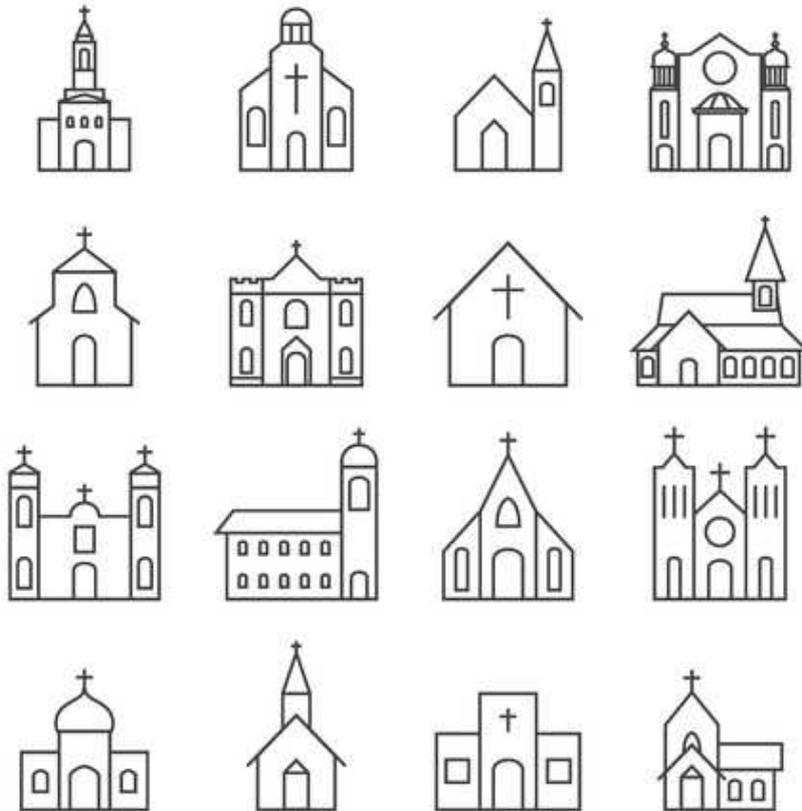




THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

THE DIOCESE OF SODOR AND MAN

2020



Tool kit for the Mission Partnership Councils

This is a tool kit offered to Mission Partnership Councils, PCCs and home groups to help them to explore the Mission of God in their parishes and help the Bishop to develop a sustainable mission and ministry on the island for the rest of the 21st century.

There is some inevitable duplication with the Strategic Review of Church Building Report and that would make essential reading before undertaking this exercise at any level. It is available on the diocesan website or available from the Archdeacon's Office (call 675430 or email archdeaconsec@sodorandman.im)

The Aim of this Toolkit

1. To help each Mission Partnership to meet the diocesan mission priorities of:
 - Working in Partnership
 - Enabling us to operate Sustainably
 - Inhabiting the Gospels, creating disciples.
2. To help Mission Partnership Councils to report to the Implementation Group in order to enable it to identify the various types of churches in our diocese, and to help the Diocesan Synod and its committees align our strategic thinking accordingly.
3. To support PCCs, especially of multi-church benefices, in making better use of the buildings they have to support and enable the mission of God.

Introduction

Parish units aim to have a population of 6,000 people to warrant a full-time stipendiary post. (Even then all stipendiary clergy are expected to have an additional diocesan responsibility amounting to at least 20% of their time). Parishes with much lower populations may have clergy with an agreed much higher percentage of their time associated with diocesan commitments.

The parish need to designate a hub church, which is seen as the key church in the parish essential to the mission of God. Other churches may exist, (if they are affordable to the parish), which have different characteristics, but it will be up to the parish to ensure they pay as a priority their contribution to the 'Shared Ministry fund' (SMF). If they fail to do so they will not be permitted to invest in anything but their hub church and the diocese will negotiate with the parish to seek to release and realise other assets which may include churches and halls to cover the cost of the SMF.

Parishes (as a priority) need to consider if there is duplication of buildings:

- Churches and halls, where one building could fulfil both purposes.
- Might a duplicate building be Let on an advantageous lease to support the parish or sold and the assets realised?
- What might be shared with ecumenical (or other) partners.
- What compatible uses is it possible to put into the buildings you wish to retain.
- How can church buildings be used for more than just Sundays and the odd occasion during the week.
- What are the barriers to you moving forward in making your buildings contribute to mission.

The type of churches within a Mission Partnership might be a variety of the following (see p.8 below for a more detailed account):

- A. **Hub Church** These churches the Church Commissioners, advised by the Mission Partnership Council, deem to be essential to the mission of God for the foreseeable future. They will be eligible for loans to install carbon neutral options for heating and lighting, and will be eligible for grants towards maintenance and improvements with a missional intent.
- B. **Community Mission Churches** These churches may be kept but should not be supported from central funds nor should they be independent parish churches nor expect weekly Sunday Eucharistic worship. Their buildings are able to be adapted or have been adapted to generate social and financial capital from the local community. They may be “hibernated” over the winter (probably except for Christmas and funerals). Furthermore, they must pay their way.
- C. **Heritage Churches** These are churches which have a clear heritage and/or architectural value but which struggle to attract a sustainable congregation, can't pay a full parish SMF consistently AND maintain their building. They should be helped to look for partnerships to maintain as versions of festival/heritage church, as cemetery chapels maintained on the rates or as self-funding community resources. They should cease to be a drain on PCC resources. They may be “hibernated” as well. They must aim to become self-funding.
- D. **Churches at a ‘Crossroads’** These are churches where radical change needs to happen with a long-term strategy of sustainability. This may involve closure, sale, demolition or radical new uses. These church buildings may have a dispersed congregation. The local population is small and/or do not relate to the church and the church has had no long-term plan to make contact with the community. There is likely to be another church building (home to a member denomination of Churches Alive in Mann) in the same community.
- E. **Marketable Churches** These are churches with small congregations but which would be easily sold for a fair market price, the funds to form a kitty to maintain Hub Churches. They may be sustainable at present, and no-one is recommending a whole scale closure and sale of these buildings immediately, but only if and when the DBF's reserves dip dangerously low. We should look to divest of one or two of these over the next five years, with at least some if not all of the proceeds going into the diocesan Pastoral Fund to pay for stipends and grants to Hub Churches.

Defining the types of church

The aim is to get each Mission Partnership Council to take the initiative in designating each church and deciding on a long-term strategy for the future of the Mission partnership that is sustainable, both in terms of fabric and personnel.

Using this tool kit

This material is intended to be used over at least two meetings of the relevant group, but they should not be too far apart in time.

Before you meet as a home group, PCC or Mission Partnership Council:

- I. Pray for an open heart and an open mind to what God is longing to do amongst us in the years to come
- II. Read the full report (but we have replicated some parts of it here).
- III. Then read the whole of this material.
- IV. Then begin to think through the questions posed. Take your time over this and don't rush straight to working out where your church sits (or how you can persuade the Church Commissioners that this church building needs never to be closed!)

When you meet:

- I. Pray for an open heart and an open mind to what God is longing to do amongst us in the years to come
- II. At the first meeting consider the theological basis for the report (included here).
- III. Consider the financial situation of the diocese (outlined in the full report) and of your PCC.
- IV. Then at the first and/or second meeting, work through the theological questions posed below.
- V. At the second meeting: begin with prayer as above.
- VI. Then work through the categorisation tool (pp. 8ff. below)
- VII. Seek to place your buildings into a category. N.B. There can be only one hub church in an area/multi-church benefice.

When this process has been completed by a multi-church benefice's PCC, they may forward their report to the Mission Partnership Team Leader to bring to a Mission Partnership Council (they will probably have given you a deadline).

The final say will remain with the Bishop.

Discussion material

What follows is taken from the full report.

It is in two parts: the Theological Basis for preparation and questions for group discussion, itself preparatory to the task. Ideally this material forms the first half of a process which will take at least two meetings.

Theological Basis

Church buildings are inseparable in the minds of most, Christians and otherwise, from the Church itself. We commonly refer to the sacred buildings in which the Church of God meets simply as “the church”. It can be said that this has led to a confusion between the buildings in which we meet and the Church of God.

Sometimes this confusion leads us to think that our buildings are not only set aside for worship, but that they cannot be used for any other purpose, or changed in any way. As Archbishop Justin Welby has said “the Church is not a building. The buildings are a gift, a treasure, but they are not the Church.” (Church Times 17th April)

There is an argument made that in an age of change people expect the Church to remain constant and unchanging. This might apply to our God (cp. Hebrews 13:8) but it does not apply to the parish church buildings of the Isle of Man, or anywhere else. The architect Richard Rogers wrote in The Sunday Telegraph Magazine (25th February 1996): “No one today wears the clothes, drives cars or writes journalism like they did a hundred years ago. Why should buildings be any different?”

And it is certainly true that many of our buildings have changed a great deal over the centuries – as has the worship offered in them – whilst all the time the ageless and yet ever new Gospel of Christ remains a constant.

2.1 The Good News of Christ

The heart of the Gospel is summed up by the Apostle Paul as: “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19)

This is recognised by the architect-priest, Richard Giles in a seminal book on the changing architecture of churches, “Re-pitching the Tent”:

“At the heart of Christian worship ... lies the mystery of the transformation of the people of God themselves into the temples of the Holy Spirit...” (Richard Giles p.145)

He goes on to reflect that the spaces we cherish may have become spaces for all sorts of other activities (flower arranging, brass polishing, needlework, rota writing, building preservation etc.) - all sorts of activities so many of us enjoy, or appear to do so, at least; but do they encourage us to celebrate God amongst us? Do they invite us into a transformative relationship with God in Christ? Do they reflect to the outsider a living worship of the God who is the creator of the physical world, who has shared the physical world in order to redeem the physical world - do they speak of transformation and beauty, of courage and creativity?

2.2 The Mission of God

“It is not the church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission who has a church in the world. The church's involvement in mission is its privileged participation in the actions of the triune God.” (*Beyond Duty* by Tim Dearborn)

The Church of God is called to belong to God, it is not a merely human institution and our church buildings are to be seen primarily as a part of God's mission in the world. That mission is not bound by or limited to church buildings, but it can be served by church buildings or hindered by them.

We need to remember that the church, in Archbishop Rowan's words, exists **“to find out what God is doing and join in”**. What is God doing on the Isle of Man? How might the mission of God, the work of the Kingdom, be helped by the Christian churches of this island? And what part may the Anglican family play in this mission, working alongside our brothers and sisters in all of the other Christian churches in the fellowship and family of **Churches Alive in Mann**?

Questions for Home Groups and/or PCCs

A Parochial Church Council (PCC) or a home group could discuss these questions as well as individuals use them for private prayer and reflection.

If a large group of more than a half dozen is looking at them, they could e.g.

- *split into smaller groups and tackle a & b in one group and c - f in another,*
- *or a & b, c & d and e & f in three small groups or pairs,*

then feedback to the whole meeting.

- a. What is God doing on the Isle of Man? How might the mission of God, the work of the Kingdom, be helped by the Christian churches of this island?
- b. What part may the Anglican family play in this mission, working alongside our brothers and sisters in all of the other Christian churches in the fellowship and family of Churches Alive in Mann?
- c. If, as Archbishop William Temple said, the Church exists for those who are not its members, then how do your parish churches speak to those who are not its members?
- d. And how does it enable the faithful community to serve those who are not its members?
- e. The central scriptural summary of the Christian good news, the Gospel, is "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" How do our buildings reflect this Gospel of reconciliation between the divine and the human?
- f. This reconciliation is of such transforming power it must change the way we live outwardly towards others as well as inwardly towards God - how do our church buildings reflect and encourage, even enable, reconciliation in human relationships?

The Categories of Church Buildings

This material is for the second half of the meeting. As you work through the description of the various categories of churches you could tick off the ones which apply to your churches. This will help you to determine where each building sits in the scheme of things.

Bear in mind that there must be changing uses of some buildings. Therefore you might like to go through the list again, and consider where each building might be better placed – this will be an especially important exercise for Mission Partnership Councils and the Church Commissioners.

A. Hub Churches

Mission Partnership Councils, working with their PCCs, are expected to identify hub churches within their area.

- There would be only one hub church per multi-church parish.
- This church would be the focus of mission in the parish and would aim to resource other churches in the parish should they exist. This is sometimes referred to as the 'Minster' model.
- Should grants be available from the diocese for buildings, priority will be to enable the hub church to meet modern standards associated with heating levels, toilet facilities, kitchen area, office and meeting space.
- It would be expected that the hub church would be a multi-use venue often making the need for a church hall redundant (unless the church hall is generating a substantial and sustainable profit).

The Community it serves

In such a community you would expect to find a catchment of:

- at least 6,000 people. (It is recognised that some areas may have a projected increase in population due to new development, others may experience decline.)
- One or more primary schools.
- The community around the church having a place for interaction e.g. business, leisure or shops.

Hub Church/Hall

The expectation that there would be:

- A Sunday Eucharist.
- Prayer said publicly daily (at least once).
- Be a focal point of the community.
- A rationale is developed if both hall(s) and a church are to be retained to justifying two buildings e.g. the hall is generating a substantial and sustainable profit or is an essential venue for multiple, regular missional activities.
- An expectation that the hub would offer significant community use or mission outreach.

- The church would be open to the public daily.
- That the parish pay their Shared Ministry Fund contribution in full enabling them to support a full-time stipendiary post.

What support can be expected from the diocese:

- Resourcing of a full-time stipendiary post for the benefice.
- Accommodation for an incumbent in as near green-guide standard as is feasible. (The diocese will also be working towards parsonages having low energy costs.)
- Permitted to apply to the diocese for grants for missionary initiatives.
- Advice on sources of development funding.

B. Community Mission Churches

Parishes would be expected to identify community mission churches within their parishes.

The Community it serves

- Expect to find a catchment of at least 1,000 **OR** the church or hall is the only community building in the district.
- Should become the focus of community interaction e.g. business, leisure, shops, service facilities.
- May be newly established 'plants' in areas of perceived need e.g. on a new housing estate.

Church/Hall

- The expectation that the church would be looked after by a non-stipendiary Local minister (lay or ordained).
- The expectation that there would be one service a week (not necessarily on a Sunday and not necessarily the Eucharist).
- These churches may have a worshipping function within a community centre.
- They may continue to offer the full range of occasional offices.
- A rationale is developed by the parish if both hall(s) and a church are to be retained to justify two buildings. The aim should be the creation of a fully used multi-purpose building.
- The retained building would be a base for community outreach.
- The church/community centre would be open to the public daily.
- The parish pay their ministry fund contribution in full.

What they can expect from the diocese/Mission Partnership:

- Assistance in developing lay leadership.
- Advice in developing plant.
- Advice regarding sources of funding.
- Permitted to apply for grants for missionary initiative.

C. Heritage Churches

These would be buildings which are essential to the historic fabric of Manx society but are not necessarily a priority for the church's Mission. These might on occasion be associated with significant burial grounds serving urban populations and which are still active.

These are likely to have been identified by government in terms of registered buildings and the parish (in agreement with the diocese) will identify whether they should be offered to government or a Trust e.g. Manx National Heritage (MNH), Friends group or retained by the parish.

The Community it serves

- These churches may no longer be the only Anglican churches serving the community, or may be isolated from centres of population.
- These churches should explore a new raison d'être, for example, linked to visitors and pilgrimage and Church-camping¹ sites.
- A key function may be associated with funerals.
- They are unlikely to be financially sustainable and unless having significant endowments will require external funding to be retained. In the case of a church with a cemetery they might become a charge to the Burial Authority as a Cemetery Chapel.

Church/Hall

- The expectation that there might be occasional services e.g. during the summer months or Festivals.
- May be used for occasional offices under special agreements.
- Compatible uses should be found for the buildings where possible.
- If retained under the full control of the parish that the parish:
 - pay their ministry fund contribution in full
 - enable the church to be accessible to the public daily, even if by indicating a key holder
 - should establish a Friends organisation.
- Collections associated with services will help pay the costs of ministry.

What they can expect from the diocese:

- Guidelines for good practice in developing a Friends group.

What the diocese needs to negotiate with government:

- A strategy of engagement with government or other body e.g. MNH or burial authority for:
 - financial contributions to repairs.
 - Enabling them to be handed over to new uses e.g. Church-camping¹.
 - Taking them into public care where preferred .

¹ N.B. parishes may not use the word "champing" as this is copyright the Churches Conservation Trust

Each parish needs to indicate heritage churches

(a) that can be resourced by the parish **or**

(b) 'un-resourced' and has no future unless other complementary uses are found or there is government or other external support.

D. Churches at a 'Crossroads'

Churches where radical change needs to happen with a long-term strategy of sustainability. This may involve closure, sale, demolition or radical new uses.

The Community it serves

- They may have a dispersed congregation.
- The local population is small and/or do not relate to the church.
- The Church has had no long-term plan to make contact with the community.

Church/Hall

- The church may be challenging to categorise, it might be a 'heritage church', a 'Burial Church' or even a 'hub' church in a parish teetering on viability.
- If retained under the full control of the parish:
 - the parish pay their ministry fund contribution in full, and
 - enable the church to be accessible to the public daily.

What they can expect from the diocese:

- A strategy of engagement with government where necessary for:
 - removing 'registered building' status, sale, demolition **or**
 - support in developing a strategy for long-term development, funding and radical new uses.

As and when revised faculty jurisdiction is in place, faculties will continue to be granted for this class of church in order to enable essential maintenance prior to a long-term strategy being in place.

E. Marketable Churches

These are churches which may have some of the following characteristics:

- easily be turned into new uses such as housing or another appropriate marketable use.
- Have a small congregation and/or serve a small population (less than 2,000).
- May be at a distance from centres of population.
- Have little or no engagement with the local community (and there has been no such plan in place in recent years).
- May have a Methodist (or another Church in fellowship with CAIM) church that could be shared nearby.

Reporting Back

The Bishop announced at the meeting of the Diocesan Synod in August 2020 at which the Report became the official diocesan strategy that he would establish an **Implementation Group** in order to deal promptly with the reports of the MPCs. This Group would be, in effect, a working party of the Church Commissioners. He asked that Mission Partnership Councils report by 31st December 2020.

What does the Implementation Group require from the Mission Partnership Councils?

- 1. A simple list of all churches** in your Mission Partnership grouped by parish and with the category you recommend they be placed in: e.g.
St Agatha's in the Wold A (Hub Church)
St Mungo's in the Wold B (Community Church) etc.
- as agreed by a simple majority of those attending the meeting. If there is an evenly split vote, please return "undecided".
n.b. We do not need any reasoning or special arguments; if we need to know more, we will ask.
- 2. A note of any pastoral re-organisation** you would commend to the Church Commissioners to enable us to achieve an approximate 6,000 population per stipendiary priest.
- 3. A brief comment** on any of the recommendations we have offered as they affect your Mission Partnership (referring to the number of the recommendations as listed in the Strategic Review document).

n.b. We cannot accept any submissions from PCCs or individuals.

How the Tool and the Report will influence forward planning

The Implementation Group will then work with these recommendations to place all of our church buildings into a category and align their decision-making, and that of the DBF and other diocesan bodies, accordingly.

The Implementation Group and the Church Commissioners will advise the bishop, who must make the final decision in all these matters.

The MPC reports should be sent by email to the Archdeacon's Office
archdeaconsec@sodorandman.im
Before 31st December 2020

Appendix

Mission Partnerships and their parishes

(Numbers taken from 2016 Census rounded to nearest 100)

North 13,000

- North Ramsey (population: 4,200)
- Northern Plain (population: 3,800)
- Maughold & South Ramsey (population: 5,000)

South 14,800

- Rushen (population: 7,100)
- Malew & Santan (population: 2,900)*
- Arbory & Castletown (population: 4,800)

West 10,500

- West Coast (population: 7,200) **
- Marown, Foxdale & Baldwin (population: 3,300) **

East 41,400

- St George and All Saints (population: 5,800)
- St Ninian (population: 8,500)
- Braddan (population: 8,100)
- Onchan (population: 9,600)
- St Matthew (population: 1,800)*
- Lonan & Laxey (population: 3,300)
- St Thomas (population: 4,600)

* Parishes with under 3,000 population

** Foxdale and Patrick are counted together 1,344 - it has been split Patrick 200 and Foxdale 1,144