



MAP for Derby Diocese developing a new worshipping community

introduction

This document outlines you will need to consider when starting a project that is intended to lead toward the creation of a new worshipping community. It has two main purposes:

1. To help you prayerfully consider some key areas as you plan the development of the new worshipping community, and to help you to make some key choices (or at least know what those key choices should be).
2. To help you to communicate to others, usually in the form of a proposal document, the vision you have for the creating the new worshipping community, how you intend to go about developing it, what resources and support you expect to need and from where you are intending that they should come.

There are many ways of going about the development of a new worshipping community. This document is designed to be as open and flexible as possible, so that it can be applied to any type of new worshipping community and any recognised methodology of developing one. Therefore, it is necessarily 'generic' and can't provide a step by step guide. You may also need to adapt the language used to reflect the nature of your own project.

For that reason, it's important that you are not daunted by the various sections and considerations here. Not all of them will be required at the same level for every project – a large traditional church plant will have very different needs to a small local fresh expression of church.

However, **you are urged to consider every section of this document in relation to your own project** and, if you do not address a section, ensure that this is because it truly does not apply, not simply that it seems difficult to address. It is much easier to consider your way forward early, rather than be faced with needing to make complex decisions quickly or react to a difficult situation caused by lack of adequate planning.

You will quickly discover that this document is not a 'pro-forma' to be completed; the wide range of styles and types of project makes this impossible. However, if it is helpful to do so, you may like to reflect the structure of sections in this document in any proposal form that you draw up for others.

Each section looks at a different aspect of any new project, outlining the sorts of decisions you might need make concerning it and the type of information you might need to supply to those whose support you are seeking.

project overview and vision

It is good to have a well-defined overview of the project in mind. This is really a summary of the overall aims and nature of the project that will be fleshed out in later sections. When writing a proposal, this will introduce the project to others. In your own mind, it will serve to distil and clarify the nature and vision of the project. The exercise of this distillation often helps to ensure that you understand clearly the core of what God is calling you to.

Name

The name may change as the project develops, but it will help those that are discussing the project to refer to it easily. It may be functional or seek to capture the imagination, but names are powerful; the choice of the right name can convey quickly and easily the vision and character of the project.

Brief description

In a short paragraph, encapsulate what the project is to be or achieve. Restricting yourself to a short paragraph can help to distil for yourself the essence of the project, and helps others discussing the project capture it easily.

Vision

Here is where you can flesh out your picture of what the project will become. This won't include how you're going to go about developing the project (that will come later); this sets out what you feel God is calling you and others to achieve. A part of your vision should always be the creation of a worshipping community, but there are likely also to be other ways in which the new worshipping community will love and serve its host context.

Depending on the project type (see below), you may not be able to describe what any new worshipping community will look like in detail, but work to include as much as you can at this stage without curtailing the creativity and responsiveness of the project.

Context

Give an overall description of the context in which the new worshipping community will be developed. This might include a description of the geographical area, defining where it is and its characteristics. It will certainly include a description of the people whom the new worshipping community is designed to serve and include.

Specifically here, you will need consider whether a Bishops' Mission Order¹ may be required. If you are in any doubt, seek help from the Parish Support Office.

¹ A Bishop's Mission Order (BMO) is used to licence an ordained minister for mission and ministry outside the confines of a single parish, either because the context is not geographical, spans across parishes or is outside the normal parish work of its context.

leadership

Project leader

This person is the primary point of contact and the person who will have overall responsibility for the project. You should be able to identify them, and it should be an individual, not a team. If you are making a proposal, contact details should be included so that further information may be sought if necessary; a minimum of email address and a phone number should be supplied.

Project leader's current role and relevant experience

Whilst this is not meant to be a CV, it is helpful to consider anything about the project leader that makes them a good choice for leading the project, so experience and training in leading congregations, groups and churches, familiarity with the context etc. If their current role and responsibilities are relevant, you may wish to include it here. This will give an indication of the areas in which the project leader may require further support, experience and training.

Project leader's location

Whether the project leader is to be resident or will commute into the area (in the case of a geographical catchment for the worshipping community), and also whether the project leader is an incomer or indigenous to the area, will make a significant difference to the time it takes to gain a deep understanding of the context and to build relationships within it, and will therefore influence your project plan (see below). Indigenous leaders who are resident within the host community will have a stronger understanding of the context and more established community relationships, and this will shorten the lead time in *listening* and *building community*.

Project leader's availability and position within the church

How much time is the project leader able to dedicate to activities related to the project, i.e. are they full time, or part time (an indication of hours per week)? What level of authorisation is envisaged for the leader (i.e. ordained or lay; licenced, authorised or recognised²)? Again, these things will influence what can be achieved in a given timescale. It is important that the overall project leader has the recognised and public authority of the wider church in some shape or form.

Project core leadership team

The project should have a core leadership team in order to provide a range of gifts and experience and to ensure local support and accountability within the project. This team should consist of *at least three others*, in addition to the project leader, who will be *actively involved* in the leadership of the project. For the purpose of project resilience, spouse's contributions are valued and welcomed but, if envisaged, they would be extra to this core leadership team.

For each person, names, contact details and information about their current role and envisaged time commitment to the project should be considered and included in any proposal. There should also be an indication of the support they have from their 'sending' local church (i.e. support from incumbent) as well as the experience they have in leadership in a church context.

² Licenced ministers are recognised nationally, usually through a panel for ordained or lay ministry. Authorised ministers are recognised at the diocesan level. Recognised ministers have a local recognition, usually at parish or deanery level. Locally recognised lay ministers should not be undervalued; many fresh expressions of church are led by lay-lay leaders (a term coined to refer to lay ministers with no 'official' training by the church).

Training

Here you should consider and identify what training relevant to the project members of the project team have attended, preferably together but also individually. This will then help you to decide what training might still need to be arranged for the team. You will need to establish plans to provide this training.

Governance / leadership structure

Parish churches have a specific governance structure, with a PCC and wardens and other office holders. Clearly, this structure is not appropriate for many new worshipping communities; however, a leadership structure of some sort will be required from the start, in order to make sure that decisions are made in a responsible way and that resources are appropriately stewarded.

At minimum, it should be clear how decisions are made and authority / responsibility situated within the leadership team.

Support

Sending / sponsoring church(es)

You will need to seek other local churches that will support the project. Such support should ideally be public and explicit, in the form of either letters of support or PCC resolution. At minimum, there should be specific commitment for the local church(es) to support the project in prayer.

Oversight and support structures

Identify what oversight and support structures need to be in place from the wider church. This could be at diocesan or deanery level, from the sending church, a council of reference, a board of trustees etc. This is different from the sponsoring churches, but rather are more about accountability.

Finances

The project will need to demonstrate with reasonable confidence that its financial viability has been considered and secured, at least for the first three years. The detail that is required here will obviously vary with the project. Small projects with minimal outgoings will require less than larger projects with higher expenditure. If you are seeking diocesan financial support of any kind, you should have in mind that the Diocese is unlikely to be able to offer subsidy to the project in the long term, so thought should be given at the beginning as to how it will become sustainable in the future.

Financial support

It is important that you consider and identify clearly the expected income and expenditure for the project, in order that you might be good stewards of the resources gifted to you. Adequate income, even if indicative, should be identified to meet all expected expenditure. Assign expenditure and income within the time frame that they will be received / incurred to ensure adequate cash flow.

Income

Identify any *one-off* funding that has been secured for set-up elements of the project. Where you are offering a proposal, show the source, the amount and whether the funding is secured or indicative.

Identify any *ongoing* funding that has been secured. Where you are offering a proposal, show the source, the amount and whether the funding is secure or indicative; in addition, state for how long the funding has been secured.

Indicate any other sources of funding, e.g. stewardship, commercial activity etc.

Expenditure

Identify carefully the predicted expenditure for the project, both one-off and ongoing. Categories to consider might be (indicative only – each project will vary and you will need to identify likely categories of expenditure):

- Buildings: purchase, repair, adaptation, rental
- Staffing (specify)
- Team building and training
- Capital items: A/V, seating, other equipment
- Outreach and mission costs
- Publicity
- Utilities
- Insurance and legal costs

Community listening / contextualisation work

Any proposal for a new worshipping community must be preceded by careful ‘double listening’ – i.e. listening both to the context in which the worshipping community is to be developed as well as listening to the move of the Holy Spirit concerning the worshipping community.

You will need to ensure that this ‘double listening’ has been prayerfully and adequately done, that further required listening is in place and that it adequately supports the project. The sorts of activities might include (not an exhaustive list):

- Interviews / conversations with key community stakeholders
- Mapping exercises
- Prayer events / vision days
- Statistical / informational research
- Conversations / relationships with residents or members of the context community

Worshipping community details

Depending on the character of the new worshipping community and the methodology that is envisaged, it is not expected that there should be a full, detailed and above all fixed view of the worshipping community during its early stages. Not everything can be managed; room to allow the Holy Spirit to move, and for the host context to shape the worshipping community, is essential. However, this cannot be offered as a reason for poor preparation.

Consider and decide, in as much detail as you can at this stage, the sort of worshipping community you to believe God is calling you to create.

The host community

Ensure that you can describe accurately the community which you believe this new worshipping community is called to love and serve. This might be a certain section of a community (e.g. families, those with additional needs etc.) or a geographical area, or both. The judicious use of maps, facts and statistics about the community will be helpful here when communicating with others.

Worshipping community description

Here is an opportunity to 'paint a picture' of what the worshipping community you envisage God is calling you to create will look like. Imagine you are inviting someone to join or visit the worshipping community and they have asked you what to expect – how would you describe it?

At a minimum, you should be considering how often and when the community will gather, both for its primary gatherings and at other times; what such gatherings might look like; the values or rule of life on which the community will be based.

Additionally, there are some well-known and recognised worshipping community types which will clearly identify the type of worshipping community you are called to create. Examples might be:

- café church
- messy church
- missional community
- new monastic community
- traditional church plant

A note of caution; terms such as these can be misunderstood, particularly by those who are not familiar with new worshipping community culture and terminology. It may be wise to include a brief understanding of such terms for those that are unfamiliar with them.

You might also wish to say in what tradition the new worshipping community will sit (without unduly limiting or characterising it):

- conservative / reformed / charismatic / open evangelical
- central / broad church
- liberal / modern / traditional catholic

Again, you may not feel comfortable with using these terms; you may wish to describe the worshipping community in other ways.

Project development plan

It would be foolish to suggest that, at the start of the journey of the creation of a new worshipping community, you should have detailed plans and timescales in place for the next three years fixed in place. However, this cannot be an excuse for not planning at all.

Jesus' ministry was intentional (he always knew his purpose, and where and for what he was destined) but interruptible (he was willing to divert his journey in order to make space for individual and unforeseen encounters).

Project leaders should work to a guide of having a **detailed plan for the first 100 days**, with progressively less detail and more openness to change beyond that. If you are asking for financial support, it's likely that you will need to provide at least outline plans for **up to three years**.

Your development plan should address the following areas:

- **listen**
how you will continue to listen both for the movement of the Holy Spirit and the voice of the host community (you should be well into this stage before being able to speak to all the areas in this guide).
- **loving and serving**
how you will establish your Christian presence in the host community by playing your full part within that community as a group of Christians.

- **building community**
how you will establish a growing community not just from those from the sending Christian community but also increasingly from the wider host community.
- **exploring discipleship**
how you will make the invitation for people to explore faith and discipleship in Jesus Christ; this will include an evangelism strategy.
- **church taking shape**
how you envisage the development of the community exploring discipleship to form into church.
- **doing it again**
how you will plan for and develop indigenous leadership and other structures from the beginning in order to enable the multiplication of the worshipping community.

Those familiar with the development of contextual church will recognise these as the first five stages of the development of a fresh expression of church.

Your project should have a specific vision, something towards which you are working. This may seem like 'telling God what to do' – but given that God has already made it clear that this is his desire and that we are to be the instruments of the building of his church³, it's a safe assumption to make! It is also not unreasonable to seek a Christ-centred vision and be bold in our expectation and prayer for that vision.

The creation of a worshipping community (church) should always be a part of that prayerful, intentional expectation in projects such as these. Church here might be defined as:

a group of Christians predominantly drawn from a discernible neighbourhood culture or network who are led by those with authorization from the wider Church, whose worship and common life includes regular commitment to preaching the Word and to the celebration of the two Dominican sacraments [of Holy Communion and Baptism]

Mission Shaped Church (2 nd Edition), CHP, 2009

In character, the new worshipping community we seek to build should reflect the four characteristics of contextual church:

- **Ecclesial**
A worshipping community in its own right, not just a congregational meeting of another church or a route through for people to church; it offers, in some way, the sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism.
- **Contextual**
Built with the intent of being true to the local culture and is in the language of the people within it. It deliberately avoids culture and language that might exclude those outside church.
- **Missional**
Deliberate about reaching out to those who don't normally come to church and inviting them to be a part of the community and to explore a life of faith and discipleship with Jesus.
- **Formational**
Deliberate about seeing people grow in faith and discipleship through their contact with the worshipping community, and to seeing them come to maturity in that faith and play their full part in the worshipping community.

Specifically, your project plan should address the following areas:

³ Matt 16:18; 28:18ff

Existing and potential openings

Consider where you already have openings into the community, and in which areas are you expecting to develop those openings. These openings might be organisational (e.g. schools, community associations etc.) or personal (e.g. 'persons of peace' outside the church that are sympathetic to the project and are willing to help it succeed). Developing such openings will be essential to any project's success.

Milestones

Consider the specific milestones for the project:

- Soft launch (when intentional activity begins with the project team and within the host community) and what that soft launch will include)
- Hard launch (when the events and activities of the project become regular and open to all in the host community)
- Subsequent event launches, celebrations, significant events
- Training and development
- Missional events and programmes
- Review and decision points

The provision of occasional offices

As people come to faith, there may be opportunities and requests for occasional offices; particularly baptism (and confirmation), but possibly also weddings and funerals. How will such requests be met? Baptisms, and confirmations where possible, are best done within the community, even if with the help of others (to emphasise the fact that this is church), but funerals and weddings might be done through the local parish church and with the help of the wider church / diocese.

Evaluation and review

Consider and decide how and when you will review the progress of the project against its objectives. Specifically, consider:

- Who will assist you in the review to ensure its objectivity and robustness?
- How will you know if you are making progress?

Consider and note now what you perceive to be your most significant challenges; how are you already planning to mitigate and meet these challenges, as much as you can?

Wider team or group

In addition to the core team of leaders for the project (see above), there may well be other who will join the initial group forming the worshipping community. This is greatly dependent on the type of new worshipping community being created. A traditional church plant (sometimes called 'worship first', because it starts through the establishing of a regular public worship event) is likely to have a larger group to establish it. Conversely, a pioneer project or missional community (serving first) is likely to have a much smaller team, seeking to build church from the host community.

Whatever the type of new worshipping community is envisaged for the project, consider the following areas that might need to be covered, and whether the people / skills are required; if so, whether they are already present, and if not, whether you will plan to recruit those with these skills or develop the skills within the existing group:

- Leadership
- Family, youth and children's work
- Musicians
- Intercessors
- Evangelists
- Preachers / teachers
- Community organisers
- Social action
- Administration
- Safeguarding

You may need some or all of these, and the list is not exhaustive; you will need to consider your own requirements, depending on the sort of worshipping community you are seeking to create.

If you need to recruit or develop skills, consider and decide how you will do this and include it in your project plan.