



YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES

Summary of Feedback from Parish Consultations

July – December 2022

The draft *You Will Be My Witnesses* was published in the Summer of 2022. The priorities outlined in the Ten-Year Mission Plan are a direct result of the last two years spent talking and listening to people across the Diocese.

We are grateful for all the time that has been taken to give this feedback which reflects all the consultation that has been done over the last two years through surveys and discussions.

The feedback received in the final stage of consultation will inform the development of the final document. We heard from 65 parishes and received 51 other responses, mostly from individuals. The feedback was given in a range of formats and was varied; some responses being very detailed, and others brief.

Views were given on the format and publication of the document, however for the most part feedback focused on the plan, citing missing elements, commenting on the proposed priorities and sharing ideas for realising the plan. The views expressed were also often contradictory. This reflected the feedback we received from our survey of the laity in 2021 *A Thousand Voices* and the feedback from the *Synod* process.

Certain themes recurred across the feedback, for example lay leadership, a call for transparency and better communication, and the provision of Mass and other activities at times to suit working people.

What was envisaged by some of the themes in the feedback varied between submissions. In the case of ecumenism for example, this ranged from learning more about other denominations, to participating in local ecumenical groups and initiatives, learning from the experience of others, taking a leadership role in ecumenical activities, to sharing resources and churches.

The quality of the liturgy was generally felt to be an area for improvement. However, how to address this revealed many tensions. For some it needed to be modernised, others more participative, or more devout, or more beautiful, or more flexible.

Many submissions stressed the importance of lay involvement and leadership. It was generally recognised that the lay faithful and clergy would need to work together collaboratively to implement significant changes set out in the Ten-Year Mission Plan. Several submissions highlighted that without clergy engagement and leadership the ambitions in this plan would not be realised.

Several submissions reflected that the change management process must include effective communication, clear aims, local planning and realistic timelines a key theme was that The pace of change in relation to structural change was felt to be too ambitious although the urgency of the need for evangelisation and reaching out to our young people was also recognised.

Feedback was received from a few areas regarding the proposed future parish boundaries. A small number of respondents gave general views on the proposed boundaries (e.g., the geographical spread) Others submitted proposals relating to specific areas. Careful consideration was given to the proposed boundaries in light of the comments received; consequently, the shape of some parishes will be amended in the final publication of the Ten-Year Mission Plan.

There was a call in some of the feedback for more detail and direction for each the priority areas. The document was described by some as more of a vision document than a plan. Further detail will be provided in the final publication informed by the suggestions proposed within the submissions received.

Approximately 40% of parish responses included issues which are beyond the scope of the Diocese. Those most frequently mentioned were the ordination of women as priests and deacons and the matter of priestly celibacy and married priests. These same themes and the tension surrounding them also came through the synodal feedback and *A Thousand Voices*.

Responses included a huge variety of questions; these will be reviewed, and an updated FAQ will be published to support the final publication of *You Will Be My Witnesses*. We expect to publish the final draft in late Spring 2023.

Finally, this is a mission plan intended to reach out to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the World. This brings the challenge of change and requires commitment and energy. That commitment is evident in the detail of the responses received and we know some of our pastoral areas are already beginning to work together to realise the future and their mission at this time. *Bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through his Church* is core to the plan. It is a call to personal holiness first and foremost, so that in charity and love we can achieve this vision.

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Introduction

Context & The Journey So Far

The development of a Ten-Year Mission Plan for our Diocese of Portsmouth is the fruit of two-years' of discernment and consultation, which began with the Diocesan-wide survey *A Thousand Voices* undertaken in December 2020.

The draft document was published in the summer of 2022, the priorities outlined in the Ten-Year Mission Plan are a direct result of the last two years spent talking and listening to people across the Diocese.

This report summarises the feedback received in the final stage of consultation which will inform the development of the final document.

Format of the Consultation

Following the Clergy Conference on the 13 of July, parish priests were asked to consult on the draft Ten-Year Mission Plan in their parish.

Copies of the detailed document, and the short version were provided, alongside a suggested PowerPoint presentation to use.

Each parish was asked to discuss and consider the draft Ten-Year Mission Plan and give a combined parish response to the following questions [a feedback form was provided]:

1. Reflecting on the information we have shared; are there any priorities you feel we have missed from our Ten-Year Mission Plan?
2. What else beyond what is set out in the plan ,do we need to do to realise this plan as a Diocese, as parishes, as individuals?
3. Is there anything further we should take into account when considering the shape of parish groupings?
4. Is there any more feedback your parish would like to add?

Parishes were asked to feed back by the 15 December 2022.

Who we heard from

Following the 5 month consultation period, we heard from 65 parishes, of which 41 submitted a parish response, 14 fed back as part of combined pastoral area response, and 10 submitted both a parish response and fed back as part of a combined pastoral area response.

Four pastoral areas submitted a combined response: New Forest, Avon Stour, English Martyrs Vale of the White Horse, and Havant.

In addition to parish responses, we received 51 other responses. Of these, 5 were from individual members of the clergy, 40 were from individual members of the lay faithful, 2 were from lay faithful couples, 1 was from a lay faithful family and 3 were from small groups: Called & Gifted, the Saint Swithun Wells Fellowship Group, and the Christchurch Men's Group.

General Observations

Form of the feedback and methodology used for analysis

The feedback received was given in a variety of formats; some submissions responded to the questions posed, others submissions ranged from general comments on the document or a particular aspect of the plan to personal reflections and histories.

Of the parish feedback received, 18 responses (28%) followed the set questions while a further 15 (23%) roughly followed the feedback form. 32 parish submissions (49%) did not follow the questions on the feedback form.

Of the other feedback received, 5 responses (10%) followed the set questions while 46 (90%) did not follow the questions on the feedback form.

Each submission was carefully reviewed in its entirety and the feedback categorised under the headings in this paper. It should be noted that certain themes recurred across several sections of the feedback, for example lay leadership, the call for transparency and better communication, and the provision of Mass and other activities at times to suit working people.

Where submissions were received from pastoral areas, the feedback was counted as equivalent to that of the number of parishes in the area. For example, if a pastoral area comprising seven parishes mentioned the priority of Christ at the Centre in its feedback, this was given a count of 7.

Tone

The overall tone of the feedback was very mixed.

15 parish submissions (23%) were positive overall, along with 17 (33%) of other submissions.

16 parish submissions (25%) were negative overall, along with 9 (18%) of other submissions.

The tone of 30 parish submissions (46%) was mixed, along with 7 (14%) of other submissions.

2 parish submissions (3%) were neutral in tone, along with 14 (27%) of other submissions.

2 parish submissions (3%) gave feedback only on the proposed parish boundaries, along with 3 (6%) of other submissions.

Views on the clarity and detail of the Ten-Year Mission Plan

13 parishes responses (20%) called for more clarity on the Ten-Year Mission Plan, along with 6 (12%) of other responses.

19 parishes responses (29%) called for more detail in the Ten-Year Mission Plan, along with 5 (10%) of other responses. While 7 parish responses (11%) called for a simpler plan, along with 3 (6%) other responses.

Views on the timing and publication of the Ten-Year Mission Plan

22 parish responses (34%) gave feedback on the timing of the consultation and proposed publication, along with 8 (16%) other responses. For the most part, respondents felt that the timing between the deadline for submitting feedback and proposed date of publication was too short to allow for an adequate review of the plan in light of the feedback received.

13 parish responses (20%) commented on the format of the publication, images and layout, along with 7 (14%) other responses. Both positive and negative comments were received.

8 parish responses (12%) fed back on the language, spelling and grammar of the document, along with 9 (18%) other responses.

Missing elements from the Ten-Year Mission Plan

40 parish responses (62%) felt that there were missing elements to the Plan, along with 8 other responses (16%).

Missing aspects mentioned included:

- Greater focus on diversity and inclusion, including:
 - catering to the differing needs of different cultural and ethnic groups
 - welcome for those who are divorced, remarried and LGBTQ+
 - greater engagement of young people and families
 - the role of women in the Church
 - a greater consideration for the needs of the elderly
 - Enabling the participation of those less able to participate due to disability
- Communications plan
- Social media and raising the profile of the Catholic Church
- Promotion of marriage and the support of married life
- Spirituality
- Sacrament of Reconciliation
- End of life care
- Catholic Social Teaching
- Greater focus on synodality
- The concept of subsidiarity
- Role of deacons
- Role of religious
- Greater recognition of volunteers

- Vocations
- Ecumenical opportunities
- Learning from other denominations, other dioceses, etc.
- Transport
- The reasons why people have left.

Focus on the areas of priority outlined in the Ten-Year Mission Plan

Christ at the Centre

40 parish responses (62%) specifically mentioned this priority of the Ten-Year Mission Plan, along with 11 other responses (22%).

Throughout the feedback, there was a call for greater accessibility to Mass and other services, sacraments, and activities. Timing, transport, language, cultural differences, disability, and ill health were commonly cited barriers.

The quality of the liturgy was generally felt to be an area for improvement. However, how to improve presented a point of tension, there was a call for it to be modernised, more participative, more devout, more beautiful, more flexible, etc.

The quality of the homily was likewise felt to be a key area for improvement. It was felt that homilies and preaching should be delivered well, be concise and relevant to modern life.

There was generally a call for greater lay participation in services, although the envisaged extent of this varied between submissions.

Key themes and ideas included:

Provision

- Varied types of Mass and other Services
- Eucharistic Services
- More teaching of the Scripture
- Prayer in small groups, cell groups
- Greater Mass provision
- More Eucharistic ministers to visit the homes of the sick.
- More opportunities for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Exposition, Benediction, etc.
- More opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- More pilgrimages
- Creating space for different types of prayer e.g., Taizé, Speaking in Tongues
- Promoting prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Accessibility

- Masses provided at varied times.
- Provision of weekday Mass at times suitable for working people
- Provision of Mass in other languages
- Provision of transport to access church services
- Live streaming
- Cathedral to be more open and welcoming to laity.
- All sacraments to be held in the parish, including Confirmation and RCIA
- Celebration of Diocesan Masses to move around local communities.
- More easily accessible information regarding Mass times etc. across the Diocese
- Mass to be made more accessible for those who are lapsed/non Catholics by extending the welcoming ministry and having welcomers on duty throughout mass to help/supply mass sheets and listen etc

Lay Involvement

- Greater lay involvement
- Greater involvement of young people
- More lay-led eucharistic services
- Develop meaningful lay-led liturgies to be used in the absence of a priest.
- Lay people to be encouraged to prepare bidding prayers.

Clergy Participation

- Good clergy participation
- Priest participation in the Holy Rosary
- Ongoing formation of priests to keep their celebration of Mass fresh and meaningful
- Ongoing formation and provision of resources to ensure a high, consistent, overall standard of preaching.
- Promote prayer, sustain the liturgy, and help individuals and communities the younger clergy into action-centred 'pilgrim' fathers, lightly equipped, mobile, with initiative to operate autonomously to reach those most in need, and supported by a logistics unit. Retain large church venues, relative to population densities served by the more elderly clergy

Formation

- Greater and clearer explanation of the Mass, e.g. "A teaching mass sometimes i.e. explain what is going on at each stage and demystify the services such as Eucharistic adoration, rosary etc in the same way occasionally"
- Promote the ministry of lay catechist and provide training and development.
- Spiritual guidance & reflection in newsletter
- Offer resources for enhanced explanation of the Sunday Scripture readings.
- Involvement of young people in liturgical ministries

Style

- A more flexible liturgy
- A more modern liturgy
- Devout liturgy
- Music: beautiful & accessible
- More relevant homilies, shorter and well delivered.
- A beautiful liturgy
- Reflection of the wide and rich cultural heritages of the parish, have services led and liturgies devised by members of those communities.
- Different parish groups to lead and devise liturgies during the year.
- Beautiful churches

Clergy

43 parish responses (66%) specifically mentioned this priority of the Ten-Year Mission Plan, along with 16 other responses (31%).

A key theme surrounding this priority was the need for support and formation to be given to clergy to equip them for contemporary ministry.

It was generally felt that priests should be spiritual leaders and that administrative matters could be managed by others. There was a call for greater collaboration between the clergy and lay faithful.

Responses often seemed to conflate the terms "priests" and "clergy". 7 submissions specifically mentioned deacons in this section. It was generally felt that their role could be expanded.

Key themes and ideas included:

Role of the Priest

- Spiritual leaders, not administrators.
- Admin staff to support clergy, so that they can focus on other matters.
- Enable the laity to assume more responsibilities, to reduce clergy workload.
- Foster a culture of humility and servant leadership, avoid clericalism.
- Increase support to clergy – support their wellbeing, provide them with more training to enable them to use more inclusive approaches in their outreach and pastoral work and increase support during their retirement.
- Increase outreach and pastoral work carried out by clergy.
- Parish priests should take more interest in lay-led small groups.

- Priests could periodically (monthly maybe) host an online hour where parishioners can join and have a question and answer session (perhaps with a topic for discussion to stimulate discussion) – this is a way of getting to know our priests a little better and a chance to knit together the community.
- Priests should be friendly and approachable, e.g. say “Good Morning”

Role of the Lay Faithful

- Clergy should collaborate more with the lay faithful.
- There should be greater consultation between the priest and parish
- Develop the role of acolyte and reader for all.
- Trust and engage with the laity.
- Encourage and support all our clergy to work in collaboration with parishioners through structure such as Parish Pastoral Councils
- Encourage clergy to collaborate more to enable the gifts, talents and experience of the laity to be used more in parish life
- Take some of the roles of the clergy and allocate them to the lay community
- A synodal parish/Pastoral Area with a priest and leadership team

Formation

- Training for priests in collaborative ministry
- Formation for clergy to include better celebration of the Eucharist, practice supervision/support for pastoral work, including confession visiting the sick, spiritual direction etc.
- Training for clergy to support families with children who have physical or learning disabilities
- Training is so important especially helping our clergy be more in touch with lay people and modern life and to help them understand how to make the Gospel message relevant today
- Priests to receive training in giving homilies that inspire
- Provide formation on contemporary ministry.
- Mandatory ongoing formation and support

Accountability

- Introduce practice supervision as is the norm in secular roles such as counselling, safeguarding etc
- Appraisals mechanism to include 360° feedbacks (i.e., from parishioners as well as clergy)
- Ensure that all clergy actively support and enact the Plan.
- Priests who do not engage with their parishes should be held to account through some form of performance review, but there is a lack of trust that it would be rigorously implemented.

Deployment

- Rotate Clergy
- Take a more considered approach to the movement of clergy.
- Allow priests to have a longer tenure in their parishes instead of moving them on so frequently.
- Match the gifts of the new parish priests to the needs of the parish.
- Share priests (rather than merge parishes)
- Combine parishes in such a way that it enables priests not to be so isolated
- Priests living and working together to prevent isolation.
- Ensure priests are spread evenly across the Diocese.

Role of the Deacon

- Develop the permanent diaconate.
- Expand the role of deacons.
- Clarify of deacons’ role
- Enable deacons to take on more of a priest’s duties.

Role of the Bishop

- More visible presence of the Bishop

Vocations

- The Diocese should do more to carve out spaces in which the conversations about vocations should be taking place. All parishes must be encouraged to hold regular conversations about vocations.

- Consider whether seminarian training is cost effective and fit for purpose.
- Address the faults in the seminary programme that has contributed to the decline in clergy and the 'issues' that emerge in parish life.
- More prayers for vocations to the priesthood

Laity

49 parish responses (75%) specifically mentioned this priority of the Ten-Year Mission Plan, along with 17 other responses (33%).

A recurring theme throughout the feedback was the call for more lay leadership. What was meant by lay leadership seemed to vary, from increasing lay leadership in governance and administrative roles, to lay-leaders for formation and catechesis, to lay-led services.

Another important theme was the desire for more formation opportunities on a variety of topics. It was generally felt that formation should "meet people where they are" and be accessible and delivered at times and in a format to fit with modern life.

Key themes and ideas included:

Timing

- Provision of training, activities and Mass at times to suit working people

Formation

- Ongoing formation in prayer, liturgy & parish ministries
- Provide a programme of training and support for those that could become lay preachers
- Formation should be more accessible, less formal, and less of a time-constraint.
- Training programmes in catechesis and administration
- Easily accessible online formation and catechetical resources
- Formation on the basics in an accessible language
- Training of Eucharistic Ministers and Readers
- Diocese to share examples of best practice in catechesis, including materials covering every stage of the discipleship journey.
- Provide formation at all stages of life and faith.
- Provide training in Apologetics.
- Support for Catholic couples/families after marriage
- Lay formation: to be delivered locally for example through parish retreats, accompanied prayer, coaching, etc. Diocesan courses or online courses are not as intimate or accessible.

Leadership

- Allow for lay leadership.
- Lay-led services other than Mass. Some of these could be family-oriented or designed to attract young people.
- Work in collaboration with clergy
- Make the Church more "lay led" and not run by priests
- Provide more opportunities for the lay faithful to be heard.
- Opportunities for laity to become involved in all aspects of parish life.
- Develop the role of women in leadership positions in the Church.
- Parish councils regarded as essential for the inclusivity and smooth running of parishes which should continue in office in the event of a change in parish priests to ensure continuity and ongoing effectiveness at least until a new priest had become familiar with his new congregation.
- Lay faithful encouraged to lead Liturgy of the Word, prayer events, retreats, etc.

Groups

- Form a parish ministry team to lead on catechesis, music, liturgy, etc
- Establish small groups for prayer and formation.
- Social activities open to all.
- Justice & Peace Groups
- SVP

Gifts & Charisms

- Explore & utilise charisms.
- Promote diocesan programmes such as Called and Gifted and Ananias Training to aid parishioners to discern their particular gifts.
- Recognise the gifts the lay faithful have to offer.
- Encourage people to come forward for catechetical & sacramental roles.
- Make sure all the lay faithful in the pastoral area are fully involved. Use the talents of the laity across the pastoral area.
- A more dedicated and rotational list of names for involvement in parish programmes, to avoid always relying on the same few people.
- Create a database of expertise within the lay faithful and work with them where possible. Use their expertise: The Diocese must recognise and actively seek the support and expertise of lay people.
- Consider fixed terms for lay ministry roles and succession planning

Welcome

- Bring-a-friend weekends.
- Welcome envelopes with key details about the parish. Buddy up those new or new to the faith with someone who is a regular.
- Each adult member of the parish could have a spiritual companion, a prayer partner whom they meet regularly so that will enhance their spiritual life.

Young People

39 parish responses (60%) specifically mentioned this priority of the Ten-Year Mission Plan, along with 8 other responses (16%).

Several responses felt that young people should not be separated out as a separate group, but rather viewed as part of the lay faithful.

The limited engagement and consultation with young people on the formation of the Ten-Year Mission Plan was noted in several submissions.

The current practice of holding Confirmations at the Cathedral was mentioned in several submissions, it was generally felt that holding it in the parish would lead to better and wider engagement.

Several submissions called for a dedicated youth leader and/or youth workers to support engagement with and provision for young people.

Key themes and ideas included:

Engagement and Outreach

- Diocesan Youth Leader/Worker
- Parish Youth Ministers (paid)
- Young leaders
- Engagement with young people, consult with and listen to them.
- Diocesan Young Peoples' Council
- Youth ministries
- Post Holy Communion outreach programmes for families.
- Engagement and consultation with school leaders
- Welcome young people and trust them to take responsibility in all aspects of parish life.
- Confirmation to happen in the new parish not the Cathedral.
- Sacramental preparation to be carried out in parishes rather than schools
- Involve children more in parish activities such as greeting, reading etc.
- Use of social media and other platforms to engage with a younger audience.
- Re- establish Diocesan Youth Office with effective support for the many without practical access to secondary Catholic schools
- Youth chaplaincies within each parish
- Differentiate the different stages of youth and the differing needs for support; Clearly defined set of activities and liturgies for 11-18, students, young professionals

- A charismatic priest dedicated to the needs of the young people
- Involve younger people more in the running / decisions of the parish.
- Invite the Bishop to meet young people in their parishes.
- A strategy for school leaver engagement needs to be developed.

Events and Activities

- Prayer/Rosary groups for the young
- Mini Vinnies (youth SVP) in the parish
- Initiatives such as "The Twelve"
- Youth events such as "Flame"
- Social events, for example film clubs, trips, competitions, etc.
- Provide formation & social events after 1st Communion.
- More family groups.
- Events and activities should be better publicised.
- Provision of Youth Masses
- Bible study and other groups for young people
- Organise youth pilgrimages.
- Provide mental health support.
- Youth mass with music and modern hymns
- Youth-led Masses
- Seek out opportunities to engage young people through charitable outreach (with Caritas and SVP support), social events and environmental activities (Laudate Si)

Catholic Education

- Support local schools.
- Catholic schools to recruit Catholic staff.
- Evangelise schools, build school teams to support and reinforce the Christian Message
- Parishes to be more dynamic in their work with schools so that the young know they have a place in the Diocese and parish
- Ensure liturgies are celebrated in schools.
- Priests need to be visibly present in primary and secondary schools.
- Improve connections with university students.
- Those going to University to be provided with contact details of CathSoc.
- There should be a Catechism plan for those who don't go to a Catholic school.
- Lay people should visit schools.

Outreach and Welcome

38 parish responses (58%) specifically mentioned this priority of the Ten-Year Mission Plan, along with 4 other responses (8%).

A common theme throughout the feedback as a call to improve our communication and make better use of technology. Accessible, up-to-date and informative websites were frequently mentioned, as was the need to use social media to increase the Catholic Church's online presence.

Responses on this area of priority included a wide variety of specific groups and initiatives for charity, outreach and building community.

Working with other faiths and/or other charities on local initiatives was frequently mentioned.

Key themes and ideas included:

Charity & Outreach

- Be more inclusive to those beyond walls – warm spaces and 'come and see' days - welcome the stranger.
- Develop links with CAFOD, Caritas, Bamenda, chaplaincies, etc.
- Parish foodbanks, soup kitchens, shelter for the homeless
- Work with other denominations and faiths in delivering community projects e.g. night shelter, warm space, credit union, food bank
- Support local charities.

- Clear plan for evangelisation
- A greater role for Caritas
- Chaplaincy work to include hospices.
- Invest in kitchen facilities and qualified catering staff, to offer meals for elderly and school holiday meals

Welcome & Community

- Social events & activities
- Efforts have to be supported by prayer. The housebound could intercede for our intentions.
- Open days
- Welcoming Ministry
- Hospitality
- "Open for Prayer" signs outside the church
- Build friendship groups.
- Fellowship groups post Alpha.
- Nonfaith specific groups to encourage the community.
- Provide newcomers with a leaflet explaining the Mass.
- Bishop to get out to meet his parishioners and people beyond. Take the church to people, rather than summoning them to the Cathedral "mother church"
- Introduce a buddy system for our house bound so that they do not feel alone.
- Name-Badge-Sundays for outreach and getting to know all faces
- Welcome liturgy to introduce newcomers to a few parishioners.
- Parish groups based on hobbies.
- Mental Health Carer's Group
- Community events - dinner and talks to provide opportunities to share our Faith with others
- Develop a Welcome Pack for new residents so they know the local Catholic church is there for them

Visibility

- Online events, podcasts, presence on social media
- Improve our channels of communication, websites, social media, newsletters.
- Sign posting the church e.g. trim bushes that hide the name of it. Some people ask is this the Catholic Church?
- Have Mass 'anywhere' not just in churches. Go to where the people are – Café Church, community centres, school halls etc.
- Keeping churches with good facilities e.g. a hall and parking open during the day for the community to feel welcome to drop into for non-worship. coffee etc.
- Use of boards around the church on topics e.g. Eucharist that get changed periodically

Accessibility

- Glossary of terms on a board in the hall or church (maybe with pictures)
- Use plain English.
- Offer shorter services for the elderly, the disabled and those with mental health problems who cannot cope with an hour-long Mass.
- Transport for the elderly to get to Mass.

School, Parish, Family

36 parish responses (55%) specifically mentioned this priority of the Ten-Year Mission Plan, along with 7 other responses (14%).

There was a general call for more interaction between parishes and Catholic schools, however many submissions did not specify what this should involve or how it could be put into practice.

Catholic schools were viewed both positively and negatively in the feedback: For example, "The real mission of the Church is school" compared with "Some people perceive that the time and money that goes into Catholic schools does not produce Catholic adults."

Key themes and ideas included:

Links between the parish and Catholic school(s)

- Embed a stronger catechetical base in school religious education.
- Develop closer links between parishes and schools.
- Increase links between parish and school with visible presence of school at Sunday Mass.
- Parishes to work closely with Catholic schools on provision for young people and families
- Priests should visit schools regularly.
- Parishes and schools could share resources.
- Increase the number of Masses at Catholic schools.
- More publicity between school and parish
- The lay faithful should also visit schools.
- Facilitate school children attending Mass on Holy Days.
- Ensure Catholic schools have access to a Catholic church

Catholic School Admissions

- Base school admission on parish involvement rather than Mass attendance
- A more liberal view on enrolment in Catholic schools

Home & Family

- Further develop parent groups, mums and toddlers and other groups
- Connect with parents of children in Sacramental Preparation programmes.
- Young couples need support and would welcome a secure and safe babysitting service
- Provide support for parents on how to pass on their Faith.
- Church estate to be used to support Catholic pre-schools/nurseries
- More home visits from priests, who are able to keep in touch with family-life and have a real understanding of what is happening in the lives of parishioners.
- Going 'back to basics' should also include encouraging and supporting the domestic Church. Many Catholic homes no longer pray together; let alone have any religious items: crucifix, statues etc.

Links with other schools

- Provision of programmes for children who are not in Catholic school, e.g., "Walk with me."
- Invite schools in to visit (be proactive about this and not wait for the schools to ask us as there are modules in the National Curriculum which include Christian Faith)

Vocations

- Formation of a Diocesan vocations team containing a secular priest, a missionary a nun & a brother who should tour Catholic Schools individually and together to make known the excitement of being a Catholic religious.

Laudato Si

18 parish responses (28%) specifically mentioned this priority of the Ten-Year Mission Plan, along with 4 other responses (8%).

This was the least mentioned priority in the feedback received, however where responses were given they tended to give specific and practical examples of how this could be achieved.

Key themes and ideas included:

Organisation

- Establish a specific Diocesan group to be tasked with this area of priority.
- Each parish to be given set of guidelines as to how they can enact this.
- Live Simply groups
- Parish targets to improve energy efficiency, sustainability to be built into all parish budgets and local plans.
- Diocese to demonstrate much more protecting-the-planet leadership and action.

Specific Initiatives

- Look at green alternatives for cleaning equipment and paper sources.
- Abstinence from meat on Friday

- Diocesan project to commit to carbon neutral / % reduction in carbon usage by set date. Set targets to improve energy efficiency, including switch to LED lighting across the entire Diocesan estate, maximising insulation, retrofitting e.g., secondary glazing, installing smart meters, not overheating underused spaces etc. Feasibility studies to end the use of gas/oil in church properties, by investigating feasibility of solar arrays on church buildings, heat source pumps, retrofitting etc
- Better promotion of online newsletters etc. to reduce the use of paper.
- Better community-sharing of our estate.
- Walk/cycle to church.
- Support parishes to undertake environmental audits and act on recommendations such as installing solar panels where appropriate and practicable.
- Use parish land to grow vegetables / fruit/ pollinator friendly plants.
- Use land around churches for a "Community Garden" - proving a hub for people interested in 'grow your own' vegetables. Scouts/Guides could perhaps work on the garden to qualify for badges/scouting awards
- Encourage recycling.
- Set targets for energy usage.
- Bishop to come to confirmands (one car) rather than (50) going to the Cathedral.
- Establish a regular Exchange of Goods event where local people can both donate items and take other items for free
- Litter picking – everyone to clean from their home to the church?

Education

- Educate people about Laudato Si
- Provide teaching on sustainable living.
- More information and guidance about Laudato Si should be provided to parishes
- Parishes to provide info regarding energy, plastic, water usage against targets

Ecumenism

29 parish responses (45%) specifically mentioned this priority of the Ten-Year Mission Plan, along with 4 other responses (8%).

In the responses given, the appetite for ecumenism ranged from learning more about each other's faith, to taking part in local events, to taking a leadership role, to sharing resources.

Several submissions considered the opportunities of sharing churches and other resources with other Christians in the local area.

One submission observed that *You Will Be My Witnesses* made no mention of the word 'ecumenism' and did not give example of how to enhance it.

Key themes and ideas included:

Sharing Learning

- Research how large Evangelical churches work as large parishes and learn best practices.
- Find ways for Catholic groups to interact with female clergy from other disciplines.
- The Church of England has for many years combined small rural parishes with a number of churches. They must have a great deal of expertise in this area, what works, what doesn't work. Is there some dialogue going on between the churches to make use of this experience, and what works well, particularly in this area?

Sharing Resources

- Offer financial and other support to ecumenical activities, e.g., Street Pastors
- Share schools; establish joint Catholic and CofE schools in area where there is a shortage.
- Sharing churches with local non-Catholic Churches. As a cost saving idea as well sharing the space with their parish could help with so many other opportunities to deepen faith together, fundraise together, share ideas and perhaps attend faith courses together. Being more connected with the Church of England community to learn from one another and with each other.
- Create a database of resources for apologetics, evangelization, catechesis, prayers, scripture

Initiatives and Activities

- Quarterly or half yearly ecumenical meetings within each parish
- Engage in Churches Together
- Need to take more of a lead in Churches Together instead of just 'tagging along'.
- Take part in the Walk of Witness
- Attend ecumenical Lent groups.
- Diocese to show leadership and example by working visibly together with other Christian organisations.
- Encourage all clergy to engage in ecumenical prayer and dialogue with their fellow Christian clergy locally
- Work with other church groups, and indeed other faith groups to work for common causes such as the environment, food banks etc, and Catholic social teaching.
- Participate in Faith in Politics, the Common Good, The Turning, etc.
- Organise joint social events and opportunities to pray together.
- Encourage the lay faithful to work with, and link with, other Christian groups to galvanise prayer on the streets and increase pastoral work across communities.

Stewardship of Resources

43 parish responses (66%) specifically mentioned this priority of the Ten-Year Mission Plan, along with 12 other responses (24%).

The Stewardship of Resources was a particularly polarising section of the feedback. Some were optimistic of the opportunities the Ten-Year Mission Plan could bring. Others were very negative, of the plan and the status quo.

Many submissions gave practical examples of how stewardship could be improved or of what needed to change.

The call for greater transparency was a recurring theme in this section of the feedback.

Key themes and ideas included:

Transparency and Decision-Making

- "There hasn't been a blunt enough message about the implication of not paying our way.....e.g., church closures."
- Greater transparency of Diocesan finances
- Develop a detailed financial plan to back the Ten-Year Mission Plan
- Introduce agreed financial management [between parishes and Diocese]
- Every parish grouping to have a council for representative decision-making
- Ensure people with relevant skills and experience are in financial roles, providing ongoing training to ensure resources are properly managed.
- "We tolerate inefficiency too often in our parishes. We allow people to do things because they are willing rather than because they have the right skills or attitude. Key roles in parish life and structure should be subject to interview and regular review and accountability, like any other key roles in life."
- Diocese to be fully transparent on funding matters and to re-examine the effectiveness of the circa £14.5m spend from the previous fund raising
- Be open about how grants are spent.
- Pooling of resources could be good but would require complete transparency.
- Diocese to publish accounts to parishes - accountability & transparency.
- Establish a parish leadership team to develop and implement a local plan.
- Transparent accounting; e.g. volunteer committees to look strategically at development and investment
- Greater accountability and visibility of the activities of Rome and the Diocese.
- Multi-way feedback between Diocese and parish and laity (publish all the information that is being gleaned from these groups; question/suggestion box in the parish)
- Parish websites to show diocesan & parish accounts, PFC minutes
- Make greater use of social media.
- More frequent updates on the diocesan financial situation.

Income Generation & Use of Resources

- Encourage stewardship rather than fundraising campaigns.
- Encourage legacies.

- Cost saving opportunities of priests sharing accommodation
- Focus our finances on outreach to the wider community not just maintaining buildings
- "If churches are to close, stop spending funds on maintenance unless absolutely essential"
- Explain the advantages of regular giving & Gift Aid
- Ensure that priority spending is for evangelisation.
- Maintenance and management of local estate. Clear and effective guidelines needed with defined responsibilities between diocese and parish.
- Preach more on financial stewardship.
- Make parishioners aware of projects and the input needed from them- time, talent, treasure.
- Make sure maintenance is value for money rather than 'we have to use X'
- Knock down all old churches and build one central hub with community facilities to do outreach, and make it a centre for the community
- Install audio/video equipment in churches to engage people in a modern way, and enrich our liturgies
- Releasing resources and money from our estate could be used to upgrade remaining churches.
- Invest in technology to support going out on mission, enhancing the cohesiveness of our community, communicating and especially engaging with young people whose preference is to encounter others digitally
- Expand the use of church premises for community use (e.g., community garden/allotments/orchard on unused grass
- Encourage tithing.
- Implement greater safeguarding.
- Repurpose any churches that do not continue to hold Masses to be put to some other use in the parish, e.g. as nurseries, training centres or community hubs.
- Create a register of gifts (charisms) and talents (Diocese)
- Diocese & parish to give 10% of its income to charitable causes via Caritas, CAFOD and SVP
- In selling off properties, retain some for refugees and homeless.
- Succession planning
- Develop parish digital resources.
- Fundraising initiatives - e.g., musical concerts
- Estate used for business meetings.

The Role of the Diocese

- Diocese to share resources with other dioceses.
- Diocese to be more supportive of local plans e.g. "For many years the parish has been trying to find a way to build a community centre but has received poor support from the Diocese."
- "suspicious of appointing people often paid to take responsibility for areas because often it means that the rest of us feel we don't have to do anything."
- Diocese to assist parishes in developing the correct approach to appeals and financial management.

Differing Opinions

- "Shared roles across the Pastoral Area are likely to be minimal."
- "Our current parishes should be given a chance to respond to the need to cover costs and given 12-36 months before any revisions to parish structures "
- "Combining finances are likely to cause discontent amongst those parishes with money."
- "What is written is good and embraces the stark reality."
- "Dramatically reduce the size of the team in the diocesan office and dramatically reduce the pay packets of the diocesan team employees."
- "Diocesan staff seem overworked and diocese runs a deficit – seek external funding to balance the books"
- "Fire trustees as they have patently failed in their responsibilities"
- "Knock down all old churches and build one central hub with community facilities to do outreach, and make it a centre for the community"
- "Close the places of unproductive 'loss-leaders' of worship, which cannot evangelise. Promote public worship - bring the liturgy to the people, rather than expecting the faithful to come to the churches. Worship could take place anywhere and everywhere, whenever people can gather: - Tesco car parks,

hotels, playing fields, festival sites etc. The internet (WhatsApp etc) would be the communications architecture.”

- “Complains that other churches has [sic.] funds which they do not share with those in debt”
- “You don't need to worry. If you follow this plan, you won't be needing the churches”

The Future Structure of the Diocese

Parishes Working Together

22 parish responses (34%) specifically mentioned this aspect of the Ten-Year Mission Plan, along with 4 other responses (8%).

Some responses specifically considered the opportunities of working together with other parishes, for some this was in the context of working as one parish, for other it was in the context of the current landscape of parishes in pastoral areas.

Several looked at the need to build a new sense of community, for others it was important to maintain the identity of existing communities.

Ideas included:

- Shared ministries, activities and initiatives: bereavement, youth ministry, music, social justice projects, environmental project, groups for the elderly, mothers groups, youth groups
- More chances to meet in large consultations/synods such as this.
- Pool resources and skills.
- Share resources and build personal relationships across the area.
- Organise transport to Churches.
- Clergy to share presbyteries.
- Coordinate Mass times across the pastoral area.
- Develop a sense of community across the wider area by creating opportunities to socialise and to pray together.
- Identify parishes with the best facilities to be open to the community.
- Need to build a sustainable, cohesive and effective structure for mission across our parishes and schools
- Facilitate sharing of resources, reduce duplication, retain strengths.
- Need to do things jointly, exchanges, talks, Masses etc. across the new area. Encourage attendance at various study groups and other activities to create a spirit of friendship and better understand the Word of God.
- Favour a group model of ministry: one of cooperation but not a group of assistant priests responsible to one parish priest.

Aspects for Centralisation

Throughout the feedback there was a tension between a call for the Diocese to be more supportive, give more detailed direction and take responsibility for many aspects of the plan, and a desire for local decision-making or a feeling that the Diocese is demanding, overbearing, untrustworthy and has no business interfering in local matters.

A small number of submissions suggested that the Diocese should consider merging with other dioceses (in this section, and other sections).

28 parish responses (43%) gave specific examples of aspects on which the Diocese should take lead or be more open, or suggested areas of activity which could be centralised, along with 1 other response (2%).

Ideas included:

Direction and Support

- A diocesan employee tasked with looking at the whole picture and advising parishes on working with young people.
- Common protocols to be drawn up for the whole Diocese, based on the principles of synodality, to guide relationships and decision making, especially between clergy.
- Common objective criteria to be established for the whole Diocese to guide decisions regarding church closures

- “Support from Diocese for increasing Mass attendance but should be less centralised and promote subsidiarity”
- Key roles should be paid roles. Roles should be consistent and clearly defined across the Diocese.
- Diocese should rate each church and put in place a structured action plan for those in 'special measures'.

Transparency

- A strategic, financial and operational management plan should be published as soon as possible to inform further discussions on this consultation document.
- The diocese must publish its evaluation and learning from the local and other pilot areas (e.g. Winchester and Romsey).
- The synodal responses were rich with ideas particularly around welcome. These need to be made available in full.
- Improved, simple, straightforward communication from top to bottom

Centralised Activity & Resources

- Finance and catechesis should be centralised
- Diocese to promote parish involvement in Caritas, SVP, CAFOD and other local charities
- The Plan seems to have a lot to be organised by Caritas – funds need to be given to achieve all this
- Diocese to Promote the Bamenda link more “we only hear of it when the annual collection is taken up”
- Commonality of technology across the Diocese
- One common website across the Diocese
- Diocese to support the development of parish estate.
- Lead on Laudato Si
- Caritas
- Lead on Ecumenism
- Take consistent approach to safeguarding, health and safety, finance
- Enable and train our Administrators to triage and action some things without the priest.

Church Closure

Generally speaking the feedback did not focus on church closure; where submissions did focus on the structural elements of the plan this tended to be in relation to the merging of parishes rather than the prospect of closing churches.

However, 38 parish responses (58%) directly mentioned church closure at some point in their feedback, along with 13 other responses (25%). 4 parish responses (6%) mentioned church closure indirectly (e.g., as an example, or as part of a question) at some point in their feedback, along with 3 other responses (6%).

Feelings towards church closure were ranged widely, some were very negative, others were resigned or saw it as inevitable, others were constructive, practical or saw it as an opportunity.

The Challenges and Opportunities Ahead

Challenges

51 parish responses (78%) foresaw particular challenges in the implementation of the Ten-Year Mission Plan, along with 15 other responses (29%).

Key areas of concern raised in the feedback were that the Ten-Year Mission Plan would result in the loss of community and a more distant bond between clergy and lay faithful.

Other concerns were regarding the practical implementation of the Ten-Year Mission Plan, and the challenges that would need to be overcome for it to bear fruit.

The challenges mentioned included:

Geography

- Large geographical area with rural/urban mix
- The carbon footprint of congregations traveling further.
- Getting coherence between a large number of parishes spread across miles.
- Large geographical areas

Community

- Loss of communities and friendships
- The loss of the sense of "parish community"
- An aging population will be even more cut off from their churches.
- If a church closes many people simply will not go anywhere else.
- The plan may be underestimating people's attachment to their local community and over-estimating willingness to travel
- Parishioners may lose their identity and sense of belonging to a particular community.
- If parishes become fewer and therefore larger, we will lose the cohesiveness of local communities and more will leave to other Christian communities
- The next 10 years will be more challenging for our parishioners, and there will be less community services as we face austerity and public funding cuts. What role can we play in supporting people in the community (not just our parishioners)
- Loss of belonging with a Team Ministry, loss of cohesion with change of structure

Bonds between clergy and lay faithful.

- If priests are spread across a large area, they will not know the local community as well - they will seem distant and unapproachable
- Hard to keep a close bond between parish priest and parishioner.
- Clergy having to service large numbers of churches.
- Avoid the Church of England model of a "united benefice" of seven parishes grouped together with one priest to serve them all.
- Pastoral care will suffer.
- Under the parish priest and assistant priest model, risk of dictatorial leadership, remuneration not equitably shared and local concerns ignored.
- Proposed larger structures will increase clergy workload and stress.
- "Our main worry is that we won't have enough priests."
- Clericalism
- Challenge around clergy who do not take part or who are unable to lead a parish due to poor formation or personal issues
- "Some clergy aren't keen on lay involvement."

Administrative, Organisational & Structural Challenges

- Those who currently volunteer may lose their positions.
- Increased administration.
- Making decisions about closing churches.
- Solvent parishes will take on the debts of others.
- We are putting increased pressure on a diminishing number of individuals (clergy and laity).
- If all in one building, it won't be large enough, If across several there will be too many buildings/masses for one priest
- "There is danger that the plan will sidestep the crucial Church teaching on subsidiarity. Such an approach is seriously and theologically flawed. An approach inspired by centralisation and a failure in subsidiarity will demoralise faith communities further, particularly geographically isolated parishes like our own."
- Due to its small size there may not be enough resources in the 'Southampton East – area M' pastoral area for it to keep going in the long term
- We need to balance immediate need and longer-term planning
- The Plan seems to presuppose a functioning parish pastoral council is in place which is not the case in all parishes
- The plan seems very rigid. Are there more innovative ways of working. Currently it seems too hierarchical.
- Call to develop outreach in the parish through SVP, taking communion to the sick but how to do this safely within the restrictions set by Safeguarding
- Combining committees / volunteer groups without alienating & losing volunteers

Other Challenges

- Changing the way mass is celebrated. More uniformity in priestly styles.

- This is a one size fits all plan. Our parish is growing. Why would we want to close. The plan should tackle the issue parishes/areas first.
- The objectives expressed does not recognise that many parishioners do not want to take part in formation, or give more time to church than they do on a Sunday or on an occasional Sunday.
- "Getting any of this done."

Opportunities

18 parish responses (28%) cited particular opportunities in the implementation of the Ten-Year Mission Plan, along with 6 other responses (12%).

The opportunities cited in the feedback were varied, for the most part they related to the opportunities brought by a "fresh start" or the benefits brought by having a larger pool of available resources.

The opportunities mentioned included:

Community

- "We used to be a very active parish but our 36 groups were disbanded and parishioners went elsewhere. Maybe now in the new structure those groups will be reignited."
- Opportunity to bring young people together.
- Growth in congregation numbers and more young people and a bigger network.
- Joyful Communities – more important than buildings
- A chance to integrated diverse congregations.
- Opportunity to link more closely to the religious communities in our parishes

Mass and Parish Life

- There is a wonderful opportunity to provide a cohesive plan that allows for a calendar of Masses and events to meet the demand of the larger area.
- A chance to renew the Liturgy.
- More opportunities to have specific masses for diverse groups.
- Collaboration of Music groups / Prayer groups / Alpha groups.
- More diversity. Get younger people involved in Mass.
- Better sacramental preparation / More effective evangelisation.
- Joint catechesis
- Services of Word and Communion, or Morning/Evening Prayer and Communion could once again enhance parish worship as parishes become larger and fewer priests are available.

Outreach

- The feedback is positive re change and becoming more outward-looking but sceptical that it will actually happen
- Better communication from the top down.
- The increase in population in the area may result in growth in the church not decline.

Structure, Leadership and Administration

- We should be open and inviting not be set in rigid formations we have had for years, possibly the new area structures can be helped by youth and technology which has less physical limitations
- "A chance for laity to be in authority."
- "Would be good if this would create more avenues for lay involvement and collaboration in Parish pastoral and Admin structures with Priests/Deacons"
- Financially beneficial (economies of scale). Common access to all offerings (spiritual, pastoral, skills and financial)
- Greater pool of talents to call upon.
- Improving the finances of the Diocese
- Opportunity for more lay leadership in liturgy, social action, and pastoral care (a pre-requisite for success).
- "A chance to clear out those older volunteers who have a stranglehold on parishes."
- Opportunity for new ideas – shared church buildings, ecumenical parishes, intercommunion with other denominations."

- Local transport issues could be overcome by voluntary carpool arrangements.
- This model, moving more and more towards teamwork, flexible roles using the time and skills people can offer, and flexible and appropriate training.
- "If we consider selling Hedge End & West End churches we could have enough funds to build up Bitterne church, we could have more people to serve, sing, clean and have a full church every Sunday and week days. Bigger tea rooms and craft rooms so we can drop in for a tea and chat on week days"
- "My dream would be to sell all the churches in our Pastoral Area, and build one large Church centre, big enough to seat all our parishioners. (600). It would include meeting rooms, a cafe, and a large hall. The presbytery would be on the same site. Parking facilities also should be made. If necessary we could organise transport for those not on a bus route, or unable to get to the centre."

Factors for Success

51 parish responses (78%) highlighted particular factors for success in the implementation of the Ten-Year Mission Plan, along with 17 other responses (33%).

Key factors mentioned were the role of the laity and the role of the clergy in ensuring the success of the Ten-Year Mission Plan. Many submissions stressed the importance of lay involvement and leadership. It was generally recognised that the lay faithful and clergy would need to work together to implement significant change. Several submissions highlighted clergy engagement in enabling the delivery of the Ten-Year Mission Plan as a determining factor for success.

Others key factors for success related to the change management process, effective communication, clear aims, local planning and realistic timelines were all felt to be important. A number of submissions talked about the pace change, which was felt to be too ambitious.

The factors for success mentioned included:

The role of the Lay Faithful and the role of the Clergy

- The active involvement of the laity
- "Priests are essential. Lay authority is essential."
- Both clergy and laity should be fully involved in the process
- Clergy needed to be informed by the best practice of other dioceses which have embarked on a similar path.
- Greater lay leadership
- "Move away from pastoral structures centred around a parish priest, to shared leadership and governance structures involving laity and religious communities, especially prioritising women. Bring diversity of thought to leadership structures (underpinned by prayer)."
- "Imperative that ALL clergy accept and actively support and implement the Plan"
- "Priests need to be open to being encouraged and challenged"
- "Preparing and equipping laity for mission"
- "Forming larger parishes will need the few clergy to 'buy into' the plan and they'll need to work closely with the laity to form the communities we need and desire"
- "Traditional churches are in decline while more modern, forward-looking churches are growing. Can our clergy embrace a more modern church?"
- "Please engage and involve the laity and not let the clergy be detached and continue in their old ways"
- "The reality is that, more than ever before, there will need to be a major commitment by lay volunteers working alongside clergy (bishop, priests and deacons) in the coming years"
- The ongoing formation, support and oversight of the priests

Change Management

- Implementing a gradual change
- Local planning and decision-making
- "The plan must, once agreed, be delivered and progress tracked with parishioners updated. It must not be a plan that is not seen through, a plan that falls by the wayside. It must be constantly highlighted and not get forgotten. To achieve this, everyone at every level must buy into it in order for it to be successful."
- Share regular updates on the implementation of the Ten-Year Mission Plan
- We should go at a speed which suits the individual location.

- A change program to tie the larger community together that is sensitive to each of the current parishes' cultures
- Learn from other communities as to how they have organised themselves and brought communities together
- Smart/measurable/achievable/realistic goals
- A strategy director to co-ordinate the plan and initiatives
- "A new youth development director to build programmes like Duke of Edinburgh for teens. Also, quarterly socials with speakers."
- "Reduce to three priorities..... formation of adults, evangelisation of lapsed Catholics, wake up call to Catholics to 'pay up'."
- Effective communications
- "All of this requires leadership which is collaborative and dynamic, youthful and inspiring. I am concerned that the timetable of integration of existing parishes is very tight and imminent with no signs of this leadership emerging,"
- A feasibility study for the plan before embarking on it.
- "We do need to emphasise the personal and Diocesan interfaces that are equally critical. Overall success will depend developing synergy between the three - Personal; Parish and Diocesan components and at the moment we (arguably) focus too much on the parish"
- "Not to rush things. Change management shows that the more time spent on the consultation and formulation of the detailed plan the more chances of success."
- "The collaborative planning needs to include neighbouring parishes in A&B and the military church and the Abbey and certainly take it into account. Additionally, even small decisions need to be taken in the context of what else is available, For example as the Abbey offers weekly traditional Latin Mass to the local population, this should be taken into account in terms of offering a diversity of Mass options in this area."
- The need for a 'central organizing team' was mentioned to ensure what the plan proposes as priorities can be implemented in a manner that is appropriate to the local situation."
- "Ensure that we close the 'say/do gaps' the difference between what we say and what we do."
- "Changes should incorporate responses to the recent synodal consultation."
- "The approach of joining up parishioners has been trialled in other parts of the diocese like Winchester and Romsey. However, no lessons from these experiences have been shared as part of this consultation. A critical evaluation of these areas aimed at understanding the impact of the changes must be carried out. Plans to proceed with the mergers as proposed in the consultation must only commence after an illustrated demonstration of these changes having had a positive impact for the clergy and parishioners involved."
- "Have the courage to change the plan following consultation if needed"
- Provision of the plan in other languages, to recognise the increasingly multi-cultural nature of parishes
- Consult and engage with people under 40 about the plan for the future
- Dialogue between parishes and the Diocese

Community

- Older people will need to be more accepting of change if we want young people to attend Church.
- Maintaining a local sense of community
- "We need to get to know each other first – how can we welcome others until we know each other."
- Cell groups within large parishes to provide the welcome of small communities.
- Need to be aware of culture and current parish identity and need to work together to bring everyone into a new structure.
- Identity is important. People need to feel a part of 'their' church community.

Structure, organisation, and administration

- New administration and support structures to meet the need and demand from the new pastoral area geographical size.
- Consideration of the logistics of the larger area including for example available public transport when arranging services and other activity, use of technology for meetings etc.
- Assurance that the new parish finances are being run for the good of all churches within the parish
- Financial transparency

- Clear, representative and fair governance structures
- "Mobility of parishioners & ease of access to church facilities."
- Facilitate transport for disabled and vulnerable.
- Times of Mass must be coordinated and varied (e.g., have a Sunday evening Mass) between the church groupings

Specific Feedback on the Future Parish Boundaries & Updated Modelling

25 parish responses (38%) commented on or proposed changes to the future parish boundaries outlined in the Ten-Year Mission Plan, along with 7 (14%) other responses.

A small number of respondents gave general views on the proposed boundaries (e.g., the geographical spread). Others submitted relating to specific areas, as set out below.

Crowthorne & Sandhurst

Feedback received.

The placement of Crowthorne and Sandhurst within the proposed Northeast Hampshire parish was not viewed positively in the feedback. The parish of Crowthorne and Sandhurst felt it would be a better fit with Wokingham and Bracknell. Four other parishes, including Wokingham and Bracknell, also fed back to this effect.

Original model published in July 2021

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
South Berkshire	BRASJ WOK	2	1,326	311,195	213,591	663	155,597	10	20	95%	62%
Northeast Hampshire	ALDSJ CROSA FARNH FARNLD FLECRO HART YAT	10	2,026	661,711	226,150	203	66,171	3	4	145%	132%

Other models considered.

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
South Berkshire	BRASJ WOK CROSA	4	1,668	437,613	430,091	417	109,403	7	14	119.6%	87.6%
Northeast Hampshire	ALDSJ FARNH FARNLD FLECRO HART YAT	8	1,684	535,294	9,650	211	66,912	6	9	120.8%	107.2%

Outcome following the deliberations of the Bishop's Council

Following careful consideration at a meeting of the Bishop's Council on the 19 January 2023, it was agreed that the proposed future parish boundaries should be amended to include Crowthorne and Sandhurst in South Berkshire rather than Northeast Hampshire.

Ringwood & Fordingbridge

Feedback received.

The placement of Ringwood and Fordingbridge as part of the proposed future parish of Dorset (following the boundaries of the current Avon Stour pastoral area) was not viewed as a viable option in the feedback. All 6 parishes comprising the proposed future parish of Dorset gave feedback to this effect, along with 1 other response. It was generally felt that Ringwood and Fordingbridge would be a better fit as part of the New Forest parish. The Parish Priest of Ringwood and Fordingbridge had been in contact with the Co-ordinating Pastor of the New Forest, who agreed that Ringwood & Fordingbridge would better fit with the New Forest. The individual response (from a couple who attend Fordingbridge parish), felt that Ringwood and Fordingbridge should remain an entirely separate parish.

Original model

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
Dorset	RIN HIG FOR BOULQ CHR BOUST	6	1,060	455,782	133,442	177	75,964	13	12	76.0%	91.3%
New Forest	BRO LYM LYN MIL NEWM WSIDE	7	646	325,090	1,638,856	92	46,441	24	19	46.3%	65.1%
Bournemouth East	BOUAE BOUCC	3	1,596	343,655	305,737	532	114,552	8	18	114.4%	68.8%
Bournemouth West	BOUSH BOULI	2	809	251,885	(947,112)	405	125,943	20	21	58.0%	50.4%

Other models considered.

A. RIN & FOR to join New Forest, BOULQ, CHR, BOUST, HIG to join Bournemouth (please see below for Bournemouth options)

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
New Forest	BRO LYM LYN MIL NEWM WSIDE RIN FOR	9	845	427,140	1,697,973	94	47,460	19	15	60.6%	85.5%
Bournemouth East	BOUAE BOUCC HIG BOULQ CHR BOUST HIG	7	2,457	697,388	380,061	351	99,627	3	5	176.2%	139.6%
Bournemouth West	BOUSH BOULI	2	809	251,885	(947,112)	405	125,943	20	19	58.0%	50.4%

B. Or RIN & FOR to join New Forest, BOULQ, CHR, BOUST, HIG to join Bournemouth (please see below for Bournemouth options)

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
New Forest	BRO LYM LYN MIL NEWM WSIDE RIN FOR	9	845	427,140	1,697,973	94	47,460	19	14	60.6%	85.5%
Bournemouth	BOUAE BOUCC HIG BOULQ CHR BOUST BOUSH BOULI	9	3,266	949,273	(567,051)	363	105,475	1	2	234.2%	190.1%

C. FOR to join Bournemouth West

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
Dorset	RIN HIG BOULQ CHR BOUST	5	954	399,933	112,295	191	79,987	15	13	68.4%	80.1%
New Forest	BRO LYM LYN MIL NEWM WSIDE	7	646	325,090	1,638,856	92	46,441	24	19	46.3%	65.1%
Bournemouth East	BOUAE BOUCC	3	1,596	343,655	305,737	532	114,552	8	18	114.4%	68.8%
Bournemouth West	BOUSH BOULI FOR	3	915	307,735	(925,966)	305	102,578	19	21	65.6%	61.6%

D. RIN & FOR to form a parish on their own

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
Dorset	HIG BOULQ CHR BOUST	4	861	353,733	74,325	215	88,433	19	16	61.7%	70.8%
New Forest	BRO LYM LYN MIL NEWM WSIDE	7	646	325,090	1,638,856	92	46,441	24	19	46.3%	65.1%
Bournemouth East	BOUAE BOUCC	3	1,596	343,655	305,737	532	114,552	8	18	114.4%	68.8%
Bournemouth West	BOUSH BOULI	2	809	251,885	(947,112)	405	125,943	20	21	58.0%	50.4%
Ringwood & Fordingbridge	RIN FOR	2	199	102,050	59,117	100	51,025			14.3%	20.4%

Outcome following the deliberations of the Bishop's Council

Following careful consideration at a meeting of the Bishop's Council on the 19 January 2023, it was agreed that the proposed future parish of Dorset should be dissolved. Ringwood and Fordingbridge would join the New Forest, and that Highcliffe, Christchurch, Iford (BOUST) and Southbourne (BOULQ) would join Bournemouth.

Dorset and Bournemouth

Feedback received.

The boundaries in and around Bournemouth were particularly contentious. Some respondents were happy with the proposal for the city to be divided into two parishes, others felt it would be better for Bournemouth to form a single parish. The feedback received also suggested that the parishes of Highcliffe, Christchurch, Iford (BOUST) and Southbourne (BOULQ) should join Bournemouth.

Original model

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
Dorset	RIN HIG FOR BOULQ CHR BOUST	6	1,060	455,782	133,442	177	75,964	13	12	76.0%	91.3%
New Forest	BRO LYM LYN MIL NEWM WSIDE	7	646	325,090	1,638,856	92	46,441	24	19	46.3%	65.1%
Bournemouth East	BOUAE BOUCC	3	1,596	343,655	305,737	532	114,552	8	18	114.4%	68.8%
Bournemouth West	BOUSH BOULI	2	809	251,885	(947,112)	405	125,943	20	21	58.0%	50.4%

Other models considered.

A. BOULQ, BOUST, CHR & HIG to join Bournemouth

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
New Forest	BRO LYM LYN MIL NEWM WSIDE RIN FOR	9	845	427,140	1,697,973	94	47,460	19	15	60.6%	85.5%
Bournemouth East	BOUAE BOUCC HIG BOULQ CHR BOUST HIG	7	2,457	697,388	380,061	351	99,627	3	5	176.2%	139.6%
Bournemouth West	BOUSH BOULI	2	809	251,885	(947,112)	405	125,943	20	19	58.0%	50.4%

B. Bournemouth to form a single parish

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
New Forest	BRO LYM LYN MIL NEWM WSIDE RIN FOR	9	845	427,140	1,697,973	94	47,460	19	14	60.6%	85.5%
Bournemouth	BOUAE BOUCC HIG BOULQ CHR BOUST BOUSH BOULI	9	3,266	949,273	(567,051)	363	105,475	1	2	234.2%	190.1%

Outcome following the deliberations of the Bishop's Council

Following careful consideration at a meeting of the Bishop's Council on the 19 January 2023, it was agreed that the proposed future parish of Dorset should be dissolved. Ringwood and Fordingbridge would join the New Forest, and that Highcliffe, Christchurch, Iford (BOUST) and Southbourne (BOULQ) would join Bournemouth.

It was agreed that Bournemouth could either form two parishes, or merge into a single parish; both options would be viable. The options were put to the parish priests in the Bournemouth area for consideration in January 2023.

Alton

Feedback received.

The parish of Alton submitted feedback requesting that the proposed parish boundaries be revisited for it to be included either in Hampshire Downs, or Basingstoke, rather the South Downs, due to transport links. The Alton Parish Priest also gave individual feedback to this effect.

Original model

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
Basingstoke	BASHG BASSJ HOO TAD	6	1,984	504,387	1,028,808	331	84,064	4	9	142.3%	101.0%
South Downs	ALT BOR GRA LIP PET	6	799	348,992	568,411	133	58,165	21	17	57.3%	69.9%
Hampshire Downs	SPWMP	5	1,013	618,922	463,925	203	123,784	14	6	72.6%	123.9%

Other models considered.

A. Alton to join Hampshire Downs

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
Basingstoke	BASHG BASSJ HOO TAD	6	1,984	504,387	1,028,808	331	84,064	4	9	142.3%	101.0%
South Downs	BOR GRA LIP PET	5	549	224,568	474,065	110	44,914	23	22	39.4%	45.0%
Hampshire Downs	ALT SPWMP	6	1,263	743,345	558,270	211	123,891	13	4	90.6%	148.8%

B. Alton to join Basingstoke

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
Basingstoke	BASHG BASSJ HOO TAD ALT	7	2,234	628,810	1,123,153	319	89,830	3	6	160.2%	125.9%
South Downs	BOR GRA LIP PET	5	549	224,568	474,065	110	44,914	24	23	39.4%	45.0%
Hampshire Downs	SPWMP	5	1,013	618,922	463,925	203	123,784	14	7	72.6%	123.9%

Outcome following the deliberations of the Bishop's Council

Following careful consideration at a meeting of the Bishop’s Council on the 19 January 2023, it was agreed that Alton should remain part of the South Downs parish, as proposed in the original model. The parish of St Peter and the Winchester Martyrs (Hampshire Downs) had been created from a previous parish merger and had been successful in building a new parish community, it was felt that adding an extra parish could be disruptive. It was felt that Alton joining Basingstoke would make that parish too large.

Liphook

Feedback received.

Feedback was received from the parish of Liphook stating that it felt more aligned with parishes in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton.

Outcome following the deliberations of the Bishop’s Council

The feedback was noted at the Bishop’s Council meeting on the 19 January 2023, however revisiting diocesan boundaries is not under consideration at present.

Twyford

Feedback received.

Feedback was received from the parish of Twyford, requesting that the proposed future parish boundaries be amended to include Woodley and Twyford together.

Original model

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
Reading	REACK REAEM REAJ0 REAJW REALB WOOD	7	2,987	843,367	781,664	427	120,481	1	3	214.2%	168.9%
Great Park	MAISE MAISJ TWY	6	1,274	372,771	739,646	212	62,128	12	15	91.4%	74.6%
South Berkshire	BRASJ WOK CROSA	4	1,668	437,613	430,091	417	109,403	7	14	119.6%	87.6%

Other models considered.

A. TWY to join Reading

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
Reading	REACK REAEM REAJ0 REAJW REALB WOOD TWY	10	3,242	921,807	1,066,120	324	92,181	1	2	232.5%	184.6%
Great Park	MAISE MAISJ TWY	3	1,019	294,331	455,189	340	98,110	13	19	73.1%	58.9%
South Berkshire	BRASJ WOK CROSA	4	1,668	437,613	430,091	417	109,403	7	14	119.6%	87.6%

B. TWY to join South Berkshire

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
Reading	REACK REAEM REAJO REAJW REALB WOOD	7	2,987	843,367	781,664	427	120,481	2	4	214.2%	168.9%
Great Park	MAISE MAISJ	3	1,019	294,331	455,189	340	98,110	11	19	73.1%	58.9%
South Berkshire	BRASJ WOK CROSA TWY	7	1,923	516,052	714,548	275	73,722	5	9	137.9%	103.3%

Outcome following the deliberations of the Bishop's Council

Following careful consideration at a meeting of the Bishop's Council on the 19 January 2023, it was agreed that Twyford joining Woodley as part of the Reading parish would not be workable as it would make the Reading parish too large. It was felt that Woodley should stay part of the Reading parish, especially given that no feedback had been received from that parish to the contrary. It was agreed that Twyford could fit with either the proposed future parish of Great Park (as proposed in the original publication) or join the proposed future parish of South Berkshire. The proposed options were put to the affected parish priests for consideration in January 2023.

Tadley

Feedback received.

Feedback was received from the parish of Tadley stating that the church of St Oswald in Burghfield Common (part of Tadley parish) would fit better as part of Reading parish.

Outcome following the deliberations of the Bishop's Council

The feedback was noted at the Bishop's Council meeting on the 19 January 2023; however it was agreed that existing parishes should not be split at present. Decisions about individual churches would be considered as part of local plans.

Oxfordshire

Feedback received.

Feedback was received from the English Martyrs Vale of the Wight Horse pastoral area reflecting that the proposed future parish would cover a very large geographical area and that the mix of urban and rural environments could be a challenge. The pastoral area had thought of a compromise to make the proposal workable, running one parish with two centres.

Original model

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
Oxfordshire	ABI BUCK DID EASH NORH WANLAM	12	1,605	555,787	949,229	134	46,316	7	8	115.1%	111.3%

Other models considered.

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
Abingdon	ABI BUCK NORH	5	912	311,098	752,843	182	62,220	17	18	65.4%	62.3%
Oxfordshire	DID EASH WANLAM	7	693	244,689	196,386	99	34,956	23	20	49.7%	49.0%

Outcome following the deliberations of the Bishop's Council

Following careful consideration at a meeting of the Bishop's Council on the 19 January 2023, it was agreed that Oxfordshire could either follow the proposed model of one parish with two centres, or alternatively that it could split into two parishes. Splitting into two would make the future Oxfordshire parish (comprising Didcot, Wallingford, East Hendred, Wantage and Lambourne) small and among the more vulnerable parishes; however it would be comparable to the New Forest and could be workable. The proposal was put to the parish priests of the English Martyrs Vale of the Wight Horse pastoral area for consideration in January 2023.

Southampton

Feedback received.

Feedback was received from a parish in Southampton suggesting that Southampton should be split into two parishes. The proposed model does split Southampton into two. Southampton Immaculate Conception responded that it would better fit with the Central Southampton parish rather than Southampton East (its current pastoral area); this was the model proposed in the original publication of *You Will Be My Witnesses*.

Feedback was received from a parish in Southampton East expressing concern that the proposed Southampton East parish may be too small to be viable in the longer term.

Original model

Large Parish	Component Parishes	# Churches	Mass Count	Income	Reserves	MC per Church	Inc per Church	% Mass Count	% Income	Rank Mass Count	Rank Income	Mass Count v Ave	Income v Ave
Southampton East	NET SOUK SOU SOU HEDE	5	887	220,926	265,721	177	44,185	2.77%	1.92%	19	24	63.6%	44.2%
Southampton Central	SOUHF SOUIC SOUJE SOU SOU SOU TOTT	7	2,533	969,742	923,277	362	138,535	7.90%	8.44%	2	1	181.6%	194.2%

Outcome following the deliberations of the Bishop's Council

The feedback was noted at the Bishop's Council meeting on the 19 January 2023, it was agreed that Southampton East should remain a separate parish for now, but that this could be revisited in 5-10 years' time once the plan has been implemented. It may be that a further merger is appropriate, either with Southampton or possibly Fareham or St Swithun Wells.

Questions Raised

40 parish responses (62%) asked questions about the Ten-Year Mission Plan, along with 3 other responses (6%):

Drafting & Implementing the Plan

- "Who is driving this plan?"
- "How will it be communicated?"
- "The priorities are good but how do we implement them. We are struggling to get people to be communion catechisms, young church helpers & to be involved with other ministries such as welcoming & outreach. How will the plan motivate people to more active members of the church?"
- "Whilst closing and selling churches will raise money. Where is the evidence from other diocese that this approach enables the other priorities to be achieved?"
- "The restructuring begins straight away. But the other priorities don't. Is this just a plan to clear the debts?"
- "How does the money aspect work? How do we collect data?"
- "Will this plan be "stress tested"?"
- "Will it even happen if clergy or bishop moves?"
- "Parishioners asked who had been involved in the development of the plan at Diocesan level, but these answers were not forthcoming on the day nor have they been supplied since."
- "Change will happen, will it be haphazard or organised? How will we manage the change process? How autonomous will parishes be in this process?"
- "The Ten-Year Plan is positioned as the result of consultation with a wide range of churchgoers. However, to re-build our Church and the numbers actively participating in our Parishes, isn't it more important that we engage in dialogue with the people who have left or are leaving the church and those who have never been part of it?"
- "The Plan as it is currently structured seems to suggest we 'do more of what we have always done - but just try harder' – but if we don't change what we are doing and how we behave how can we hope to change the decline in the size of our Christian family?"
- "Should some select areas of the diocese pioneer the 10 Year Plan first to learn what works before all parishes attempt to achieve results?"
- "The opportunities for mission seem 'low priority', what is driving the plan?"
- "Where does the Synod sit in the priorities, what is the role? of the Synodal process in the plan?"
- "There is scepticism about this plan: 'We've done this before, what's different with this plan?'"
- "What are area responsibilities, what are parish responsibilities – how will it be managed?"
- "Why was money wasted on producing a glossy draft document? How much did it cost?"
- "These are national issues, why are we looking at them locally?"
- "The diocese must provide greater clarity regarding activities and roles that will remain at current parish levels and those that will move to the new parishes."
- "What support and resources would be made available for the delivery of this change?"
- "The proposed time scales for delivery and transition to begin are extremely tight. Has consideration been given to the impact on parishes and more specifically parishioners?"
- "Parishioners asked for more details about what elements would be kept at current parish level and what would be taken over by the bigger parishes? What happens to issues identified as priorities for Immaculate Conception for investment or financing? Will decisions be made by the new parishes? The diocese is requested to publish these details before progressing with these plans."
- "Little detail in the plan on how the personnel will be made up and, apart from priests and deacons, how the missionary community will be made up and how chaplaincy will be developed."
- "How does the plan 'fit into' the Synod consultations?"
- "How will progress be monitored over the 10 years?"
- "How are you trying to gauge the views of Catholics who no longer come to church?"
- "Change management needs professional input – is money being allocated for this?"
- "Why were mass attendance figures quoted/used for 2021 which was not a representative year."
- "Should there be a more nationwide approach to the problems of falling congregations and numbers of priests. Should the configuration of dioceses in the country be changed?"

- "Will anything change in practise? Will the plan fully cover 10 years?"
- "It is unclear if the synod and "A thousand voices" are also part of the process "
- "Lack of clarity about how we move onto the next stages – what is the exact pathway? How do we seamlessly transition into new pastoral areas/parishes? What are the criteria for the parish changes? Is it just Mass attendance figures and paucity of funds?"
- "How will the Parish representatives in the new structures be chosen/who? Should these "lumped" arrangements (parish groupings) in the plan end up as the new way to go for everyone, won't currently big/rich parishes which will most probably become the Admin centres Lord it over the smaller/poorer ones? Agelong human interests are still strong forces to contend with even in our Churches."

Lay Faithful

- "Is it really too radical to adopt a much more accessible, less formal, and quicker programme of training and support for those that could become lay preachers? It is done in other denominations, so why not the Catholic church? If Canon Law is currently an obstacle, then maybe the Canon Law needs revising!"
- "How will larger parishes help the mixing of ethnic groups."
- "How to get Laity involved? How does this plan empower the Laity to be actively engaged? Training?"
- [Lay formation] "what specific form of support and resources will be provided over and above the current resources - time, personnel, physical resources; how will this be resourced?"

Clergy

- "Could we not find more priests from abroad, as this pattern is already established? "
- "Could we not approach those who have left the ministry (even those who did not belong to this diocese) and express our need for them to return?"
- "Could we not use lay people to take all the desk/committee jobs away from clergy so that they can focus all their time on parochial ministry?"
- "How many priests and deacons will be in each 'new parish'?"
- "Is there guidance about the number of priests to service the enlarged parishes and the number of churches that could remain, given that local groups are being asked to develop firmer plans for the Bishop to consider?"
- "From reading this, it seems that the key person (priest in charge) in each pastoral area needs to have all the qualities of a good leader. He would need to be someone who could empower the laity and coordinate both laity and priests in the area in a collaborative and encouraging way. He would need to be supported by a good lay team who truly represent parishioners. There would need to be accountability and transparency and true discernment of the gifts that many parishioners can offer. I imagine the management of the pastoral area will need to be very carefully done - how will we prevent politics, arguments, people with their own agendas taking over? Who is going to decide how the pastoral area is structured, how it is run, who is going to be involved? How will the priest in charge enable and empower views which he might not necessarily agree with? We need to be a broad church and to welcome people in - we need to win the hearts and minds of all parishioners (and potential parishioners) if we want to keep them and grow rather than lose them and decline yet further."
- "Why not any mention of women priests?"
- "Will African priests still continue to serve in the diocese? – their contribution has been greatly valued and they add a great deal liturgically and help to revitalise parishes".

Structure

- "How many churches are likely to close as a result of parish mergers? 10 churches will be reduced to how many?"
- "Given the percentage of Diocesan building stock that is not church related, would there be any way of saving money by reducing managerial related stock, rather than churches being closed?"
- "Has the Diocese considered joining forces with neighbouring Diocese[s] and sharing managerial roles in order to reduce costs?"
- "The question was posed as to whether consideration has been given to a reorganisation to a smaller number of dioceses, similar to the reduction in the number of parishes"
- "Does the Diocese have a financial plan running alongside its parish reduction plans which has already determined in principle those churches it needs to sell? Going forward, will the closure/sale of churches be primarily driven by diocesan financial requirements or locally driven within individual parishes in line

with their own parish resources to support the churches – and with them, the individual church communities"

- "Does one single large Finance Committee mean one, single pooled bank account? Will each church's expenditure need to be authorised by the 'super' Finance Committee?"
- "How will a single parish in Reading be an advantage – how will it make us more outgoing and effective as a community?"
- "Concerns about merging parishes and sale of property which local parishioners have built: where does the money go?"
- "What are the plans for existing staff- especially taking into account the tight schedules-there was no messaging or reassurance provided to existing staff or plan for handling staff concerns?"
- "Furthermore, how would issues such as leaving money in a will to a particular parish work? Would money left be subsumed by the bigger new parishes?"
- "Would the proposed restructuring mean the demolition / restructuring of existing churches?"
- "What stops us contacting parishioners we no longer see at Mass? GDPR!!!! How do other churches keep contact with their parishioners? Work with other churches"
- "Who will be responsible for finances?"
- "Will there be mini parishes within the super parish run by associate priests"
- "Regarding saving money, has any thought been given to the sharing of various functions common to neighbouring diocese? This is a common practice in business, in the NHS and other services. Areas such as PR, Finance, Safeguarding could be considered. Feedback about what has been done so far by the diocese would be valuing of all those who pay into the diocese."
- "What happens to the current priorities in a parish?"
- "Has the diocese investigated the distribution of schools and boundaries to maximise the opportunities for working together to generate communities of young people".
- "How will the identity of parishes be preserved?"
- "How will a lack of community and ownership impact on financial giving and evangelisation and growth of faith?"
- "Will this plan really lead to improvement".
- "Where does Douai Abbey fit into the plan?"
- "How will the extremes of what's wanted in a parish be managed? (Don't change anything to new ideas)"

Transparency

- "Given the current economic situation it is struggle for many people and we need to be sure that every penny we give is being spent prudently. Over the years there have been various fundraising activities all of which have come with a promise to strengthen the funding mode of the diocese, but this never seems to happen? Why is this?"
- "What happened to the living your faith money?"

Beyond the Diocese

27 parish responses (42%) raised issues beyond the scope of the Diocese, along with 7 other responses (14%), this included (listed in order of frequency):

- The ordination of women as priests and deacons
- Priestly celibacy and married priests
- Expanding the role of the permanent diaconate
- The rule of 'obligation.'
- Welcoming divorced and remarried people to receive the Eucharist
- Same-sex marriage
- Greater accountability and visibility from Rome
- Translation & language of the Mass