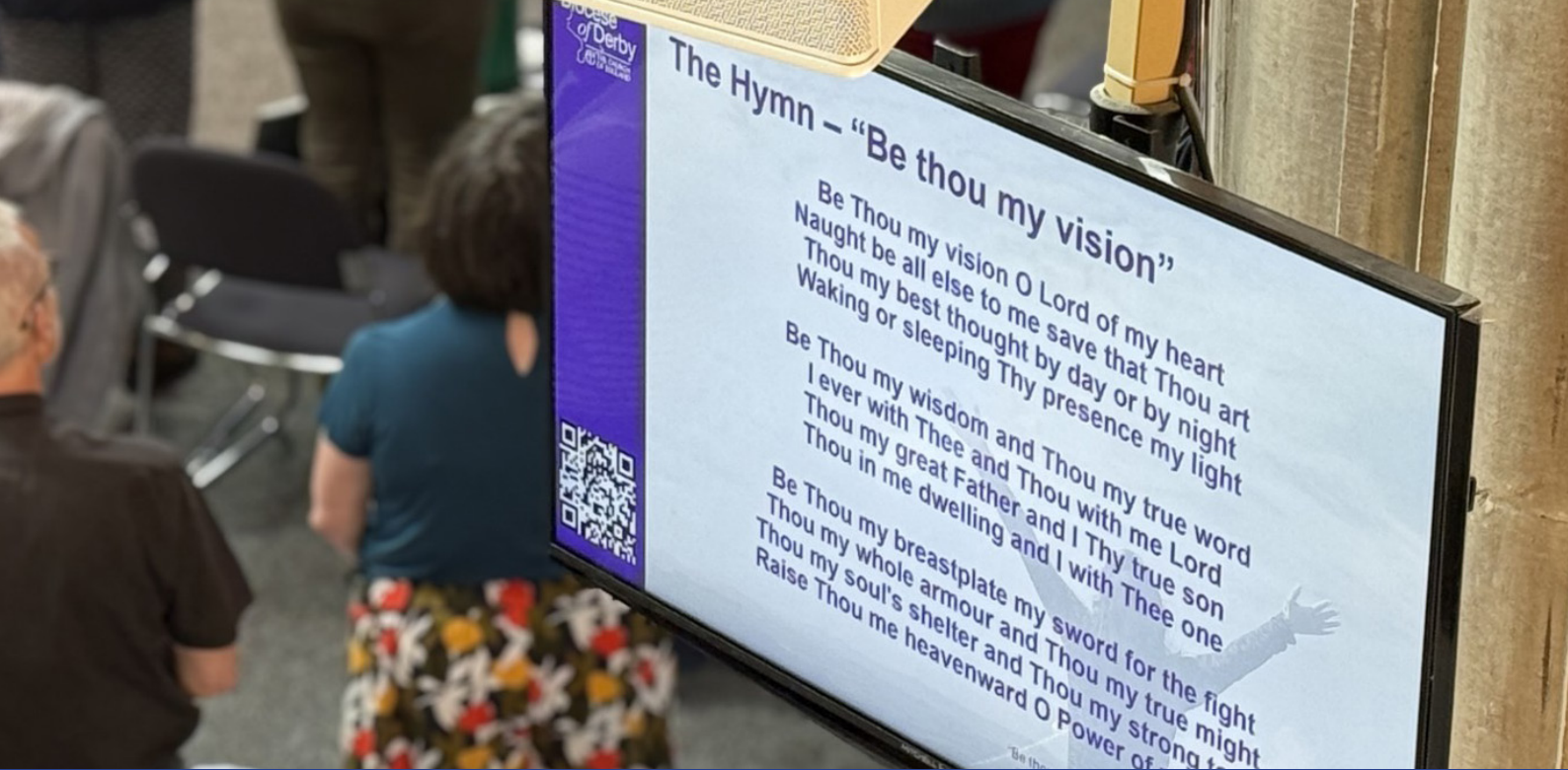
## 2. Growing Younger initiatives progressed more slowly and unevenly than planned

### What happened

Growing Younger work, including Growing Faith Networks and the FLOURISH pilots, proved harder to establish and sustain than expected. Fewer contexts were ready to participate, collaboration across parishes took longer than anticipated, and some initiatives moved into delivery before governance, capacity and relational foundations were secure.

### What we learned

Enthusiasm does not always equal readiness, particularly where shared funding, shared employment or shared oversight are involved. Collaborative models require time, trust and financial resilience at local level. Starting small, focusing on deep discipleship, and ensuring strong local ownership is more effective than aiming to scale quickly across multiple settings.



### 3. The challenging road to Net Zero

#### What happened

In 2025, work continued towards Diocesan Synod's commitment to net zero, supported by significant effort from Parish Support Team staff, including the Net Zero Programme Manager and Diocesan Environmental Officer. We've hit some major milestones, including Bronze Eco-Diocese status in 2024 and completion of the diocese's first fully net zero vicarage in 2025. Even so, progress has been slower and more complex than anticipated.

#### What we learned

Alongside the wider National Church, we are learning that ambitious targets must be held alongside realism about time, cost, capacity and the complexity of historic church buildings. Meaningful progress is being made, but reaching net zero will take longer than early plans suggested. Celebrating tangible steps forward while sustaining long-term commitment will be essential to keeping this work credible and pastorally responsible. developing a more resilient and realistic approach to funding ministry over time.

### 4. The scale and pace of transition placed strain on people and systems

#### What happened

The cumulative impact of restructures, safeguarding system changes, strategic development work and rising operational demand placed strain on staff capacity, governance processes and organisational culture. While progress was made, the year highlighted the cost of trying to deliver too much change at once.

#### What we learned

Significant change requires clearer sequencing, protected capacity and explicit attention to wellbeing and culture. Not everything can be done at the same time without cost to people and quality. Listening mechanisms, such as the first staff survey, proved essential in understanding pressure points and adjusting how change is managed.

# Challenges we are leaning into

## Financial sustainability and shared stewardship

# 1

### The challenge

Across our diocese, financial pressure continues to shape what is possible. Common Fund income has not fully recovered, national funding is time limited, and investment income is exposed to wider market conditions. Together, this makes sustaining ministry a careful balancing act.

While careful stewardship has helped us navigate recent years, it does not remove the deeper challenge of aligning the ongoing cost of ministry with the resources available to support it. This affects confidence, planning horizons and the ability to invest for growth, particularly in places where capacity is already stretched.

### What we're doing about it

We are approaching sustainability as a shared responsibility rather than a technical problem to be solved at the centre. A Financial Strategy Group has been established to explore realistic options for the medium term, reporting through existing governance structures.

Alongside this, we are strengthening longer term planning, making fuller use of tools such as Total Return Accounting, and supporting more open, honest conversations across our churches about affordability, priorities and shared stewardship. These conversations matter because the future shape of ministry depends on them.



# Creating a coherent strategic picture

# 2

## The challenge

As churches, leaders and support teams have responded to multiple priorities and significant change, it has not always been easy to see how different pieces of work fit together. For a long time, this was more than a communication issue.

There was no clear, shared way of describing how priorities connected or how strategy was worked out in practice. Even those closest to the work sometimes struggled to see the whole picture. That lack of shared understanding can slow momentum and weaken confidence.

## What we're doing about it

We are working to strengthen coherence and shared understanding. We are viewing episcopal decisions about the shape of mission, ministry, and deployment as our most important strategic conversations. Alongside this, a governance review is underway to ensure structures are proportionate, transparent and supportive of good decision making.

We are also clarifying how priorities are set, how work is sequenced, and how learning is shared, so that energy is not dispersed and we can see how each of us connects to a shared purpose. This is mainly useful for Parish Support staff and doesn't necessarily need to be the same language used in local churches, but we would now be able to articulate a clear framework of how things fit together if we needed to.

# Holding theological difference and church tradition together within a shared vision

# 3

## The challenge

The Church of England is shaped by a wide range of theological convictions and traditions. National conversations around Living in Love and Faith have brought some of these differences more clearly into view across our diocese. For many people, these questions are deeply personal and pastoral, touching on identity, faith and vocation.

Holding together honesty, trust and commitment in this context requires time, care and attention. Without that, there is a risk that difference becomes a source of fracture rather than a reality we learn to hold well.

## What we're doing about it

Our focus is on nurturing a shared commitment to the Kingdom of God while recognising that unity does not require uniformity. Bishops and archdeacons are prioritising clear communication, pastoral attentiveness and well facilitated conversation, creating space for people to speak honestly and listen well.

The Parish Support Team supports this work quietly and indirectly by sustaining fair processes, healthy structures and safe spaces for dialogue. This helps ensure that difference can be held with care, without undermining our shared life or our common calling.

# Missional trajectory

Across the Diocese of Derby, the missional picture is best described as mixed, uneven – but full of possibility. We serve around 1.1 million people, with a worshipping community of roughly 14,000–14,200, representing about 1.3–1.4% of the population. Recovery since the pandemic has been slower in the Diocese than the national picture, and our worshipping communities remains around 18% smaller than in 2019. Yet the story is not one of decline alone.

There are clear signs of life. Taken together, the Statistics for Mission data from almost every church shows a small but real overall increase in participation over the past three years. Easter attendance rose strongly in 2025, October counts show a modest upward trend, and more than 140 churches report growth in their worshipping community, with over 130 seeing increased adult Sunday attendance. Most encouragingly, children and young people represent the strongest area of growth. Where churches have invested intentionally in younger generations, participation has often increased by 10–15%, reminding us that focused mission bears fruit.

At the same time, we are confronted with a serious challenge. Formal membership is under

pressure. The full revision of the electoral roll in 2025 resulted in widespread falls, with a typical church seeing a decline of around 10%. Many congregations are fragile: a significant number gather fewer than fifteen adults on a Sunday, and most sit below the level widely associated with long-term sustainability. Leaders are stretched, capacity is thin, and in many places the energy for outward-facing mission is easily exhausted.

Growth is also unevenly distributed. A relatively small number of churches account for much of the increase we see, while many others are holding on rather than moving forward. If we simply continue as we are, the likely outcome over the next decade is a Church that remains faithful but becomes smaller, older, and less able to reach new people.

That future, however, is not inevitable. The evidence points clearly to what makes a difference: stable and confident leadership, sufficient lay capacity, collaboration and shared resources, and a willingness to try new things. Where churches are open to working collaboratively together, change and are intentional about mission, growth is already happening.



Ordination at Holy Trinity and Christ Church, Chesterfield



Stained glass window at Derby Cathedral

# Financial trajectory

The financial story of the diocese is fundamentally about 'Resourcing Mission Together'. Through the DDBF, just over £10 million is stewarded each year to support ministry, safeguarding, training, housing and parish support, all in service of the diocesan Vision and Outcomes.

In 2025, this included £3.7 million of Common Fund, around £1.9 million of investment income, and significant national funding. Despite this, DDBF planned for and managed an operating deficit of just under £0.5 million, reflecting a structural imbalance rather than a failure of control. Common Fund income remains around £1 million below pre pandemic levels, while costs have continued to rise.

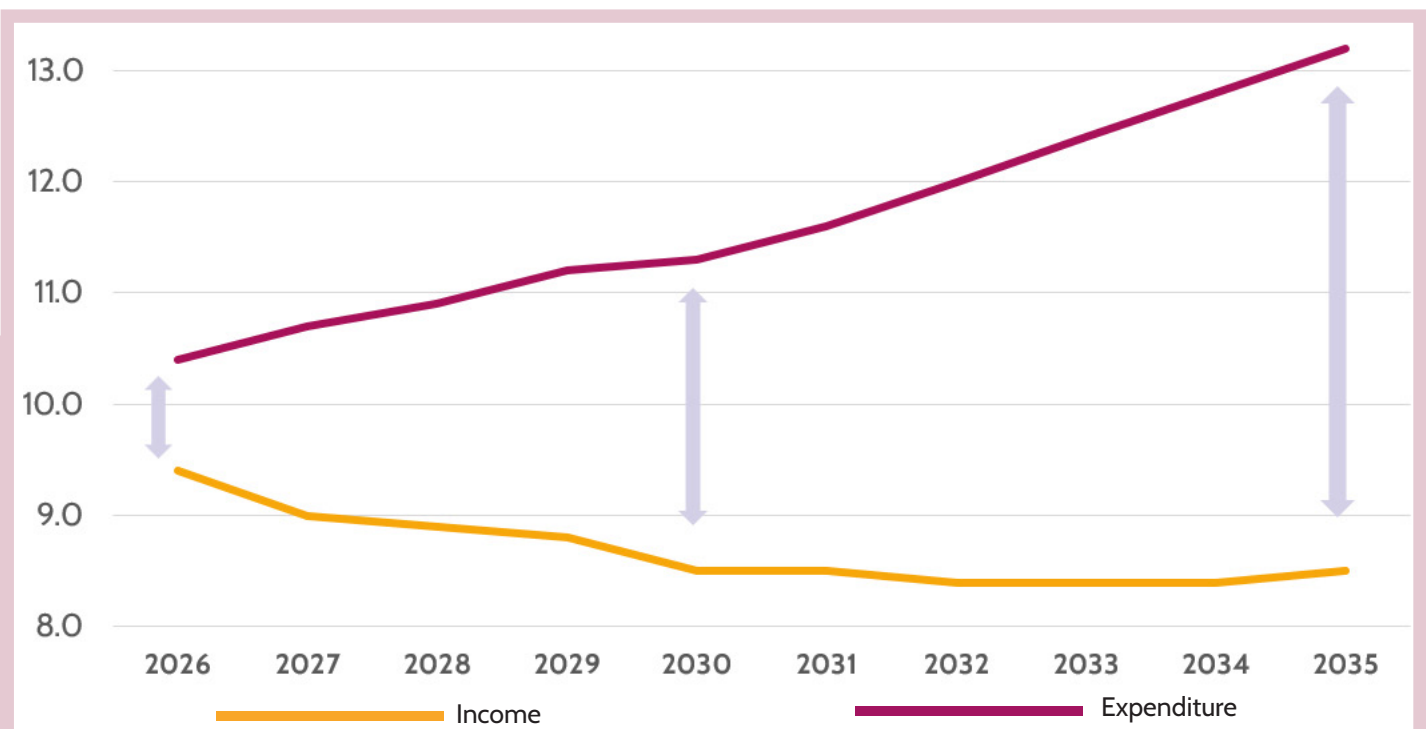
The cost base is largely fixed. Around three quarters of all expenditure is tied directly to frontline mission and ministry, including stipends, pensions, housing, training and safeguarding. These costs do not flex easily when income falls. Reserves and investment income have therefore

been used deliberately to bridge the gap, supported by a total return approach to releasing income from historic assets.

If current trajectories continue, the next two years remain manageable but fragile. Planned deficits can be covered, but with reducing headroom and increasing sensitivity to shocks. By five years, reserves would be significantly depleted and financial decisions would increasingly become deployment decisions, shaping where and how ministry is sustained.

Over ten years, the position becomes unsustainable. Without a step change in generosity, growth or deployment, the Church would need to operate at a significantly smaller scale, aligned much more tightly to recurring income.

The conclusion is clear: finances matter because mission matters. The future shape of the diocese will be determined by whether we can continue to resource God's mission together.





# The importance of Common Fund

Church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, Edale

Common Fund is one of the most tangible expressions of the diocese resourcing mission together. Through it, parishes pool resources so that ordained ministry, training, housing and support can be sustained across every community. These contributions are received, held and deployed by the Derby Diocesan Board of Finance (DDBF) on behalf of the diocesan family.

In 2025, parishes contributed around £3.7 million to Common Fund. This funded approximately 45% of the core cost of mission and ministry, including the stipends, pensions and housing of clergy serving across the diocese. In 2026, the total cost breakdown to pay, house, train and support each full time stipendiary priest is approximately £95,000, a figure that makes clear both the scale and the commitment involved.

If current trajectories continue, the implications are significant. Over the next five years, Common

Fund will remain central to bridging the gap between the cost of ministry and available resources. Over ten years, if generosity does not grow, pressure would increasingly be felt in deployment, support services and the capacity to invest in new discipleship initiatives. Beyond that, the overall scale of ministry we can sustain in our diocese would be fundamentally shaped by the strength or weakness of Common Fund.

Common Fund therefore represents more than a financial mechanism. It embodies a shared theological commitment to mutual responsibility. Parishes contribute according to capacity, shaped by context and deprivation, and in return every parish benefits from shared ministry, oversight and support. Strengthening Common Fund is not about institutional survival, but about ensuring that together we can continue to proclaim the Kingdom of God, make new disciples and serve our communities for generations to come.



# Resourcing Mission Together

We have created this Impact Report because we believe deeply that what you have read here is only possible when we choose to resource mission together.

The Parish Support Team exists to serve the ministry of local churches, not to replace it. Alongside the pastoral leadership of bishops and archdeacons, and the faithful work of lay and ordained leaders in parishes, our role is to help hold the wider picture, especially when capacity is stretched or pressure is shared. Different roles, one body.

Much of what sustains mission is easy to overlook. Safeguarding, governance, finance, training,

housing and collaboration do not exist for their own sake. They exist so that churches can focus their energy on prayer, discipleship, service and witness in their own communities.

***“The Parish Support Team exists to serve the ministry of local churches, not to replace it.”***



Resourcing mission together depends on trust, honesty and shared responsibility. Common Fund is one of the clearest expressions of that commitment. It allows ministry to be sustained across our diocese, not only in places with the greatest capacity, and it enables longer term decisions rather than year to year survival. We also want to hear from you. Your insight and experience matter. Tell us what is working, where support could be better, and where change is needed. Be bold in the conversations you have locally, championing the message that we all need to play our part. This shared life only holds together

when we listen well, learn from one another, and take responsibility together. Resourcing mission together is not about institutional survival. It is about faithfulness, mutual care and hope. It is about the choices we make, individually and together, to steward what God has entrusted to us so that the good news of the Kingdom can continue to be proclaimed, here and now, and for generations to come.

## Who are the Parish Support Team?

The Parish Support Team supports and resources the flourishing of Christian leaders and Anglican communities of faith across the diocese. As we do this, we're working to shape culture and to be the Kingdom of God – Good News for All.

The Parish Support Team is everyone employed by the Derby Diocesan Board of Finance (DDBF).

You can find out more about us, including names, faces and contact details, on the diocesan website using the QR code or visiting [bit.ly/parishsupportteam](https://bit.ly/parishsupportteam)



## The Diocese of Derby Vision Prayer

Gracious God,  
in your mercy, and for your glory,  
renew us, reshape us, revive us -  
with generous faith, courageous hope, and life-giving love -  
that, in transformed lives,  
through growing church and building community,  
we may see your Kingdom come  
and be good news for all.  
Amen.



Derby Diocesan Board of Finance  
Derby Church House  
Full Street,  
Derby DE1 3DR

01332 388650  
Website: [derby.anglican.org](https://derby.anglican.org)  
Email: [enquiries@derby.anglican.org](mailto:enquiries@derby.anglican.org)