

Workshop 1: Building momentum on your vision

Many Dioceses have launched or are working on a Diocesan vision or strategy. But once launched how do you gain traction on it? How do you keep focus and how do you build momentum?

10 Insights from Portsmouth Diocese (Joanne Grenfell, Archdeacon of Portsdown)

1. **From group or meeting to team.** Take time to build a team which can reflect together about theology and strategy and which understands each other's different roles. You need a high level of trust to challenge each other about the direction and pace of change and to support each other when it feels difficult and sticky.
2. **From reactive to consultative.** Make time for slower consultation as you embed things. Sometimes strategy has to be rapid and reactive, but it shouldn't always be so. In particular, your second phase of change might be different – slower, more consultative. In Portsmouth the culture has always been quite positive - relational, contextual, and generous. We are told that deanery planning doesn't correlate with growth, and maybe that's no surprise. But deanery planning does improve relationships and emotional buy in. So, do take time for this kind of work when it is possible.
3. **From resistance to contribution.** Notice who feels undermined. What role can they play? What responsibility, wisdom, and stability can be lent by more traditional forms of church? Can there be shared curacies, occasional mentoring, wise mediators? All of these have worked for us.
4. **From reporting to owning.** Make time for communications. You need repeatedly to show and tell the stories of success and development in both external and internal communications so that you get to the point where people can tell the story themselves with pride, not just hear it reported and receive it as second-hand news.
5. **From potential to pipeline to maturity.** Engage younger and newer leaders in planning for future change - for the next phase. Give them responsibility for working out some of the next steps. Coach them through that and make it a learning opportunity. Attend to your pipeline of vocations, especially young ones. This has to happen now, so that they are ready to take on wider responsibility when your growth plans come to fruition.
6. **Keep scanning the context and the horizon.** Have a proper monitoring group, which has oversight. Make it accountable and interesting and give it a channel to report back to your BSM or BC. That will keep strategy – both implementation and new development – on the agenda.
7. **Keep the momentum.** Be ready quite soon to plan and act again. Don't stop and just survey what you've done. Work out what the next steps are. Do more of what is working. Ask for an investment of resources to do keep the momentum.
8. **Keep spreading change.** We know that Harbour church [Harbour Church intro film](#) will not be enough and that we need to change and grow in other areas. So, draw in your second phase adopters. Ask what next and who else?
9. **Keep tackling the hard things.** Do tackle deep-seated problems in this next phase. There are many things that could easily be put into the "too difficult" box. But if you don't tackle them, you will fail in both practical and symbolic terms. You can't leave situations as wells of despair
10. **Keep receiving, keep learning.** Seize on new ideas that come up from the grass roots – whether or not they are entirely feasible – and do at least some of them. Lose the old withholding culture, the sucking of teeth, the "I'm not sure that will work, and it'll have to go through committee" response. Say yes to a few things, even if they need some work and adaptation, and praise colleagues even for having ideas. All of this is about culture change and also about creating a learning culture together.

6 insights from Southwell and Nottingham (Paul Williams, Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham)

1. **Communicate the vision.** You can't always give the full version so have a short, few words, memorable version, but also have a full version. Only a 1 minute version can feel shallow, so have a five minute and a forty five minute version too. Have something that parishes could opt in to using as a framework. Think about the language you use.
2. **Answer the question why.** Keep explaining why and keep communicating. Don't assume people have "got it" at the start. The Bishop needs to be a "non anxious" presence, reducing anxiety but at the same time creating urgency and vitality – and holding this tension, settled and confident in God but knowing there is much to do.
3. **Keep the how as wide as possible.** When we do something zany or new, we risk the engagement of every parish. So, describe it diversely, you don't need to look like a resource church to grow. Tell diverse stories about what is happening. [Easter Message Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham - one example](#)
4. **Connect the future to the past.** History is important. Acknowledge it. It's not about compliance but engagement. Tell history collectively as a diocese and locally in parishes and benefices.
5. **Attend to the detail of implementation.** Don't assume it will be done, the most important things need the detail. Coach intensively.
6. **Give time and energy to appointing the right people in the right places.** It's not just about who you appoint to new things. Appoint with rigour and give focussed coaching,

Insights from the discussion

- The need to balance the Church of England "brand" with engaging those who don't currently engage with church. Holding to values is even more important than visuals.
- You have to get ownership for the need to disrupt, and model owning challenges. Things quickly go back to the default position, keep resetting.
- Realise that morale is low. New things can push morale down further, we need to keep affirming. Recognise that some people may be thinking "I would love someone to have invested this in what I was planning 30 years ago".
- Think about the role of coaches and accountabilities. Keep the conversation live, find good mediators (sometimes in unexpected places) to move forward on blockages.
- When we think about the right people in the right places; it is easy for the emphasis to be on clergy, we need the lay enthused and enabled – and actually we need teams not individuals to build change. The impact of people being prepared to relocate to help. And we need leaders everywhere, not just in churches.
- Flagship projects have the capacity to alienate. Keep drawing people in, don't overreach and deskill ownership.
- You may have to give disproportionate time to the most negative 10%, simply because some of them have megaphones and make others feel anxious. Be aware that the most positive 10% can also alienate people; show that it's not just about them.
- It's frustrating when the narrative comes across as if SDF is all about your resource church. It's not, there are wider things.
- There are wider possibilities – many resource churches, breadth of traditions and new resourcing churches- who can give away.
- The foundation of prayer, and confidence in God.