

2020



UNLOCKING **OUR**
POTENTIAL
DIOCESE OF ST ASAPH

ANNUAL REPORT





Introduction from Bishop Gregory

No report could offer an adequate reflection of our experiences as a diocesan family if it did not begin with the extraordinary circumstances of 2020. We did not expect that our churches would be closed for many months this year; that Easter could not be celebrated liturgically, and that major diocesan events, like the Chrism Eucharist on Maundy Thursday and the ordinations, would have to be cancelled or postponed.

Yet here we are. I can't be complacent, since the challenges ahead are huge, and we shall have to be radical in addressing issues that have been accumulating for the last 50 years. Nevertheless, I have been hugely proud of the way in which the Teulu Asaph has risen to the challenges of Covid-19.

Firstly, the way in which clergy and laity have co-operated in commitment to the mission of the Church. Priority has been given to the vulnerable and carers with arrangements put in place for collecting medicines for the shielded, assisting with shopping, and providing meals. New ways of keeping in touch have been widespread across our mission areas, and "virtual" worship has been attracting high numbers – sometimes apparently even

higher than usual. The picture has been one of resolve, dedication and bold response.

Secondly, there has been wise stewardship. The Church in Wales at provincial level has been generous in its support to the dioceses in maintaining ministry, remitting the payments normally associated with the clergy bill. The diocese has passed that saving onto the mission areas, encouraging them to hold corporate responsibility for the financial commitments of the individual churches, and in planning for ongoing mission.

Thirdly, there is an ongoing process of reviewing our past life to prepare for the future. We have known for some time that patterns of ministry need to change: the days when every parish had a full time vicar dedicated to their care have long gone. Exceptional investment returns and the benefactions of wealthy patrons have receded, and the cost of maintaining stipendiary ministry now falls largely on regular worshippers. Congregations have declined or grown old, so that in some parts of the diocese, the number of worshippers at our services have shrunk to fractions of their former size.

MISSION AREA REVIEWS

A review process across the diocese is taking a serious look at what is sustainable in the future in terms of church buildings, the pattern of ministry, and the appropriate deployment of finance. The mission areas are not short of money, it is just that it has been held against old patterns of expectation, and we must look at creating the energy for new patterns of ministry instead of tying up funds in the maintenance of buildings. It is not that we are putting money before God, but that putting God before money means that our resources have to be thought about and used differently.

SIGNS OF HOPE

There are many signs of hope: the seriousness with which worship is taken, and the growing seriousness which is given to discipleship – to following Jesus in life, and not just in Church. *Leading Your Church into Growth* has become an approach to Church life in which lay and clerical leaders have become skilled. Leadership is not just about the ministry of stipendiary clergy, but new lay leaders are emerging, helping to shape the life of the mission areas, whether it be in leading mission, or ministry, or caring for finance and community. The diocese now has its first three stipendiary Youth and Children's Chaplains.

Ordained ministry is still attracting vocations. 2020 saw the largest crop of ordinations that this diocese has seen in a dozen years or more, requiring us to hold two separate ordinations. Nine new deacons were ordained under conditions of lockdown at the beginning of July. By God's grace, the ordination of nine new priests is currently scheduled for the beginning of October. The numbers for ordination next year are at the same level.

The Standing Committee and Diocesan Board of Finance have been bold in their plans, and 2019 opened with a successful bid to the Evangelism Fund of the Church in Wales, coming into fruition as this Annual Report is published. Hope Street in Wrexham is becoming our first Resource Church, oriented towards communicating the good news of Jesus Christ outside of our traditional membership.



A big thank you to everyone – lay, ordained, diocesan, mission area, local – it could not be done by a few, but by the hard work of everyone.

The stories we choose to tell ourselves are important. Am I being too cynical when I say that perhaps we have clung too long to a narrative of decline, possibly as an excuse to hold on to familiar and comfortable patterns rather than embrace new initiatives? It is true that in society at large, the Christian story has lost the nominal obedience it was offered for many generations. But Christ is risen, and leads his people onwards still, and I see so much which is encouraging and listen to the testimony of people for whom Christ has brought change and new life into their lives.

Thanks be to God, Amen.

Gregory Llanewy



Growth

by Tracey White, Director of Resources

Many of the plans, projects and ideas for growth for 2020 have been impacted by Covid-19. Some disappointments, obstacles and cancellations have provided unexpected opportunities.

HOPE STREET

2020 will see the opening of our first Resource Church in Wrexham – Hope Street – intended as a home for those new to Christianity and funded largely by the Church in Wales' Evangelism Fund. Work on the building, bought by the Diocesan Board of Finance, began in August 2019 with stripping out of the old shop fittings and then moved into the refurbishment phase. Sadly, due to Covid-19 work had to stop for several months but began again in June 2020. The first member of the team, Luke Bristow along with his wife Beci and their five children moved to Wrexham in June, closely followed by

the Church Leaders, Rachel and Andy Kitchen and their children. Though building work may not be finished the team are expecting to open the church in some capacity as planned in autumn 2020 subject to regulations. The main civic opening will take place in January 2021. Visit <https://www.hopestreet.church/>

ONLINE MINISTRY

As churches were forced to close due to Covid-19, an unexpected outcome was the swift adoption of online worship by many of our church leaders and their congregations. This ministry ranged from live streaming of services on Facebook, recorded services on YouTube and the use of Zoom for online prayer meetings and fellowship gatherings. Some clergy saw many more people joining online worship and fellowship than would normally be found in

church services. This is an area for development. We are keen to retain these new members of our digital churches and build on the excellent work already begun.

RURAL STRATEGY

A consultation process to develop a Rural Strategy to support churches and communities in rural areas of the diocese was launched in October 2019. Facilitators were trained to run a series of consultation events throughout the diocese and four took place before Covid-19 lockdown. We are currently reviewing how to move the strategy forward in the light of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Visit <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/rural/>

MAPPING PROJECT

This project, in partnership with the Church Army, brings together demographic information based on UK Census data and Church in Wales attendance figures to provide a wide range of information about the people who live, work and believe in each mission area. The information is designed to help in planning services, events, activities, support and engagement that will better meet the needs of the local community. It will also provide valuable evidence for funding applications.

Visit <https://churchnearme.co.uk/resource-map/>





Developing Steering Group

by Canon Chancellor Pam Powell,
Lead Officer and Director of Ministry

Covid-19 has affected all ministry as well as life in general:

- The Provincial /Regional discernment process changed from being residential to online, via Zoom.
- The curates were ordained in St Asaph Cathedral, respecting social distancing rules, using face visors at times and without a physically present congregation. Family and friends joined them via a live stream on Zoom.
- Some of the curates were prevented from moving into their new mission areas.
- As well as services taking place online, prayer groups, bible studies, Theology for Life courses have all taken place virtually. Many churches have run virtual coffee catch-ups after the service, catering for large numbers, using Zoom's break out room facility.



⚙️ LICENCED LAY MINISTRIES

Revd Huw Butler is responsible for Licenced Lay Ministries. He is working on clarifying the contact information and status of all serving Licenced Lay Ministers together with those holding the Bishop's Permission to Officiate. He is planning the annual LLM Day in September on the theme of Transforming Ministry.

Huw interviews and supports those currently undergoing discernment and those in training. He liaises with St Padarn's Institute which is responsible for all ministerial training including Theology for Life which currently has 41 students across the diocese. Numbers enrolled on the course will increase in September.

⚙️ COMMISSIONED MINISTRIES

Canon Kate Tiltman has oversight of commissioned ministries, which includes Worship Leaders and Pastoral Assistants. There are approximately 300 commissioned ministers across the diocese, although they are not evenly spread throughout each mission area. Kate is working with St Padarn's on training materials for these ministries as well as a course exploring intentional discipleship. This will be useful to mission areas in encouraging people to explore the various ministries available.

⚙️ THE SPIRITUAL FORMATION GROUP

The Spiritual Formation group is facilitated by Elizabeth Day. It continues to support Diocesan initiatives to deepen our relationship with God. This year the group focused on the development of *Signposts* with sections on Prayer, Worship, Sharing and Giving. Each section is intended to provide helpful way-markers and practical suggestions to support our journey of faith. Comments will be invited on the final draft before it is made available via the diocesan website.

The group's next task will be to consider ways to support mission areas in the new post-Covid environment which may necessitate less face to face contact and meetings.

⚙️ A CURATE'S VIEW:

My name is Gareth and I am currently a deacon and assistant curate, based in the southern group of churches in Borderlands Mission Area.



The most wonderful thing about my first year in ministry has been joining three vibrant local churches and enjoying the Christian fellowship. Another highlight was conducting my first baptism, especially as the baby was my nephew! In March my wife and I adopted two young children so I was on paternity leave for the first two weeks of lockdown. It took some time to find a new rhythm of work when I returned for Holy Week, but I soon found increased phone calls led to deeper conversations with members of our congregations; deeper and richer conversations than I'd had during the first nine months of curacy.

I'm looking forward to discovering the "new normal" for churches, including new forms of worship and socially distanced socialising. Hopefully, by the end of the year I'll also be priested and able to celebrate the Eucharist for the first time.

MINISTRY CATEGORY	NUMBER
Curates (full time/stipendiary)	⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️
Curates (part time/NSM/NSML)	⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️
Youth Chaplain (stipendiary)	⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️
In training for Priest (stipendiary)	⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️
In training for Priest (NSM/NSML)	⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️
In training for Distinctive Diaconate	⚙️ ⚙️
In Training for Reader	⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️
In Training for Evangelist	⚙️
In training for Pastoral Chaplain	⚙️
In receipt of Enquirer's Form and preparing for Boards	⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️ ⚙️



Engaging Steering Group

by Sarah Wheat, Lead Officer for the Engaging Steering Group

The Engaging Steering Group seeks to challenge social injustice and stand alongside those on the margins of society. It runs and supports projects across the diocese, with members of the group pioneering and reporting back on their work. Details of the projects can be found at <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/faith-in-action/>

MODERN SLAVERY

To enable us to further develop our partnership with north Wales based anti-slavery organisation, Haven of Light, its founder, Alison Ussery was employed by the diocese for six months. She devised a programme of awareness raising and information sessions and produced a report to highlight the issues around modern slavery and what we can do to help combat it: *Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking – A Guide for the Church Community*.

Read it at

<https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/faith-in-action/modern-slavery/>

COLD WEATHER NIGHT SHELTER

A partnership with Housing Justice Cymru and Wrexham Council to open a Wrexham Church and Community Cold Weather Shelter continued for the winter of 2019/20. The shelter, staffed by volunteers, provided ten emergency beds for 13 weeks for those experiencing homelessness during the coldest time of the year. A second pilot project ran in partnership with Conwy Council. Churches in Llandudno and Colwyn Bay offered ten beds over a six week period.

RESPONDING TO COVID-19

Much of the work of reaching out to our communities has been affected by the coronavirus and many projects were forced to close. The crisis has also allowed new projects to emerge in response to the need. These projects range from churches providing hot meals, setting up food clubs, offering care packages for those who are isolated and delivering cream teas. Our churches have, where possible stepped up and stepped out in faith.

- **CHURCHES PROVIDING FREE FACE VISORS** – three of our churches have purchased high quality face visors to offer them free to anyone who needs them in their community. We recognised that many might not have access to this form of PPE and for those working or volunteering with people who have hearing issues, learning difficulties or dementia it is very important that the face can be seen.



- **TWO'S COMPANY** – In response to Covid-19 we worked with Linking Lives UK to pilot their telephon befriending scheme within the diocese. Using individuals already known to the church and keeping the referrals to the project local, trained volunteers befriend a local person who is feeling isolated or lonely. Once Government guidance allows this may turn into a face to face befriending scheme.

- **HOPE AND A FUTURE** – We have worked with the creators of Hope and Future to provide a series of webinars to support churches and communities as we come out of lockdown. The webinars focus on the emotional, social and psychological impact of this time and how the church can respond. They will provide resources and positive ways to build resilience in our churches and communities and ways of supporting the most vulnerable in our society. Recordings of the sessions are available at <https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/faith-in-action/hope-and-a-future/>

ECO DIOCESE

In 2019, the diocese signed up to work towards becoming an Eco Diocese. To support churches in their journey to become more eco-friendly and to register with A Rocha to gain Eco Church recognition we developed a booklet which will be launched in September 2020 to coincide with Climate Change Sunday.

The short guide offers simple actions that will lead to changes in the way people live, work, shop and worship, contributing to a fairer more sustainable world. Visit

<https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/faith-in-action/eco-church/>



Nurturing Steering Group

by the Diocesan Education Team

All our schools have been working hard during lockdown, with about half repurposed as hubs to provide childcare for keyworkers and vulnerable children. Schools have been adjusting to online and “blended” learning to keep providing the best education and care possible for our school children.

RAINBOW RESOURCES

Education teams across the Church in Wales have worked together to produce [#addewidagobaith](#) [#hopeandpromise](#) to support teachers and parents during lockdown. Over 16 weeks the weekly, bilingual resource has offered a rich variety of themes such as pilgrimage across

all faiths and religions, caring for yourself, reaching out to others, art competitions and creative ideas for exploring.

NEW SCHOOLS AND BUILDINGS

Following consultations in 2019/20, we welcome two new Voluntary Aided schools to our diocesan family as of 1 September, 2020. The schools are: Lixwm Church in Wales Voluntary Aided School in Flintshire (previously Lixwm Community Primary School) and Ysgol Cwm Banwy Ysgol yr Eglwys yng Nghymru, a Welsh-medium Voluntary Aided primary school in Powys (this is a result of the closure of Banw County Primary School and Llanerfyl Church in Wales (Foundation) School from the 31st August 2020).

The new school building for Ysgol Llanfair DC was officially opened

on 26 February 2020 and the children enjoyed a brief spell in their new classrooms before Covid-19 changed the way children could attend school. Hopefully all the pupils will be able to enjoy their new school building again in September.

Due to Dawnus Construction entering administration in March 2019, work on the new Welshpool Church in Wales Primary School building ground to a halt. Pave Aways, a local contractor, was commissioned in January 2020 when building work recommenced. Despite a temporary suspension due to Covid-19, the building is progressing well, and we anticipate an opening date in early 2021.

CURRICULUM FOR WALES 2022

Schools are working towards the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales 2022. Across the diocese church schools have been working as ‘cluster groups’ to explore how their local ‘cynefin’ can inspire creative learning projects.

BEIBL I BAWB O BOBL Y BYD / BIBLE FOR EVERYONE IN THE WORLD

Five schools, Ysbyty Ifan, Pant Pastynog, Eglwysbach, Llanddoded and Betws yn Rhos have enjoyed working together to research the inspirational story behind the translation of the Bible into Welsh. The creative, multi-media project marks the 400th anniversary of the Richard Parry and John Davies revised Bible and was funded by The Bible Society and the Archbishop Rice Jones Trust. It focuses on the personal stories of the eight translators. Pupils have created digital film animations of the translators with the support of practitioner Robin Williams from CYDAG and taken part in workshops at St Asaph Cathedral. The project will now extend to 2021 and will include a celebration of the translation of the Psalms by Edmund Prys in 1621.

EIN MILLTIR SGWAR / OUR SQUARE MILE

Church Schools across the diocese have explored their cynefin through Big Questions. In Forden, Powys the question used was ‘What is special about Our Square Mile?’ With an OS map of their local area pupils identified a place to investigate, choosing the old hospital building. Data was sourced from the census of 1881 and

questionnaires sent to members of the community. Pupils explored what the place had meant to different people across time and how it had affected the lives of people in the community. Pupils considered the purpose of the building across time and the project led them to deeper questions such as ‘who is my neighbour?’





Under 25s work

by Tim Feak, Under 25s Officer

It was a busy start to the year for the Under 25's Team but sadly the Covid-19 situation has impacted on a great deal of Under 25s Ministry.

FINLAND

The first group of our year-long Discipleship and Leadership Programme completed their training with a visit to Finland and a reciprocal visit by young people from Finland in October. A group started meeting for this year's project but due to Covid-19 we have been unable to visit Finland yet.

YOUTH FORUM

The Youth Forum has met several times this year and spent time working on the Hope Street Project and the Rural Strategy.

YOUTH PILGRIMAGE

The 2019 Youth Pilgrimage was a great success with our biggest group yet.

BIG WEEKEND AWAY

In October 2019 we had a great Diocesan weekend away at the Christian Mountain Centre with our biggest group yet.

TRAINING AND MISSION AREA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Three-quarters of all mission areas worked with us in 2019/20 for training and to support new projects, including the creation of successful Youth Groups.

Our Youth and Children's Chaplains, Esther and Jon Andrews continue to develop work in their mission areas, including Chaplaincies in secondary schools, Messy Church, Youth Groups and training.

CHAPLAINCY

Chaplaincies now run in Coleg Cambria, Bryn Hyfryd, Ruthin, St Joseph's, Wrexham and Emrys ap Iwan, Abergele.

LEAVERS SERVICE

An online event was held this year due to Covid-19. This included a song written for us by Chip K and a prior online tutorial on how to sing it. This song was Premiered at the Leavers Service.

ENGAGING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

We have seen growth in our work with Children and Young people. Analysis of the numbers taking part in recent projects show that:

- 59% of those who have been involved in a diocesan project have some form of mission area support and involvement.
- 88% of those involved in a diocesan project have been involved in further diocesan projects in the course of 2019.
- Over 1/3 of those involved in diocesan projects have signed up to some kind of leadership role or scheme in the diocese including Youth Forum and the International Confirmation / Leadership Programmes in 2019.
- A young person has far more likelihood of staying with their mission area and diocesan projects if they are supported by both the diocese and the mission area.
- Mission areas that access diocesan support are more likely to start and maintain new youth and children's work.



Number of
Quinquennial
Inspections:

44

Number of
Churches
visited:

102+

Number of
mission area
reviews:

10

Number of
houses
owned:

137

Houses
sold:

1

Houses
bought:

2

Houses
substantially
refurbished:

23

Number of
houses owned by
Trusts or mission areas
for letting and managed
by the diocese:

21

Number
of Faculties
(1/7/2019 – 30/6/2020)

List A:

71

List B:

42

completed
ave time 45.5 days,
9 ongoing

Full:

44

completed
ave time 88 days,
15 ongoing



Property

by the Diocesan Property Team

CHURCHES

Church Inspections have continued with a further 44 inspections during 2019/20. The results of these inspections are helping to inform mission area strategies being developed by Property Committees and Executives.

In May 2020, in light of the Coronavirus pandemic, a support package was launched by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales for each diocese. As part of this process we have committed to work together on the preparation of a strategic vision document for each of our mission areas, and for each of our worshipping communities. We aim to have visited each church in the diocese between June 2020 and Easter 2021.

Over the last 12 months we have also visited more than 100 churches across the diocese to help provide support, strategic advice, and guidance on the preparation of Faculty applications.

CHURCH TOURISM

St Asaph Diocese is part of the Experiencing Sacred Wales Project, run by the National Churches Trust and launched in autumn 2019. It is a cross denominational project aimed at promoting cathedrals, churches and chapels in Wales, and encouraging visitors.

The main aims are to:

- identify and promote churches along The Wales Way,
- sign up 200 new churches and chapels across Wales to the ExploreChurches website
- add bookable experiences by churches onto their website.

To support this a Church Tourism page has been added to the diocesan website:

<https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/property/church-tourism/>

🕊️ PILGRIM CHURCHES

Each of the seven pilgrim churches will receive a pack of interpretation materials to help people understand and appreciate the meaning of the various items found in a church building.

🕊️ FACULTIES

From 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, St Asaph Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches dealt with 42 List B applications and 44 full faculties compared to 32 List B applications and 33 Full Faculties last year. The average time taken for List B applications was 45.5 days and 88 days for full faculties. List A, B and full faculty applications show that building work – either maintenance or improvement – has taken place in over a third of our churches over the last year.



🕊️ PARSONAGES

The residential property portfolio of the diocese currently consists of 137 properties, with a further six properties vested within the Education Trust. The diocese also assists the mission areas / St Asaph Cathedral with the management of 13 properties, the majority of which are residential properties for letting.

There have been two new property acquisitions in Wrexham. The parsonage in Glan Conwy has been sold, and two further parsonages are currently earmarked for disposal subject to favourable market conditions and offers being received.

🕊️ MAJOR REFURBISHMENT WORKS

23 properties have been subject to substantial refurbishment works over the course of the last twelve months to prepare for occupancy by clergy or tenants.

🕊️ CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE

A programme of cyclical maintenance works has been maintained over the last year, with 20 properties receiving external envelope repairs and redecoration works.

🕊️ EXTERNAL FUNDING

Grant assistance totalling £ 17,000 has been gratefully received from the Marshalls Charity to aid improvements and upgrade security features for parsonage properties.

🕊️ REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

The annual service and maintenance of fixed appliances within a residential property is managed by the diocesan office, together with a service attending to breakdown and emergency repairs. On average, the diocesan team receive and process 225 payment transactions per month relating to the maintenance and upkeep of the residential property portfolio.

🕊️ MISSION AREA OFFICES

The Parsonage Improvement Fund has continued to support the creation of mission area offices, with new offices established in Aber-Morfa and Bryn a Môr.

🕊️ FUNDING

It has been a productive year for many of our churches in securing funds toward their projects. Some have received large sums from the main funders whilst others have benefitted from smaller sums from a wide range of funders. To be successful in securing funding good preparation, research, a willing team and determination is required. Between June 2019 and June 2020, the funding department researched and compiled strategies for 27 potential projects who requested funding, amounting to over £1.6 million.

🕊️ SUCCESSES

St Peter's Church, Llanbedr DC secured funding totally £8,000 from the diocese and the National Churches Trust to complete essential electrical/rewiring work.

St Cadwaladr, Llangadwaladr secured grants from the diocese and the Representative Body, totally £5,000 toward the cost and completion of roof repairs.

St Trinio Peter and Paul, Llandrinio received a diocesan grant of £3,000 toward a new boiler which is now installed and operational.

St Mary Magdalene, Gwaenysgor received a grant from the diocese for £3,000 toward the cost and completion of repair and decoration at their church.

St John's, Rhydymwyn received a £25,000 grant from the Community Facilities Programme and grants from the All Churches Trust, John Laing Trust, the Diocesan Building Fund and local fund raising toward the reordering. The church has nearly reached its target and hopes to commence work soon.

Ongoing projects in the process of raising funds:

- **All Saints, Newtown:** reordering and extension, £700,000
- **St Mael and Sulien, Corwen:** reordering and repairs, £200,000
- **St Mary's Ysceifiog:** toilets and kitchen, £80,000
- **St Mark's Caia Park Wrexham:** reordering, £300,000
- **St John's Pool Quay:** roof repairs, £80,000





Finance Annual Report

by Diane McCarthy, Diocesan Secretary

The Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) is made up of elected lay and clerical representatives from churches across the diocese, along with ex-officio members. Elections to the Board took place in June 2020 and the newly elected membership will serve until 2023.

✿ REVIEW OF 2019 - 2020

The Board continues to steward the financial resources of the diocese to build the Kingdom and to share the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Overall, the 2019 accounts show a surplus for the year on the General Fund of **£286,462**. The Board had budgeted for a deficit of **£161,461** so this represents a better outturn on operations than originally forecast. The reason for this variance is that a number of property issues were regularised during 2019 and the income from these transactions has been included in the accounts.

The largest element of our diocesan expenditure (79% or £3.6m) is on clergy costs, including stipends, pensions and housing costs. The Board also allocates funds to support the work of the Diocesan Steering Groups in the vital areas of Developing, Engaging and Nurturing all the people of God. It also funds the work of the Diocesan Office Team (8% of expenditure) which provides sustained support to the life of our churches and mission areas.

Local churches continue to meet a significant part of the total costs of running the diocese and we are very grateful to them for their ongoing support of mission and ministry. There was an increase of 2.4% in Mission Area Share in 2019 to cover an increase in clergy stipends and lay salaries of 2.4% and an increase in clergy housing costs of 4.2%.

The annual block grant from the Representative Body of the Church in Wales was unchanged at £1.04m and represented 21% of diocesan income.

Mission Area Finance is now established across the diocese. This is particularly significant when it comes to the Mission Area Share:

the contribution of each church to the total Mission Area Share is agreed in advance by the constituent churches, and all churches within the same mission area need to pay their share in full and on time in order to allow the Mission Area Discount Scheme to pay out. In 2019, we were delighted that all 20 mission areas qualified for this discount. We are hugely indebted to all our mission area and church treasurers for their dedicated service and the care that they take in ensuring a fair outcome for all our churches.

Overall, the value of diocesan reserves increased by £1.14m. This is due to the property donations and the stock market bounce-back in 2019 after a particularly challenging final quarter in 2018. However, the economic outlook remains extremely uncertain in the context of the coronavirus pandemic and a volatile global political landscape, including the ongoing uncertainty regarding Brexit.

✿ FUTURE PLANS – PRIORITIES FOR 2020 AND BEYOND

The Coronavirus Pandemic has had a dramatic and immediate impact on global finances and the long-term implications cannot yet be measured. Our church buildings were closed for several months and many sources of income were severely reduced or dried up completely. We are grateful to the Representative Body of the Church in Wales for its generosity in helping us to address some of the immediate financial pressures during the six-month period from April to September 2020.

The DBF was keen to respond with an offer to our mission areas that was strategic, generous and enabling. It was therefore decided that each mission area should receive a lump sum, equal to 60% of its Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 Share. It will be for the Mission Area Conference to decide how to apply these funds. The total value of this

Coronavirus Emergency Funding to the mission areas is £1.04m. In order to access this funding certain principles have to be adopted.

Funding Principles:

- There must be a willingness to engage in active discussion with the Bishop and Archdeacons about the future life of the mission area, including but not limited to, growth and discipleship, the provision of ministry, and the future of church buildings in order to develop a plan for a sustainable future.
- A commitment to cooperate with the plan's implementation and the acceleration of the rate of change.
- All churches in the mission area must be registered with the Gift Direct Scheme.
- Mission Area Share must be paid in full (at total level), with stronger churches supporting weaker churches as necessary.

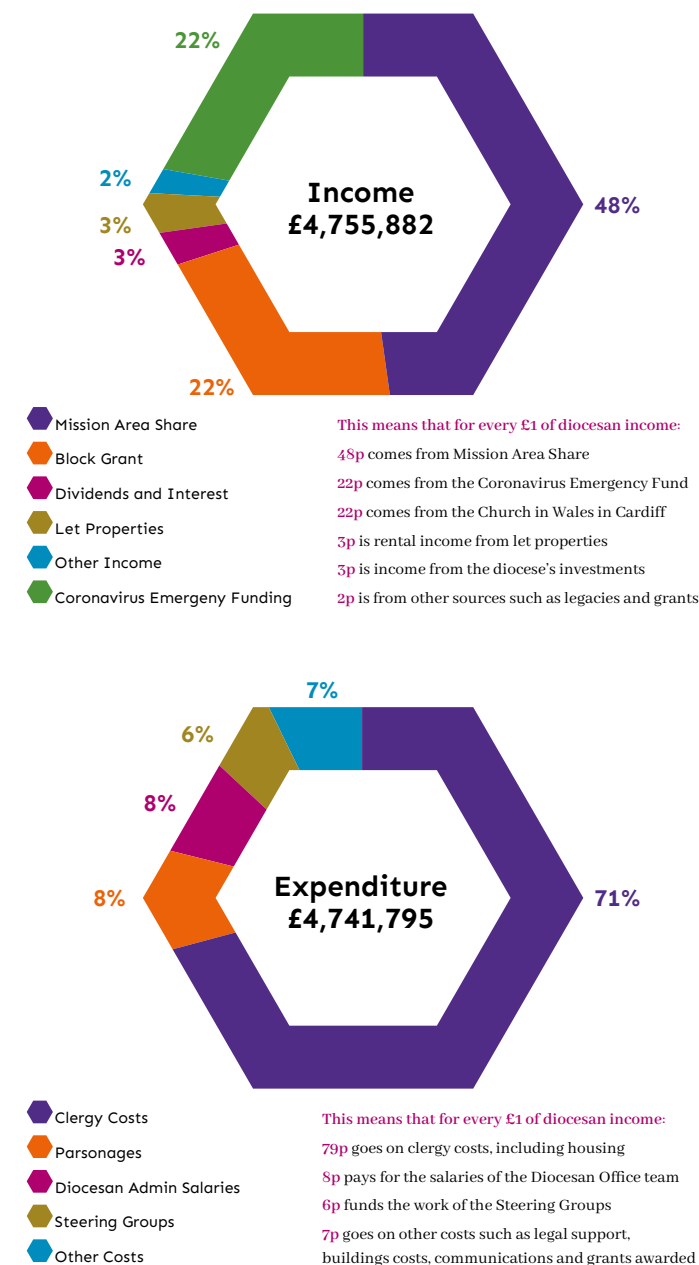
The response from all mission areas has been truly exceptional: determined, generous and strategic. Special thanks must go to the Mission Area Treasurers who have coordinated the response across all our churches. The teamwork, faith and commitment displayed across the diocese should give us all great hope for the future.

In light of the current exceptional circumstances, the 2020 Budget is being reviewed in detail to inform and update our financial forecasting. This will feed into the work on the 2021 Budget when the Board hopes to hold as steady a position as possible while we work together to redefine the shape of the diocese and assess the impact of the pandemic.

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them.

Acts 4:32 – 34a NIV

✿ 2020 BUDGET







Keeping in touch

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