



Working Together To Evangelise Our Diocese

ADVENT 2017



Introduction

To Proclaim the Good News of
Jesus Christ in Essex and East London

Introduction

DIOCESAN CENTENARY PRAYER

Almighty and merciful Father,
bestow your grace upon the Diocese of Brentwood
as we celebrate our Centenary Year.

We give thanks for the witness of past generations
and pray for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit
that we may be ever more faithful to proclaiming the Gospel of Christ.
Bless Alan, our Bishop, the Clergy, Religious and Faithful of our Diocese,
and graciously grant plentiful vocations to the Priesthood,
the Consecrated Life and the Sacrament of Marriage.
Strengthen us in the communion of faith, hope and charity,
united in prayer with our Holy Father the Pope and the Universal Church.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

Saints Erconwald, Cedd and Edmund of Canterbury, pray for us.

Introduction

A FIRST FORMAL PROPOSAL

Our Vision

“Proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ in Essex and East London”

The Church in Essex and East London working better and differently together to evangelise our diocese; it is a vision of the people of God here and now collaborating to use our various Grace-given gifts to evangelise our diocese to the best of our combined ability with the help of God

Our Objectives

Maximise the opportunities for evangelisation

Maximise sacramental provision

Maximise the opportunities for putting faith into action through charitable works

Our Strategy

Renewal and Restructuring

Implementation

The steps needed to achieve those objectives:

A 12-Strand Plan for Renewal

A Framework of Proposals for Restructuring



Introduction

A FIRST FORMAL PROPOSAL FOR THE RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING OF OUR DIOCESE

This first formal proposal for the evangelisation of our diocese follows on from the draft working plan and the feedback we have received. Both documents are wrapped in prayer. Our Centenary Prayer asks for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit so that we may be ever more faithful to proclaim the Gospel. Our Stewards Prayer asks for the inspiration to discover new ways to spread the joy of the Gospel. All through our thinking, we are mindful of those prayers and we have tried to find new ways for us all to use our gifts to make our vision a reality.

Christ has no body now but ours. Our hearts and minds and our hands and feet are the instruments that we must put to work to make God's Kingdom a reality here in Essex and East London. As God's family in our diocese, priests and lay people will work together in new ways so that we can better proclaim the Gospel, celebrate the sacraments and exercise the ministry of charity.

Our task is to guide our diocese through a period of change so that we can organise ourselves, and permit and empower

people to make the best use of their gifts and collaborate with one another.

Together we must discover new ways to spread the joy of Christ with a missionary impulse that does not say "we have always done it that way" but looks to find the right human response to God's love for us right here and right now.

Initial responses to the Questionnaires made it clear that young people, schools, formation and lay leaders were all key factors and we added to those things the sacramental nature of our Catholic Church. Parishes set agendas for themselves to do new things and do existing things better and those agendas remain valid and in use in many places.

We are now moving to think beyond our existing parish boundaries and outside our own comfort zones as we seek our appropriate response to God's love. As we do this, we recognise that everyone is valued and valuable on this journey. A focus on the young does not mean that the older people are not valued. A focus on a priest being in a particular place does not mean that people who are currently in another place are not

valued – far from it. We must love one another as God has loved us and we must do so with generous hospitality and care for the needs of our neighbours. Together we must find ways to help each other and do so with joy.

Our work is set in the context of a sacramental church in a large and diverse diocese. Our responses will vary in different places; there is not one size that will fit all. We must look at our particular needs in particular places to find the responses that best fit each place.

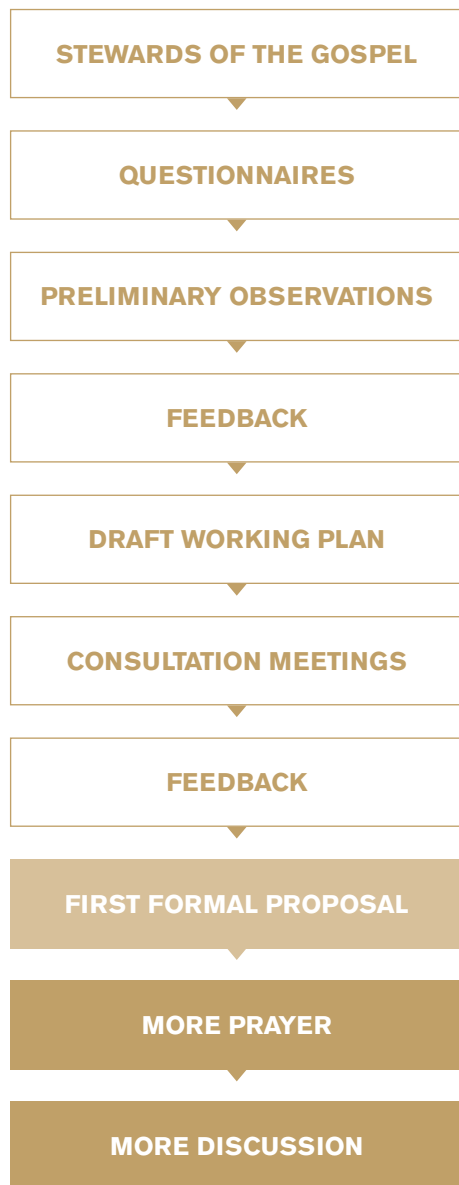
Our work is set in different time frames: the short term to 2019, the medium term to about 2025 and the longer term to 2035 and beyond.

The short term is about our discernment and working together to find suitable responses and in this document we set out some more detail to take that forward. It has been altered and developed from the Draft Working Plan to take account of comments made by parishes. A summary of those responses has been sent to every Steward of the Gospel and can be found in the Development section of our diocesan website.

The Renewal element spans all three time frames but focuses on the short and medium term as we plan twelve strands of work that will inevitably develop as we move forward and build on the work we do together. You will see that these have already evolved as a result of your responses to the Draft Working Plan.

The Restructuring element of this document works backwards from the long term to the medium term. This is because a medium-term structure needs to focus on where the long-term position is likely to be while providing some flexibility to cope with the changes that will almost certainly need to be made as circumstances change. We plan in the expectation that we will have considerably fewer priests in our diocese than we have today while praying and working for more vocations for the future. We know that we must change many things in how we all work together to proclaim the Gospel because just spreading what we have more thinly is not enough of a response to God's love for us. We must also change and renew ourselves and our faith lives.

Introduction



Approval of the Draft Working Plan

We are grateful for the overall support for the Draft Working Plan. The responses were favourable by a significant margin. The dissenting voices were mostly helpful but varied to the extent that it is hard to discern a better way forward from them. This document contains significant changes as a result of comments from both those who supported the overall plan and those who did not.

As you read this proposal, it is important to bear in mind a few things:

- It is still subject to many conversations and the final outcome will rely on continued prayer to Mary (to whose care Bishop Alan has entrusted our diocese), prayer for guidance of the Holy Spirit and the goodwill and generosity of many people to make it work.
- If you have made a response, it has been read, thought about and prayed about as this document has been drafted. Many people who have responded will see how their ideas have been incorporated. A discernment process and a consultation both involve taking in many ideas and thoughts; not all of these can be accommodated by the Bishop when making his final decisions. However, every response has been much appreciated. Thank you all.

- This proposal is offered in the spirit of discernment. Accordingly, we have included ideas that will require significant additional consultation with individuals and religious orders and other groups. Nothing is being taken for granted and we offer these ideas for prayer, conversation and discernment.
- We may talk about allocating a number of priests to different places but we have never forgotten that every priest is an individual person. Each has different strengths and will be suited to a particular type of ministry: some are married with families, some are younger and some are older. For a variety of reasons some will have more energy than others, some will be close to or at retirement age, while others will have particular responsibilities either as members of an Order or as Vicar General, Episcopal Vicar or any one of several other responsibilities outside parish life that our priests undertake.
- We may talk about parishes in a general sense but we have never forgotten that every parish is different.
- There is no mention of how Mass times will need to change because that detail needs local discussions in the first instance but, as you read this document, try to imagine how Mass times will need to be changed.
- With only one exception (that came in rather late!), we have accepted every invitation to speak with parish groups to discuss the Draft Working Plan.
- We still believe that all sorts of events could have an impact on the longer-term plans for our diocese and we remain committed to keeping the situation under review. This proposal enables us to do that.
- It is a proposal and not the final decision.



Renewal

12-Strand Plan for the
Renewal of Our Diocese

Renewal

We have altered this Renewal section by adding new headings, merging some of the old ones, changing the nature of the content of others and adding in more details about future work. Please note that in every case these are still works in progress and that we shall be exploring ways to use digital and emerging technologies to support each of them as we move forward together.

1 Caritas: 31 January is the feast day of St John Bosco, who holds a special place in our diocesan lives through his devotion to Mary Hope of Christians and the St Vincent de Paul camp that bears his name. His work as a teacher of the youth and with the disadvantaged makes him an obvious choice as a patron for our new Diocesan Caritas. We will link with the work of Caritas Social Action Network (www.csan.org.uk), which is the agency of the Catholic Bishops' Conference for England and Wales (CBCEW), Caritas Europa and Caritas Internationalis.

Therefore, on St John Bosco's feast day in 2018 we will begin to shape our new diocesan caritas initiative at Abbotswick in the company of established practitioners and our young lay people. This will bring together the wisdom of years seasoned by experience with the youthful zeal and enthusiasm for finding causes and for protest. Through this vehicle of an intergenerational caritas

movement, we will begin to facilitate a greater sharing of the charitable work that goes on in our diocese. This will enable good practice to be shared, mistakes to be learned from, support to be given and resources to be widely available to all who are interested. As a natural effect of this, we will find new ways to express the timeless truths of our faith and we will evangelise by our witness to the example and commandment of Christ.

2 Christian life and worship: The liturgy is the source and summit of the Church's life. Through the liturgy, the Church offers a living sacrifice of praise to God and so receives the grace to be the light of the world and glorify the Father in the eyes of all. The Church's liturgy consists of the Mass, the sacraments and other rites, and daily prayer. Since the Second Vatican Council, these rites have been revised in the light of sound tradition and experience, and so when translated more fully reflect the faith and practice of the Church. Celebrating Holy Mass and other sacraments together affords us an opportunity for evangelisation. The stranger in our midst, the person who is casually exploring their own spirituality, the non-Catholic friend of a long-standing parishioner who is staying for the weekend, the person who has doubts, the family that has just moved into the

Renewal

area, the family visiting as they consider a Catholic education for their children – all of these people find themselves in the presence of the Lord and for each of us there is the opportunity to make them welcome and comfortable so as to help proclaim the Gospel message to them. Do people on the margins of our Catholic community feel the joy of the Risen Christ when they celebrate with us? Do we truly welcome the stranger?

There are those who come to Mass (or want to but don't feel able) and are not in a state of grace nor in a position to receive the body and blood of Christ. Do we in all our imperfections welcome them in all theirs to worship with us? Do we make them feel welcome and comfortable, or do we judge them and treat them as outcasts or just ignore them? Do we look for these people and try to help them or do we leave it to someone else?

As we work together across boundaries, can we find time to worship together? Can we devise short specific liturgies (not to replace Holy Mass) that will enable us to consciously pray together as a wider Catholic community? Can we find laypeople to lead us in that worship when we come together – people who are formed and confident in their faith so that we can supplement the celebration of Holy Mass and the sacraments by our priests with other forms of worship when circumstances suggest the opportunity?

As parish communities form new relationships with each other, we shall find new ways to celebrate what each has achieved and been over the years and then give thanks for the opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the service of the Lord in a new way going forward together.

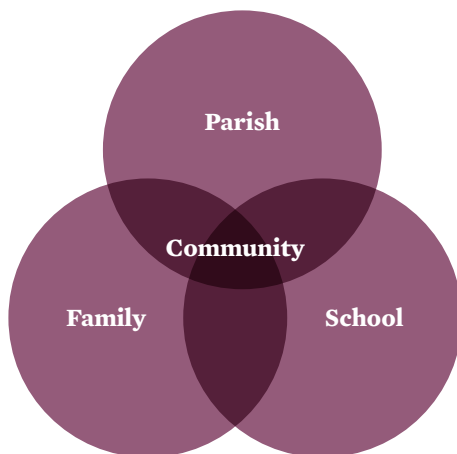
3 Education: In the five-year vision for education in our diocese, the number one commitment is “To proclaim and promote Jesus Christ as the foundation and centre of the school community and of its evangelising mission within the Church’s overall pastoral mission.” As part of how we achieve this, we are seeking to provide specific governor training appropriate for our Catholic schools and also to facilitate effective and meaningful engagement between schools and the parish. This provides an important opportunity for laypeople to become involved in evangelisation through taking up leadership roles as governors or as part of a chaplaincy team. We would encourage people to consider this as a very practical way to evangelise and make themselves available to support the Catholic ethos of our primary and secondary schools. Furthermore, we will work to strengthen bonds between the parish, families and schools, recognising them as the foundations of our community and a support to many other strands of our work.

We have heard concerns about the ability to get Catholic children into Catholic schools and we will explore potential solutions to that issue.

We recognise the place of universities in our diocese and the opportunity that they provide for us to share our faith with young people in our midst. We recognise the international Church has a jointly held responsibility to support and care for young Catholics who are away from their families and home parishes. Together with university chaplains, we will work to honour this responsibility and develop links between parishes and universities.

4 **Family:** We recognise the importance of the sacrament of marriage and that families are a crucial forum for evangelisation. Parents have the primary responsibility for handing the faith on to their children, with support from the wider Church. Families also have a part to play in evangelising outside the home, especially by taking on works of charity, welcoming others into their home and witnessing to their faith. The family represents a crucial point of difference when the values of the Church are compared with the world's and stands as a visible reminder of God's original blessing of creation and his plan for humanity. We shall develop and make more widely known existing work that is being done in this area such as: "Explore" school

workshops with married couples, marriage preparation, and supporting families in parishes, specifically, welcoming families, considering them when planning events and helping them to realise their particular vocation. Furthermore, new work will involve developing "family groups" (small support groups within the parish community), encouraging people to take part in marriage enrichment programmes and promoting and teaching about natural family planning. These initiatives will also create new opportunities for lay leadership as people lead groups and/or facilitate them.



Renewal

5 Formation: The first step in our work on formation has just been taken. The Bishop's Certificate in Catechesis and Youth Ministry was launched on 4 November and details can be found on the diocesan website. Designed to be accessed online at times convenient to each individual and with two group meetings a year, we hope that this will provide an easily accessible, convenient blend of practical skills and theological knowledge that will lead to an entry level qualification. This will help the formation of those who have an interest in working with children and young people but it will also benefit anyone who wants to develop their practical skills and theological knowledge. During 2018, we will provide details of further training that will be rolled out to help develop our relationships with Christ and enable more of us to be more confident evangelisers for our diocese.

6 Integration: Within our diocese, we have an abundance of diversity. We often talk about it but do we really celebrate it properly? Do we really share our experiences, traditions and reflections on God?

We have a wide variety of nationalities in our diocese. Every week there are people who live in our parishes who go to Mass at a service separate from what might be called the "normal" parish Mass: Polish,

Syro-Malabar, Latin, Ordinariate and Eastern Rite to name but a few. These are people in full communion with the One Holy and Apostolic Church to which we all belong, but can we do more to invite each other to worship and celebrate together?

Our Christian brothers and sisters in other denominations live next door to us and much is made of ecumenism, but can we do more?

We pray regularly for those who do not share our faith, but do we put those prayers into practice?

Our readings regularly remind us that Jesus was often to be found in unlikely places that sometimes shocked the Jewish leaders. If we are to be witnesses to our faith and if we are to proclaim the Gospel message (whether by words or actions), is there more that we can do?

7 Leaders: See also education, Christian life and worship, youth and family.

In 2018, we propose to develop a programme of training that will be made available for both priests and laypeople. There will be courses and resources to assist with the challenges ahead.

This will include:

- Helping parishes to develop a vision and strategy for evangelisation.

- Leadership training for people in parishes, e.g. how to set up a mission team, how to form a team and small group dynamics.
- Communication skills – individual and corporate, e.g. how to get the message out and how to get it heard.
- Information about and training in using the various resources for evangelisation – Alpha, CaFE resources, Divine Renovation, parish cell groups and others.
- Parish missions and retreats to help resource ongoing evangelisation in parishes.
- A resource on how to make a Parish Pastoral Council one of spirituality and prayer, enabling members to plan, prepare and promote evangelisation.
- Extraordinary ministers – updating the syllabus in light of evangelisation and formation of the person.
- Training for Pastoral Care Teams.
- Stewards of the Gospel – exploring how to take this role forward in the future and ensure good succession planning whilst at the same time providing support through prayer and practical help.
- Lay administration – some parishes are already blessed with capable and competent people with the time to devote to administration in a parish.

Others are not so fortunate and struggle with even the basics. We will offer a course to cover areas such as finance, property, administration, basic parish organisation, communications and social media.

- Priesthood in an age of the changing lay faithful – how do we understand each other and use language in different ways. How we can improve delegation and consider the relationship between responsibility and authority.
- Priesthood to facilitate change – it is inevitable that some priests will be moving to places where change is a strong feature of parish life. We will offer a course to assist those priests as they take up their responsibilities.

Courses will be offered in various locations across our diocese so that more people can have access to them. No one should be excluded on financial grounds.

We will also explore how our deacons can provide service and leadership within our communities, both to groups of parishes and ministries that run across our diocese. Possibilities exist within the diaconate to give service in new ways, based upon the traditional role as assistant to the Bishop proclaiming the Word, serving at the altar and exercising the ministry of charity.

Renewal

8 Material assets: During the course of our meetings and in the responses to the Draft Working Plan, it has become apparent that greater transparency is required in relation to our financial and property-based assets. We recognise that all we have is by the Grace of God and that it is incumbent upon us to use things wisely in His service. In early 2018 we will therefore undertake three separate projects to produce materials:

- that explain how the money you give to the Church is used, and how finances are shared between individual parishes and our diocesan family as a whole;
- on the theology of giving; and
- that offer new ideas for the future.

We will ensure that these materials are clear and easy to understand.

We will also work with parishes to explore the possibilities associated with the Restructuring element of this proposal. As parish communities adapt, there will be questions about:

- the future of buildings and their use; and
- sharing resources.

These need to be addressed both at parish level and at diocesan level. As parishes start to work across parish

boundaries and share their Church life more and more, it is highly likely that a different attitude will be taken on how we use our resources in the future. Evangelisation of our diocese will require of us a fresh approach to how we raise and spend money and use buildings.

9 Prayer and spirituality: Bishop Alan has always made prayer a priority in this process and as we move forward we would like to support our Renewal and our Restructuring with prayer. Many people have a charism of intercessory prayer and it will be our intention to facilitate this both in groups that meet personally and virtually and with a dedicated webpage for those who would like to contribute prayers or join in occasionally. If you feel that your contribution will be best made in this way, we will shortly be announcing how this could work in our diocese and how you can get involved. Furthermore, we must continue to ensure that we all wrap our planning in prayer. Our Centenary Prayer helps us to focus on the fact that we are working together to build the Kingdom of God on the foundations of those who have gone before us and our Stewards Prayer helps us to focus on the fact that the responsibility for our future lies with us here and now. You will also see prayer and spirituality referred to in note 7 above. Let Your Kingdom come and Your Will be done.

10 **Priests and people:**

There is a gap in our understanding of each other.

Many laypeople do not understand the life of a priest and that can lead to unrealistic expectations. We will produce materials that will help priests and laypeople work together with realistic expectations of one another and provide courses that will assist (see 8. Materials). We will learn together about how we can work better and differently, and we will explore new ways to recognise each other's gifts, expertise and skills and to collaborate to the best of our combined ability so that we can bring our vision to reality.



11 **Young people:**

The Brentwood Catholic Youth Service (BCYS) is moving

into Abbotswick as this document is being published. Our prayers are with them as they settle into their new home and begin a new chapter of incredible service in our diocese. The work they do is evangelisation and they are a wonderful witness to our faith. Bringing them close to the geographic centre of our diocese will make them more accessible and make young people symbolically central to the life of our Church. We will work to make stronger links between family, parish and school, to help young people find the relevance in our Church and Catholic Social Teaching and help them discern vocations where possible. We will appoint a priest specifically to work with parishes on these areas in the coming years as we develop a lay youth work strategy that caters for the future. We are aware that some parishes have well structured youth work already, but it is not yet the norm and we must develop this in the context of future parish relationships. In October 2018, the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops is dedicated to the theme of “Young people, the Faith and Vocational Discernment” and we will work with the Synod themes and outcomes in the coming years.

12 **Vocations:** We will constantly pray for new vocations and support for those discerning their vocation.

As part of the National Vocations Framework 2016 to 2019, the CBCEW offers three aims and objectives (see below) of the Church. This will build on “In Verbo Tuo: New Vocations for a New Europe”, the final document of the Congress on Vocations to the Priesthood and to Consecrated Life in Europe held in Rome in 1997. We will affirm and give life to these through the various strands of our work. You will see that several of our strands of work are clearly related to these aims (e.g. family, education, prayer and training).

1) DISCIPLESHIP will be developed in the local Church in the following ways:

- a. Every vocation is appreciated and celebrated locally as essential to the Body of Christ.
- b. Opportunities for people to grow in discipleship are available within the liturgy and outside it.
- c. Through their service, evangelisation and witness of daily life, Catholics share their love and faith with all people.

2) DISCUSSION: People are often reticent when it comes to speaking about vocation and, in particular, their own vocation. To help them overcome this reticence, the following will be developed:

- a. Within families there are conversations about the vocation of marriage and all other vocations. Parish communities encourage people to talk about their vocation and to see it as a continuous discovery of God’s purpose in their lives.
- b. The culture of vocation is central to the life and curriculum of Catholic schools and is integral to all forms of youth ministry, family ministry and catechesis.
- c. Bishops, priests and deacons, together with consecrated men and women, speak freely about how their vocation has grown and invite those they think suitable to consider a vocation to the priesthood, diaconate or consecrated life. People pray for vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life throughout the year, especially on the Fourth Sunday of Easter.

3) DISCOVERY: Those seeking to discover their God-given purpose in life often say, “There’s no one to talk to.” The culture of vocation needs to become a regular part of the Church’s conversation. As a contribution to this conversation, the following opportunities will be developed at the local level:

- a. Individual vocational guidance and vocation discernment groups are available locally and advertised widely in parishes and chaplaincies.
- b. Advice for those considering vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life is clearly available. Parishes actively support those approaching marriage and they nurture family life as a school of vocation.
- c. Parishes and chaplaincies enable the many laypeople who are single to recognise their vocation within the community.

From early 2018, each of these twelve strands of work will have a page on the website where people will be able to access materials, diary dates, interactive forums and regular updates that can be shared with others through the Stewards of the Gospel network. There will also be a Facebook group for people interested in what is going on. We intend that every aspect of our Church life should be a fitting response to God’s love for us and each strand will evolve and develop over time.

Website

Our own Vocations Director, Fr Graham Smith: frgraham@brentwoodvocations.org, and Vocations Promoter, Fr Mark Swires: vocprom@dioceseofbrentwood.org, have established a new section of the website, www.brentwoodvocations.org/priesthood/, and can be contacted by those wishing to explore their vocation. They will also be producing materials for this strand of work.



Restructuring

A Four Part Framework for
Restructuring our Diocese

Restructuring



We must not look at Restructuring in isolation. Everyone is invited to consider this objective as totally connected to Renewal. If we do not renew, then restructuring on its own cannot work. If we try to do things exactly the same way in the future as we do now, then we will not be making a suitable response to God's love for us. Furthermore, if we are to make the best use of our combined gifts and the resources that we have, we need to think about how things could be better rather than just about how to stretch what we have now.

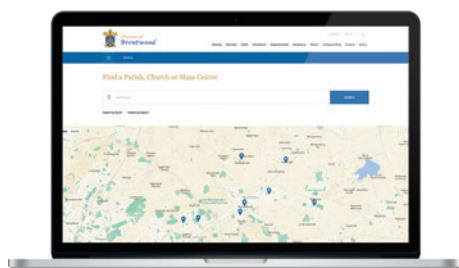
The long-term picture

In the original Framework Part One, we set out 14 locations with 25 priests for the long term. We received some representations arguing against this and we have noted comments about future developments in relation to hospitals and healthcare, the fact that many people who are elderly are not in hospital, and the importance of care homes and hospices. The "Locations" overleaf are places where schools and hospitals exist in close proximity and, given that the majority of feedback we received was broadly in favour, we have decided to follow the model with slight amendments.

Restructuring

Framework Part One

The proposal is that, in the long term, priests living in the following parishes should serve the Locations referred to in the Framework Part One. Please bear in mind that as you read this document, an overall picture will develop and Framework Part One is just the first part of the picture for each Location. We suggest that groups of parishes and, in some cases, religious orders will need to determine together how they would like to organise things at their location and then feed back to us as a part of this discernment process. Nothing is being taken for granted in this stage of our discernment. There is a chart with suggestions of the parish groupings and a timetable on pages 27 and 28 but these are suggestions and not directions.



Find a Parish, Church or School on the homepage

➦ www.dioceseofbrentwood.net

- 1) **Colchester** – one priest living at St James the Less in the town centre and another at St Teresa of Lisieux in Lexden.
- 2) **Chelmsford** – the Order of Canons Regular of Prémontré, commonly known as the Norbetines, already live in community at Our Lady Immaculate parish in Chelmsford. It is proposed that they continue to live there but are asked to serve Chelmsford in a new way. We suggest that the four parishes in Chelmsford (The Blessed Sacrament, St Augustine of Canterbury and Our Lady Immaculate, which is linked with the parish of Holy Name) work together to suggest a way forward.
- 3) **Brentwood** – two priests will live at Clergy House at the Cathedral and will also serve the parish of Hutton.
- 4) **Harlow** – the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette are already present in Harlow and it is proposed that they remain. They will live in one presbytery, but two priests will serve two churches in Harlow. We suggest that the Harlow parishes of Our Lady of Fatima and St Thomas More, Church of the Assumption, and St Luke's and Holy Cross work together to find a proposal that they think can work in Harlow.

- 5) **Walthamstow** – the Society of African Missions is already present in Walthamstow and it is proposed that they remain in one presbytery serving both Walthamstow parishes (Our Lady of the Rosary and St Patrick, and Our Lady and St George) in a new way.
- 6) **Woodford Green** – the Order of Friars Minor (the Franciscans) are in this parish and it is proposed that they remain there. They will continue to look after St Thomas of Canterbury under this part of the framework and will also serve South Woodford.
- 7) **Ilford** – one priest will live at Ss Peter and Paul and will also serve St John the Baptist, Ilford, and another priest will live at St Augustine of Canterbury, Barkingside, and will also serve St John Vianney in Clayhall and The Assumption in Hainault.
- 8) **Forest Gate** – the Community of St John is at St Anthony of Padua. It is proposed that they remain there and also serve St Stephen's at Manor Park under this part of the framework (see also 20 overleaf).
- 9) **Dagenham** – the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette are present in Dagenham and it is proposed that the two priests resident there live in one presbytery and serve both St Peter's and Holy Family.
- 10) **Romford** – one priest will live at St Edward the Confessor and another at Christ the Eternal High Priest at Gidea Park.
- 11) **Grays** – one priest will live in the presbytery at St Thomas of Canterbury.
- 12) **Basildon** – the current structure of two priests looking after all of the former Basildon parishes that are now united as Our Lady and All Saints will continue unaltered.
- 13) **Upminster** – one priest will live at St Joseph's.
- 14) **Southend** – one priest will live at The Sacred Heart and another at Our Lady Help of Christians and St Helen in Westcliff.

Restructuring

Framework Part Two

In the original framework, we set out areas where mere numbers would not justify the placement of a priest, but we recognise that it is about more than mere numbers. This part of the framework met with almost no opposition.

15) In the north of our diocese there are five parishes: The Holy Spirit in Great Bardfield, Our Lady and St Anne Line in Dunmow, St Francis of Assisi in Halstead, St Teresa of Lisieux in Stansted Mountfitchet and Our Lady of Compassion in Saffron Walden. These parishes cover quite a large geographic area that is lightly populated. It is proposed that two priests will cover these five parishes.

16) The Dengie Peninsula will be served by one priest probably living at the presbytery at Assumption of Our Lady in Maldon, but also looking after the parishes of English Martyrs in Danbury, Holy Trinity in South Woodham Ferrers and St Cuthbert's in Burnham-on-Crouch.

17) To the south and east of Colchester, we propose one priest living in the combined parish of St Sabina in Brightlingsea and St Monica in Wivenhoe and, as now, covering the university chaplaincy at the University of Essex in Colchester while also serving St John Payne in Greenstead.

18) To the east of Colchester, there will be one priest covering the existing parishes of Our Lady of Light and St Osyth in Clacton and Sacred Heart and St Francis in Frinton-on-Sea, linked with Our Lady Queen of Heaven in Harwich and Dovercourt.

19) There are several small parishes that could be served by one priest living in one of the parishes but travelling to each of Ongar and Doddinghurst, Epping, Ingatestone and Stock. Nearly all of these parishes have expressed a strong desire to remain as village communities and they are invited to explore together how that could be made to work.

Framework Part Three

Under part three of the framework, we add in churches with large congregations:

20) Our Lady of Compassion in Upton Park will have a priest serving it but it is proposed that the priest will be living in the Community of St John at St Anthony of Padua in Forest Gate (see 8 on page 21).

21) Our Lady of Lourdes in Wanstead will have a priest resident.

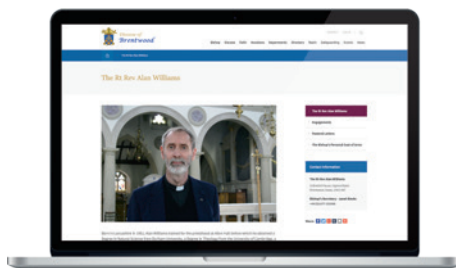
22) St Margaret and All Saints in Canning Town will have a priest resident.

23) St Cedd in Goodmayes is currently served by the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette. It is proposed that they remain there but also serve St Teresa's in Newbury Park.

- 24)** St Mary Mother of God in Hornchurch will have a priest in residence who will also serve English Martyrs in the town, perhaps in conjunction with Upminster.
- 25)** St Michael in East Ham will have a priest in residence.
- 26)** Our Lady of La Salette in Rainham is currently served by the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette and it is proposed that they remain there but also serve the parish of St Alban in Elm Park.
- 27)** Our Lady of Lourdes and St Joseph in Leigh-on-Sea will have a priest in residence who will also serve St Peter Eastwood.
- 28)** St Bede in Chadwell Heath will have a priest in residence who will also serve St Vincent in Becontree.
- 29)** St Thomas More in Barking will be served by a priest living in Dagenham (see 9 on page 21).
- 30)** Loughton/Debden, Waltham Abbey and Chingford could be served by a priest resident at one of those parishes.
- 31)** St Joseph in Leyton is served by the Claretian Missionaries and it is proposed that this continues.
- 32)** St Francis of Assisi in Stratford is served by the Franciscans and it is proposed that this continues.
- 33)** The Most Holy Redeemer in Billericay will have a priest in residence.

- 34)** Our Lady of Walsingham in Royal Docks will have a priest in residence.
- 35)** Our Lady of Ransom in Rayleigh will have a priest in residence.
- 36)** Our Lady Queen of Peace in Braintree will have a priest in residence.

We would ask that people think and pray about this and the rest of the restructuring proposals, recognising that every parish will change. Where it states that a priest will be resident or serving a particular community, we must remember that those communities themselves will be changed as people from other parishes and communities are welcomed and served. In most cases, Mass times will change and lay leadership teams will need to support the priests who will be appointed to them. Please also consider that by 2035 new models of Church will have been adopted. Some parishes may wish to be linked or merged while others may wish to retain their existing identity. The life of a priest in each of these scenarios will be very different but both will require the help of a lay leadership team.



See the Bishop's introductory message

➦ www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/bishop/

Restructuring

Medium term

In the Draft Working Plan the medium term assumed that each of our “Locations” (1 to 14 above) would be allocated another priest. However, as a result of the feedback, we are persuaded of three things:

- a) We should leave Upminster with one priest. The geography around Romford, Hornchurch and Upminster’s hospitals and schools is complicated. The presence of significant Polish communities also has an impact and the schools and hospitals appear to be served here with an additional priest.
- b) Dagenham effectively has two priests built into the long term.
- c) We could use a little non-linear thinking and allocate priests to non-parish-based work in the medium term to prepare us for the future.

Therefore, we propose that instead of allocating an extra 14 priests to the “Locations” in Framework Part One we allocate only twelve by leaving out a priest in each of Dagenham and Upminster.

These twelve priests will be based in one of the churches/parishes identified but they will work in a particular way with a focus on:

- working with the secondary school in the location;
- working to create/develop a more lay-led hospital ministry in that location;
- working with primary schools and on First Holy Communion groups, experimenting and trialling new lay-led work;
- helping parishes to become more missionary, evangelising or outreaching;
- helping those nearby parishes that in due course will not have a resident priest come to terms with the shape of the future; and
- covering weekend Masses for brother priests in the area.

Three priests will take up new roles not based in a particular parish or serving a particular location:

- They could help parishes to transition from the current state of affairs to the new state of affairs, e.g. if a parish is not marked down to have a priest in the long term and the current priest in that parish retires or dies, they could help that parish as it becomes part of a larger grouping.
- They could be well used working with several parishes as they develop youth work and school/parish links.
- There could be a programme of Sunday cover in different parishes to enable priests to take holidays or go on retreats, sabbaticals, training and so forth. A priest becomes effectively a cover priest for weekend Masses and has a four-day-per-week role working with groups of parishes on other projects.

The remaining priests (our current working estimate is eleven) could be allocated in the medium term as follows:

Four would be allocated to help parishes in rural areas and seven to larger parishes in order to help them adapt to the future.

These priests would work with the people in these specific areas to prepare them for the changes that are to come. Each of these will be known to be temporary and each parish will be incorporated into the long-term situation in due course. They will work with the Bishop and the Director of Development on this task, with a view to making the transitions as smooth as possible.

- 1) North Essex area
- 2) Tendring and South Colchester area
- 3) Witham, Kelvedon, Tiptree and Coggeshall
- 4) Danbury, Burnham, Maldon and South Woodham Ferrers
- 5) Shoeburyness and Rochford
- 6) Becontree
- 7) Wickford, Benfleet and Canvey
- 8) Chingford (both parishes), Waltham Abbey and Loughton
- 9) Hainault, Clayhall and Collier Row
- 10) Harold Hill (both parishes)
- 11) Tilbury, Stanford-le-Hope and South Ockendon

Restructuring

These are the numbers we are currently working with, but we suspect that our numbers just might be a little better than this for three reasons:

- As Bishop Alan uses our visas carefully and wisely, there could be a few more priests imported than previously factored into the figures.
- The current trend on religious orders is slightly more optimistic than the original figures.
- It appears that some priests who attain retirement age may prefer to stay on in ministry IF they can be relieved of administrative duties and extraneous work.

IF (big if) we are right about this, then we would propose that Bishop Alan uses his discretion to determine how they be placed (within the context of this overall plan) as it will depend on who the particular priest is as well as how things have developed in the medium term.

The fourth part of the original Framework suggested that once it was agreed we would then start work towards moving people into place as soon as we are able – that remains our intention.

Lay leadership and support

Please bear in mind that our priests are going to need a lot of support to make this possible. Around the position described above, we need to put in place proper lay leadership teams in the medium and long terms. These teams need to be strong, well organised and well resourced. They will also differ significantly from one place to another. A parish team should be a mix of volunteers and paid people. This links significantly with some of the work highlighted in the Renewal section and, in particular, with references to training, lay leadership and use of material resources.



The original Draft Working Plan is still available

➦ www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/news/diocese-is-listening/

CHART OF SUGGESTED PARISH GROUPS

1	Frinton	Harwich	Clacton			
2	Colchester	Lexden	Brightlingsea/ Wivenhoe	Greenstead		
3	Chelmsford x4					
4	Burnham	Maldon	Danbury/South Woodham Ferrers	Kelvedon	Witham	
5	Cathedral	Hutton				
6	Ingatestone	Ongar	Stock	Epping		
7	Billericay	Wickford	Basildon			
8	Romford	Gidea Park	Collier Row	Harold Hill x2		
9	Rainham	Elm Park				
10	Upminster	Hornchurch x2				
11	Barking x2	Dagenham x2				
12	Royal Docks	Canning Town				
13	East Ham	Upton Park	Forest Gate	Manor Park		
14	Braintree	Dunmow	Gt Bardfield	Halstead	Saffron Walden	Stansted
15	Ilford x2	Goodmayes	Newbury Park	Chadwell Heath	Becontree	
16	Barkingside	Clayhall	Hainault			
17	Walthamstow x2					
18	Woodford Green	South Woodford	Wanstead			
19	Chingford x2	Loughton	Waltham Abbey			
20	Leyton	Stratford				
21	Southend	Westcliff	Leigh	Eastwood	Shoeburyness	Rochford
22	Rayleigh	Canvey		Benfleet		
23	Grays	South Ockendon	Stanford- le-Hope	Tilbury		
24	Harlow x3					

Summary

It is now time for parishes to have serious conversations about how the future may look. We have suggested that groups of parishes need to work together and these are suggestions and not prescriptive. We have set out a chart of those groups below for ease of reference.

There is a meeting of Stewards and Clergy on 24 February 2018 and we would hope that the following timetable will be of assistance to Stewards of the Gospel and parishes as they plan for the coming months.

From now until mid-January – read, pray, think and discuss.

Mid-January –organise meetings within your individual parishes.

Late January/mid-February – meetings of groups of parishes.

24 February 2018 – Stewards/Clergy meeting.

31 March 2018 – deadline for feedback to be sent to the Director of Development.

Thank you for your prayers and your help as we Renew and Restructure our Diocese.

Bishop Alan SM

Steven Webb

Director of Development

Diocesan Strategic Planning Group

Advent 2017

STEWARDS OF THE GOSPEL PRAYER

Merciful Father, author of creation,
your Spirit enriches our world.

Through your Son, who shares our humanity,
you have called us to participate in your divine creativity
and to build the kingdom of God here on earth.

Form us, we pray, as one community
under the leadership of our Bishop Alan,
to serve the people of our Diocese of Brentwood.

Inspire us to discover new ways
to spread the joy of the Gospel.

Open our eyes to see Christ in others,
especially the poor, the sick and the marginalised.

Empower us to be the hands and feet of Christ
in our parishes and communities.

Help us to welcome all into His embrace.

Guide us in our discernment.

Give wisdom to our Stewards of the Gospel
who will help us in each parish
to see new paths of possibility:

for a spirit of mission that invigorates our every effort;
and for the strength to be unafraid of what is new.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Cathedral House
Ingrave Road
Brentwood
Essex
CM15 8AT

www.dioceseofbrentwood.net