

DIOCESE OF EXETER



Operational Report Diocese of Exeter

October – December 2023

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Overall Summary

Welcome to our final Operational Report for 2023

Well, that was another busy year of growing in prayer, making new disciples, and serving the people of Devon with joy.

Talking of joy there is much to be thankful for as we look back to the end of 2023. One of the most joyful but profoundly moving experiences was the Archbishop of Canterbury's visit and invitation to the people of Devon to 'Come and See'. The extended weekend of events included a very wet Remembrance Day service on Plymouth Hoe, a really moving and powerful bereavement event at Exeter University and many others which enabled thousands of people across Devon to 'Come and See'. You can read more about these events in this report.

The final quarter of the year also witnessed some significant changes to the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS). This scheme has been a huge success for those parishes that participate, and the funding received via PGS helped many parishes to maintain and grow their ministry despite the many challenges of the past few years. The changes are positive and see the scheme expanded to all parishes with the help of the National Church. You can read more on page ten where you will also find news of the early stages of our Give2GoGreen pilot (more on page thirty one). This is a great opportunity for engagement with communities across Devon and we look forward to seeing how this develops in 2024.

The Give2GoGreen pilot will undoubtedly see communities give generously to make a difference to their local environment, however many in our communities already give generously to support our mission and ministry via our Common Fund. The year figures can be found on page nine and are slightly behind 2022, although our books remain open until the end of February for any final donations. We thank everyone for their contributions and generosity as this is the main funding stream for our mission and ministry across the county.

In this quarter we also had the opportunity to engage with Professor Jay as she works on the Church of England's Future of Safeguarding project. Professor Jay will report to General Synod in early 2024. You can read more on page eighteen.



We are always happy to receive your feedback and would love to hear from you. Please contact my Executive Assistant, Annemarie Kendell, (annemarie.kendell@exeter.anglican.org) if you have suggestions on how we can further improve our reporting.

Stephen Hancock
Diocesan Secretary

Meetings taking place during the period:

Diocesan Synod

Summary of core business transacted at the meeting on 14th October:

- Presidential address
- Promulgation of Amending Canon 42
- Receipt of the Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2022
- Approval of the diocesan budget for 2024 and consideration of an indicative finance plan for 2025-26
- Receipt of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel annual report; consideration of the implementation of 'Next Steps'
- Receipt of a report from General Synod
- Receipt of the Diocesan Net Carbon Zero action plan
- Approval a scheme of amendment to Standing Order 108
- Approval of a scheme of election to the Diocesan Synod for the 2024 – 2027 triennium
- Receipt of the Annual Report of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee.

Bishop's Diocesan Council

Summary of core business transacted at the meeting on 2nd December:

- Receipt of a verbal update relating to 'Living in Love and Faith'
- Receipt of independent financial advice concerning the adoption of Total Return
- Approval of the application of Total Return accounting to both assets classes of the Diocesan Stipends Capital Fund
- Confirmation of the use of the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) for the purpose of calculating the current value of the Base Investments and that a maximum of 20% of the Unapplied Total Return Fund will be taken as income to support the Energy Performance Certificates and Net Zero Carbon upgrade works to clergy housing
- Receipt of an update on the Parish Giving Scheme and the Diocesan Giving Strategy
- Approval of revised Terms of Reference for the Environment Working Group
- Approval of a scheme of amendment to the 'Model Rules for PCCs' in respect of the Conventional District of Cranbrook
- Approval of a Joint Council scheme for parishes of Brampford Speke, Newton Saint Cyres, Rewe with Nether Exe, Stoke Canon with Huxham, Thorverton and Upton Pyne in the Netherexe benefice
- Consultation with the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee concerning the nomination of a member to the Church Buildings Strategy Committee
- Receipt of an update on Common Fund received for the year to date
- Receipt of reports from the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee Secretary, the Assets Group and the DBF Standing Committee
- Receipt of an update on operational reporting.

Work related to elections carried out during the period:

Preparation of electoral scheme to Diocesan Synod (2024 – 2027) and communication of the same to deaneries.

Vacancies

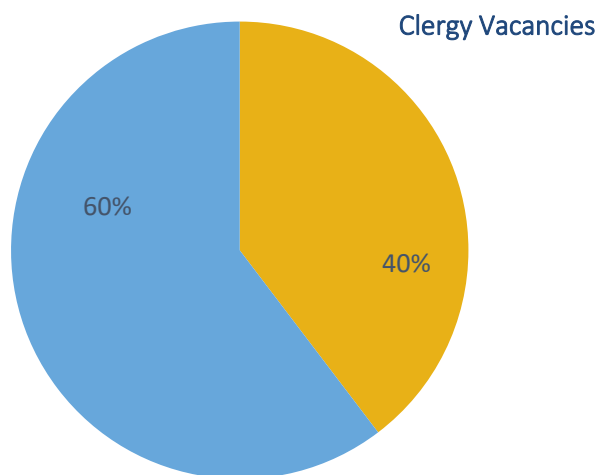
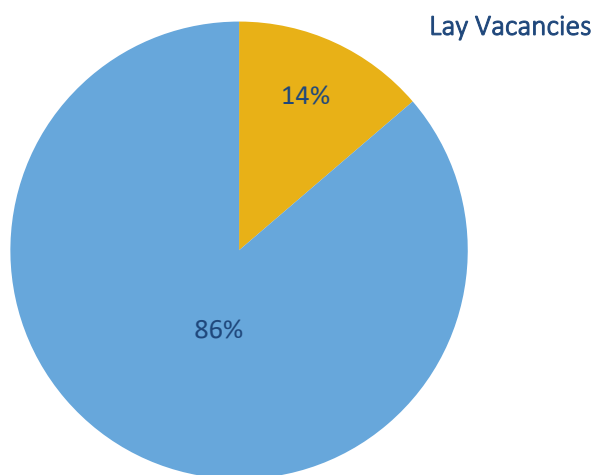
Vacancies on Diocesan Synod:

7 out of a possible 51 elected lay members and 23 out of 58 elected clergy members

Vacancies on Bishop's Diocesan Council:

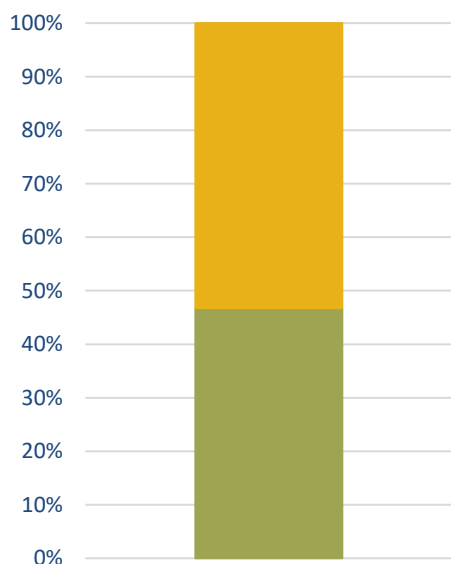
One lay vacancy from each of the Barnstaple, Totnes and Plymouth Archdeaconries

Vacancies on Diocesan Synod



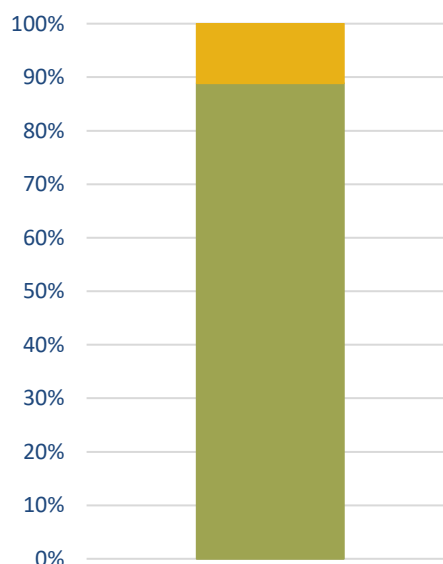
Meeting Attendance Rates – Q4 2023

Diocesan Synod



October 2023: 50 out of a possible 107
elected members = 46.7%

Bishop's Diocesan Council



December 2023: 8 out of a possible 9
elected members (There being three
vacancies) = 89%

Mission and Pastoral Office and Mapping

At its meeting of 2nd December 2023, the Bishop's Council and Standing Committee approved a Scheme under the Church Representation Rules for the creation of a full-transfer joint council for the parishes of Bramford Speke, Newton Saint Cyres, Rewe with Nether Exe, Stoke Canon with Huxham, Thorverton and Upton Pyne: these are six of the seven parishes in the Netherexe Mission Community. Under the Scheme, it would be straightforward for the seventh parish to join the Joint Council within the first three years if it so wished.

The Scheme will take effect on 1st January 2024, and the resultant Netherexe Joint Council will be the first 'true' full-transfer joint council in the diocese, the six PCCs going into abeyance and representatives from each parish instead being elected to the Joint Council, which is a body corporate. The parishes themselves will remain distinct, and churchwardens and deanery synod representatives will therefore continue to be elected by the annual parochial church meetings and meetings of parishioners.

Following the taking effect of the Scheme, diocesan officers will work closely with the clergy and parishes on the transition from PCC governance to governance by the Joint Council. It is anticipated that it will take some time to establish local systems and practices that enable the new structure to function effectively. It is hoped that the example of the Netherexe Joint Council, and the learning of both diocesan staff and parish clergy and officers, will prove helpful to other parishes in the diocese who may be exploring this model.

Pastoral Schemes and Orders:

Work continued on the following proposed Schemes during the Quarter:

- A Pastoral Scheme for the dissolution of the parish of Escot and the incorporation of its geographical area into the parish of Feniton was made on 11th December 2023, and will take effect on 1st January 2024.
- The Acting Bishop has given her approval to pastoral proposals for the transfer of the parish of Harberton from the benefice of Diptford etc. to the Totnes Team Ministry, subject to receipt of a resolution from one of the parishes. Once this has been received, it is expected that the Acting Bishop will formally sign the Proposals, and that they will be passed to the Church Commissioners for the preparation of a draft Pastoral Scheme. The draft Scheme would then be published for public consultation.
- Consultation with the interested parties on Draft Proposals for the union of the benefice of Abbotsham and the benefice of Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho! began on 29th November 2023 and will end on 17th January 2024. After this date, any comments received will be considered by the Barnstaple Archidiaconal Mission and Pastoral Committee as they decide whether to recommend the proposals to the Acting Bishop. If the Acting Bishop, in turn, were to give her approval, the Church Commissioners would be asked to prepare a draft Pastoral Scheme.
- Consultation with the interested parties on Draft Proposals for the dissolution of the parish of Coffinswell and incorporation of its geographical area into the parish of Kingskerswell (Coffinswell parish church to become a chapel-of-ease in the enlarged parish of Kingskerswell with Coffinswell) began on 6th December 2023 and will end on 24th January 2024. After this date, any comments received will be considered by the Totnes Archidiaconal Mission and Pastoral Committee as they decide whether to recommend the proposals to the Acting Bishop.

A number of further proposals for pastoral reorganisation remain under discussion locally and by the Archidiaconal Committees, including those concerning the potential Crediton Rural Ministry Hub; and proposals concerning the rural North Devon benefices of Ashreigney; Broadwood Kelly; Brushford; Winkleigh; and Dolton, Dowland, Iddesleigh and Monkokehampton.

Suspensions and Restrictions:

During the Quarter, the Acting Bishop renewed suspensions of the patrons' right of presentation to three benefices, for periods of up to three years. In all cases, this was due to potential pastoral reorganisation being under consideration but discussions not having yet progressed to the stage where formal consultation can be initiated. In addition, one new suspension was put in place on the grounds of possible pastoral reorganisation.

Consultation with the interested parties on two further potential suspensions (one renewal and one new) was commenced in December 2023.

Church Buildings Strategy Committee (CBSC):

There was one meeting of the Committee during the Quarter, on 2nd November 2023. Updates were given in relation to twelve cases.

An expression of interest was received from Mr Andrew McSmythurs in joining the Committee, which carries several vacancies. The full Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee were consulted on his nomination at its meeting on 2nd December; and he was subsequently nominated by the Acting Bishop.

- A Pastoral Church Buildings Scheme for the closure for regular public worship of St Petroc's Church, Petrockstowe took effect on 1st October 2023, with the building subsequently vested in the Exeter Diocesan Board of Finance for the duration of the 'use-seeking period'. This is likely to take a considerable period of time. There has been some tentative community interest in the building, and an initial local meeting of interested parties is to be held prior to wider marketing.
- The CBSC continues to await a Part 1 Church Buildings Council (CBC) Report for the church of Holy Cross, Highampton, which is at risk of closure due to its poor structural condition and the inqoracy of the PCC. At present, the Acting Bishop has put Dispensations in place to a. exempt the building from worship on health and safety grounds; and b. enable the Incumbent to discharge essential PCC functions given the inqoracy of the PCC. It is anticipated that formal consultation on closure will commence on receipt of the report.
- Two meetings took place in November in relation to the churches of St John the Baptist, East Down, and St James, Arlington, respectively a parish church and a chapel-of-ease in the parish of East Down with Arlington. The first meeting was a public meeting to explore community interest in establishing a friends group to support the care and maintenance of the buildings; while the second was an 'options appraisal' meeting attended by the Archdeacon, diocesan officers, a representative from the CBC and a representative from Historic England, with the aim of exploring possibilities for additional uses that might support the future of the buildings as places of regular public worship. The first meeting attracted a degree of community engagement, and work on the establishment of a friends group continues locally. The second meeting enabled some creative discussion, and an Options Appraisal Report is expected from the CBC.

- Preliminary discussions are taking place concerning the church of All Saints, Withycombe Raleigh, in Exmouth, which occupies a large and central site and has a small congregation. Exmouth Town Council has expressed an interest in acquiring the site for the development of a community facility. Lease options are currently being explored.
- Work continues on seeking an alternative use for the church of St Michael, Honiton, which was closed under the Mission and Pastoral Measure in 2019. At its November meeting, the CBSC agreed to support a statement of joint venture in relation to a piece of land belonging to Combe Estate. Under this statement, the Exeter Diocesan Board of Finance would be permitted to use part of the land for the development of thirty parking spaces to serve the church building; while Combe Estate would jointly use part of the land to elevate its green credentials in relation to a building proposal for which they intend to seek planning permission.

The following work was also undertaken during the Quarter:

- An Agreement between the Acting Bishop and the Incumbent of the benefice of Broadclyst, Clyst Honiton, Clyst Hydon, Clyst St Lawrence, Rockbeare, Sowton, Talaton and Whimple was signed on 22nd November 2023, bringing into existence the Conventional District of Cranbrook within the parish of Rockbeare. This has enabled the licensing of the Revd Jon Holder as Curate-in-Charge of the Conventional District, together with the establishment of a Parochial Church Council (PCC) to serve the area of the District for the duration of the Agreement. At its meeting of 2nd December 2023, the Bishop's Council and Standing Committee approved a Scheme for the variation of the Model Church Representation Rules as they apply to parishes to enable the creation of an ecumenical electoral roll and, therefore, ecumenical membership of the PCC.
- The DMPC Secretary and the Head of Governance contributed to a training programme for new incumbents in the diocese; while the DMPC Secretary continued to offer induction on DMPC-related matters to new colleagues.

Clergy Appointment Processes

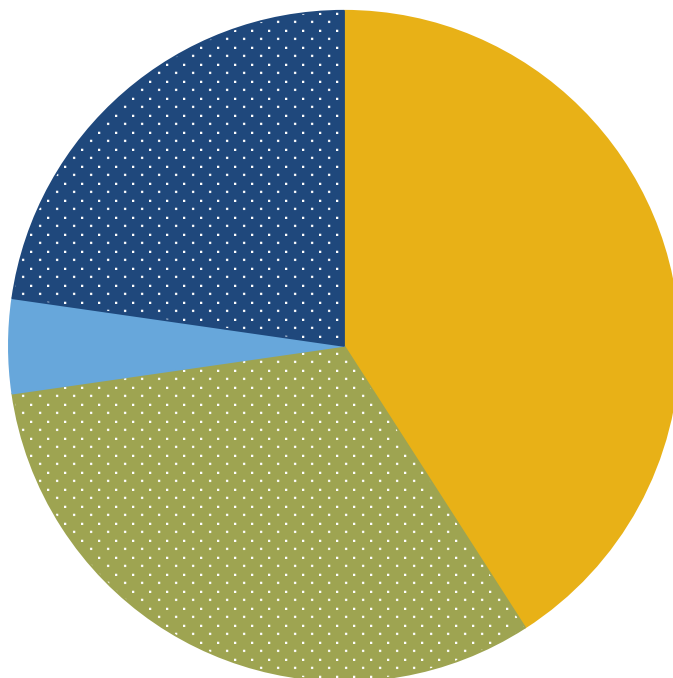
The Designated Officer under the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 has, under instruction from the Bishop's Staff, prepared the administration for the following five appointment processes in the months from October to the end of December 2023.

- Benefice of Axminster et al
- Benefice of Lynton et al
- Benefice of St David Exeter
- Benefice of Sticklepath with Roundswell
- Benefice of Willand et al

Mapping

Under the terms and conditions of the relevant licences, and in accordance with agreed and designated purposes, the Diocesan Mapping Officer compiled the following maps in the months from April to June 2023 in support of the central and local work of the Diocese of Exeter, and that of Truro Diocese through a Service Level Agreement:

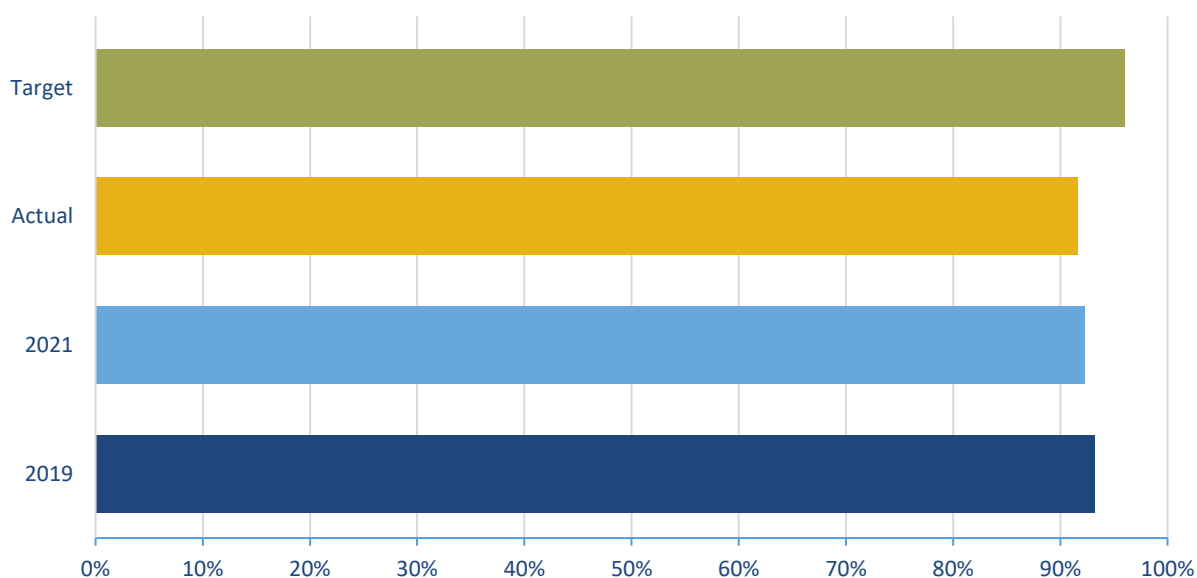
Area of work	Maps Produced
For the Diocese of Exeter	9
For the Diocese of Truro	7
For New Housing Communities	1
For clergy appointment processes	5



Finance

Common Fund Collection rate for the period ending 31st December 2023:

Common Fund	Request £000	Contributions £000	Target	Actual	Comparison to Previous Year	Comparison to 2019
For 2023	9,026	8,268	96.00%	91.60%	92.31%	93.20%



Mission Resources

Working together to support mission & ministry in our diocese.

In December, we participated in the regional giving conference, organised by the national giving team, at the Ammerdown Centre in Radstock. During this event, we received an update from the PGS team, re-established connections with colleagues in the same field and gained inspiration from a workshop led by Dave Hopwood. He referenced 'Tales of a country parish,' written by Colin Heber-Percy, who said; 'We reach out to help each other, not because of our differences, but because of our sameness. We are part of the same humanity, branches on the same tree, limbs on the same body. Rich or poor, weak or strong, it's our humanity that unites us.' These were encouraging words at the end of the year where we all prepared for a season of gifts, particularly the greatest gift to all humanity: Christ

The last quarter of 2023 was dedicated to responding to queries related to the distributed digital devices.

We also increased the number of in-person visits to support connectivity tests required before purchasing a contactless device.

For more information about Digital Devices visit:

<https://exeter.anglican.org/resources/generous-giving/digitalgiving/>



Those involved in the Parish Giving Scheme received news that the Church of England is extending the Scheme to all parishes, not just the 35 member dioceses, which included Exeter. This expansion is facilitated by integrating PGS more closely into the National Church, with funding coming from the Archbishops' Council through a grant from the Church Commissioners.

Through the Give2GoGreen pilot project from the Church of England, match funding was available for churches interested in implementing small to medium-sized projects to reduce their carbon footprint, with costs ranging between £5,000 - £20,000. For every £1 donated to the Give 2 Go Green campaign, the National Church of England will contribute an additional £1. We have supported some of the churches participating in this initiative by providing the necessary resources to launch these campaigns, as well as making a limited number of contactless devices available on loan for the duration of this fundraising campaign (6 weeks in February/March 2024).



You can contact us at:

 mission.resources@exeter.anglican.org

With our best wishes,
Alison, Brigit and Phil

 @StewardDevon

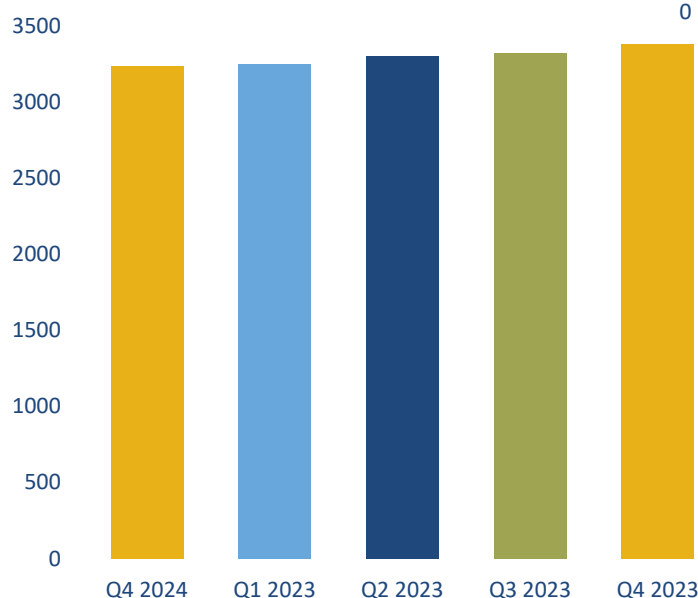


Parish Giving Scheme as at 31st December 2023



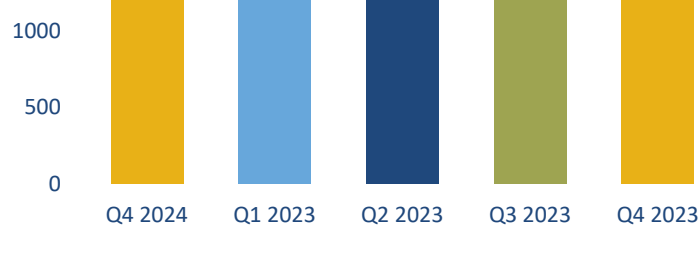
Number of churches participating:
287

Number of churches participating at the end of each quarter



Total number of donors:
3,377

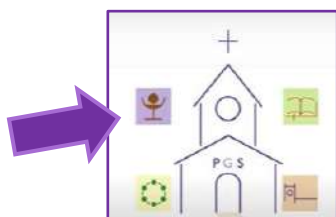
Total number of donors at the end of each quarter



Sum returned to churches at the end of the quarter
£290,718.06

Total sum returned to churches during the final month of each quarter

For more information about Parish Giving Scheme click here



Or visit: <https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/home/>



Communications and Engagement



This was a busy quarter for the Comms Team, beginning with the Licensing of Lay Ministers (LLMs) at Exeter Cathedral, at which we captured interviews and photographs with the new LLMs and livestreamed the service.

During October and November, we were planning, promoting, and preparing for the Come and See Weekend of Mission with the Archbishop of Canterbury. The weekend itself was a great success and our team covered the whole weekend across Devon, supporting with the technical needs of the main events and sharing content from the weekend on our platforms and with local and national media.



You can subscribe to our weekly email bulletin **Roots & Shoots** [Here](#)

<https://exeter.anglican.org/>



@CofEDevon





After Come and See, we quickly switched gears to Come and Pray, our Diocesan Day of Prayer at Exeter Cathedral. The Comms Team were part of the planning team for the event, and created branding, t-shirts, promotional material, and worship resources used during the event itself. The event was livestreamed, and we had a lot of engagement on Andy Flannagan's performance of 'O Come Emmanuel' with lyrics re-written to address the Israel-Palestine conflict.



The rest of December was quieter than the previous months as we wound down towards Christmas, recording a video message with Bishop Jackie in her role as the Acting Bishop of Exeter, reflecting on our role as 'Bearers of Light and Hope'.



Chloe Axford

Director of Comms & Engagement

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Communications & Engagement Officer

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Matt Prior

Communications & Engagement Officer

Multimedia Storyteller

📞 01392 294966 or 07704 155228



Top Posts

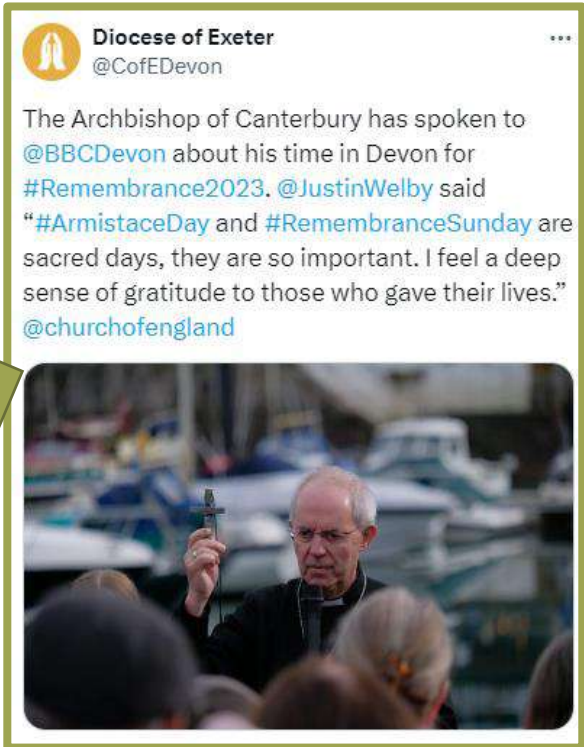


facebook

Reach: 6.709 Reactions: 87
Impressions: 6,981 Comments: 4
Interactions: 156 Shares: 27



Impressions: 7,934 Profile Clicks: 12
Detail Expands: 17 Likes: 29
Total engagements: 82 Retweets: 5
Media engagements: 12 Replies: 3



Reach: 360 Likes: 40
Impressions: 432 Comments: 1
Interactions: 44 Shares: 2



Overview

Views

2.4K

Impressions

47.5K

Unique Viewers

1,036



Roots & Shoots Community News

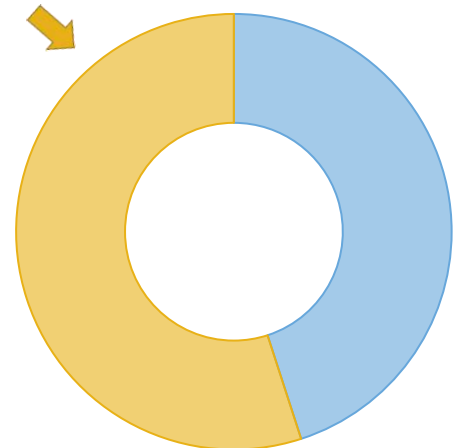
Welcome to our Roots & Shoots newsletter with a Come and Pray invitation, Prayers of Love and Faith briefing, a churches' Come and See round-up, countdown to Cop28, Advent events, and... did you hear the pun about the Archbishop's cup?!

NEED TO KNOW



Emails Sent: 45,239

Open Rate: 55%



Total number of
Subscribers: 3,760

People Services

The period between 1st October 2023 and 31st December 2023 was a time when the people team consolidated working practices, carried out routine work, and inducted new employees.

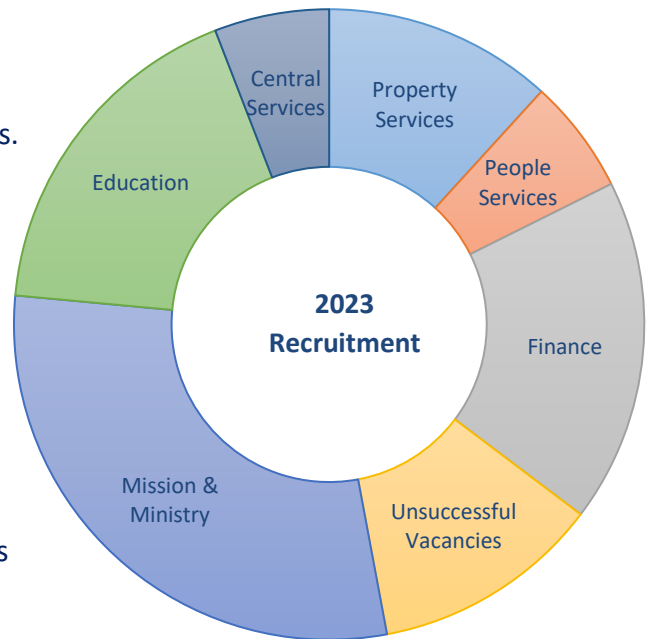
Appointing People

It has been a comparatively quiet quarter for recruitment at EDBF, with just two new appointments. The Mission and Ministry Team welcomed Sarah Charker as Creation Care Engagement Officer in October. This role is match funded by the national Church through our Net Zero Carbon grant funding. The Education Team appointed Aleksandr Mihnovits as their new Education Administration Officer in December, filling a post which had been vacated by Deborah King

Other recruitment processes are ongoing for the Property Services and Education Team with interviews scheduled for January.

During the quarter, the People Services Team updated their recruitment processes, to ensure that we are making the best use of the Church of England Pathways system and other recruitment services.

The end of year Recruitment Report was prepared for the Senior Management Team, reflecting on a successful year's recruitment in a challenging labour market. We anticipate that the challenges will continue into 2024.



Developing People

Staff feedback from the 2023 Performance Development Review (PDR) process was used to review the PDR process for 2024.



The policies, forms, and guidance have been updated and refined in preparation for a rollout in March 2024.

Clergy Policies and the Clergy Handbook have been reviewed and updated, with advice from our legal support, to ensure that they remain in line with current legislation and requirements.

The revised policies relating to clergy will be presented to the Acting Bishop of Exeter and her team in the new year for consideration.

Engaging People

We continue to seek feedback on changes such as the Hybrid Working Policy and the new PDR process, to ensure that we are responsive to the needs of employees and considerate of their working experience.



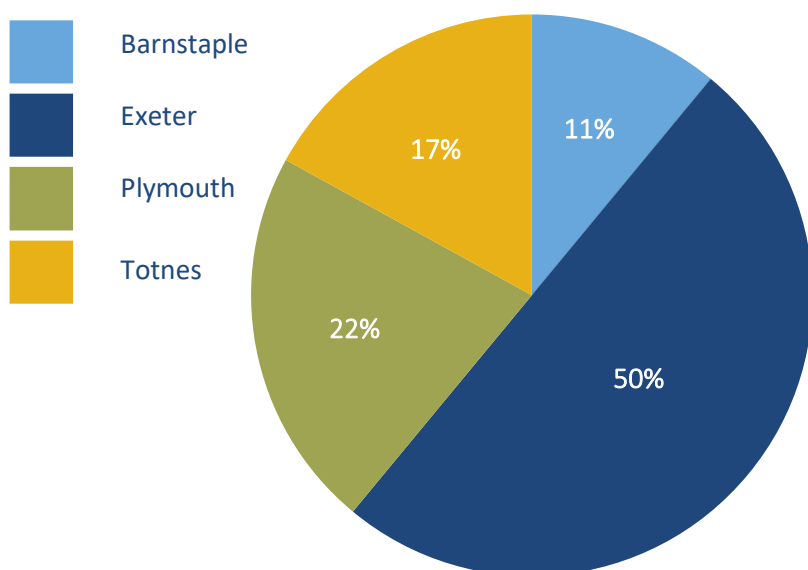
Culture

A whole staff training session on Mental Health Awareness was held in October, led by Richard Frost. Feedback indicated that this was a priority issue for staff and so a Staff Wellbeing Survey was designed and undertaken in December to consider mental health and other aspects of wellbeing in the workplace. Analysis and recommendations have been prepared for Senior

Wellbeing

An EDBF Staff Wellbeing Strategy and 2024 Calendar signposting support have been prepared for the SMT, with a view to further raising the profile of wellbeing in the workplace. We continue to work closely with line managers to support individual employees wishing to vary their existing Terms and Conditions of Employment, or through absence and other difficulties.

The breakdown of support by Archdeaconry is as follows:

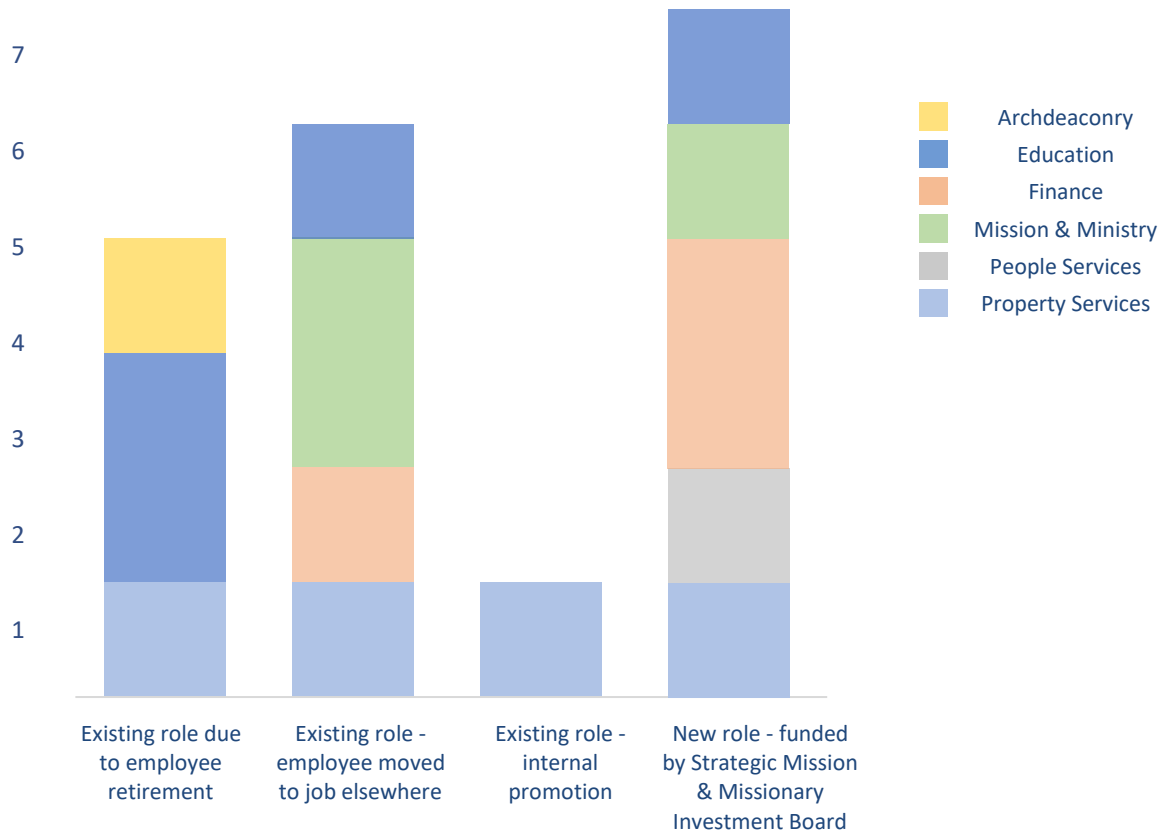


Anthea Carter-Savigear

Director of People Services
& Safeguarding

 07519 116073

Breakdown of vacancies filled in 2024

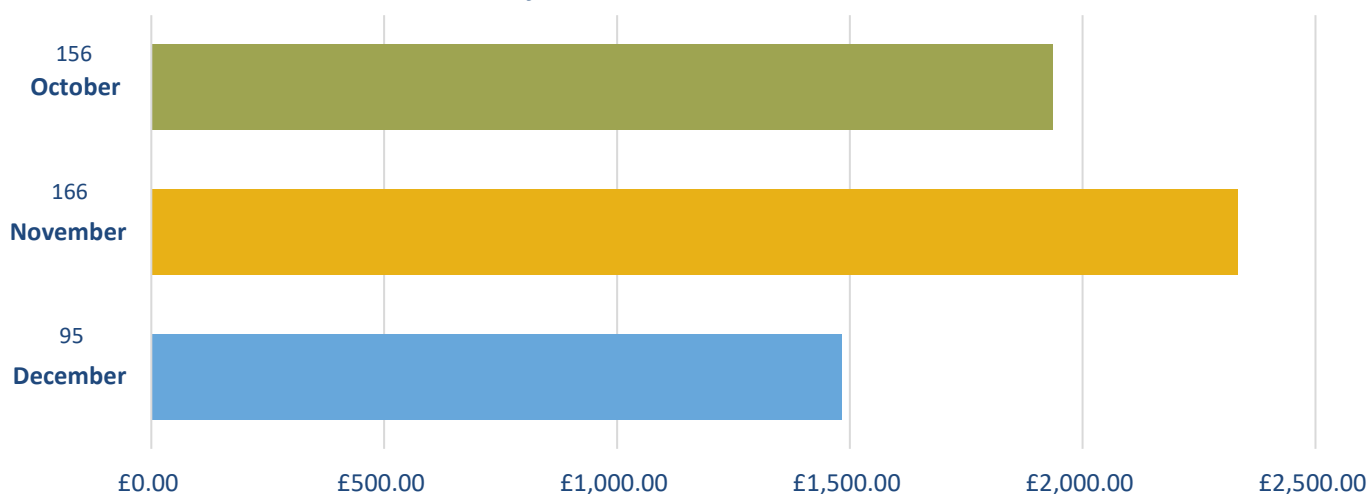


Safeguarding

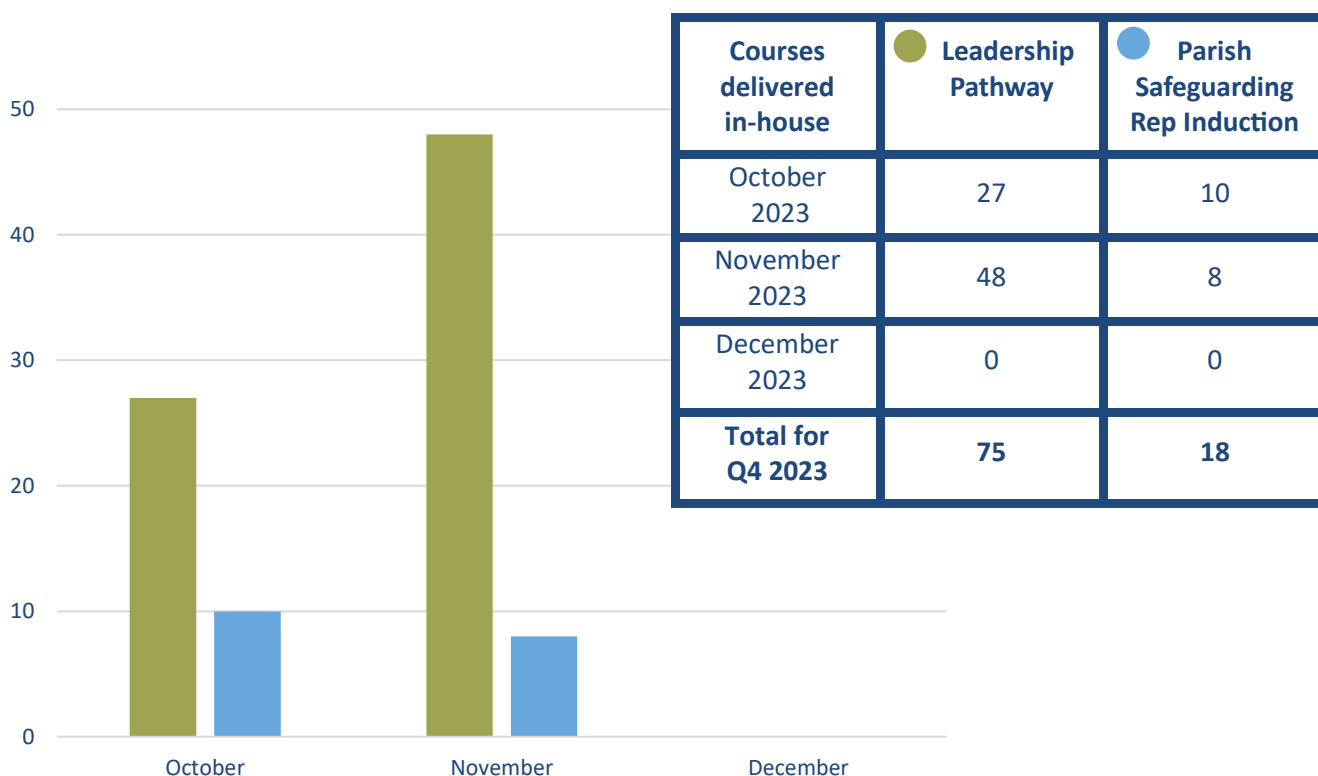
The model of safeguarding supervision being trialled by our diocese under the Pathfinder project has been evaluated, and we anticipate that it will be recommended that it be adopted across the country. We have also been engaging with the Future of Safeguarding project being led by Professor Jay, which is considering models of increased independence for safeguarding in the Church, and we expect to see recommendations from that project soon. We have supplied that project with anonymised data covering the last 5 years and that demonstrates a significant increase in safeguarding cases, training courses, and DBS checks, over that period. We believe the increase in cases is a positive development that reflects a greater awareness of safeguarding. The caseload is very varied, but the general themes remain the same, with most cases not being linked to Church Officers. We have provided detailed feedback to the consultation on the draft guidance on Managing Allegations and are now waiting to see the updated version, which will then be subject to wider consultation. Our representations to the project team leading the implementation of the National Safeguarding Case Management System have been accepted, and that will make the move to NSCMS much simpler. The initial feedback from our use of the National Training Portal has been positive but we will continue to evaluate the changes in training delivery.

Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

Number of DBS Checks and cost to EDBF - Q4 2023



Safeguarding Training – numbers trained Q4 2023



For information and resources from our Safeguarding team, please visit our website at <https://exeter.anglican.org/resources/safeguarding/>

Clergy Housing

Quinquennial Projects – year to date			
2021 Schemes Completed	Total 2023 Quinquennial Schemes	2023 Quinquennial Inspections Completed	2023 Schemes Completed
52	106	106	60

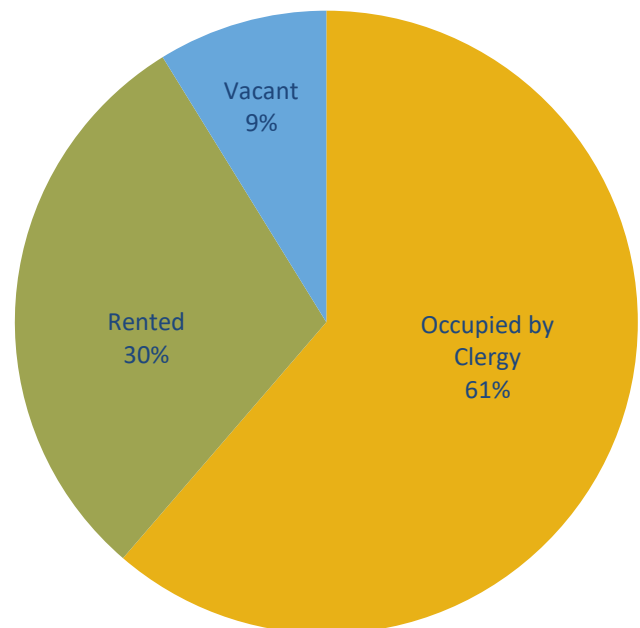
*Note: these are the total number of schemes for 2023. Some schemes will be a combined QR/Ingoing. All Quinquennial schemes have been instructed, but some will not be completed this year.

Ingoing Projects – year to date	
Schemes In Hand	Schemes Completed
0	36

*Note: these are the total number of schemes we expect to undertake during 2023. Some schemes have been deferred as an appointment has not yet been made.

Current use of Clergy Housing – as at the end of Q4, 2023

Number of Clergy Houses in portfolio	318
Occupied by Clergy	195
Rented	95
Vacant	28



Sales and purchases – Year to date

Houses on market for sale	2
Houses sold	1
Houses purchased	0

Church Buildings

Applications – Q4, 2023

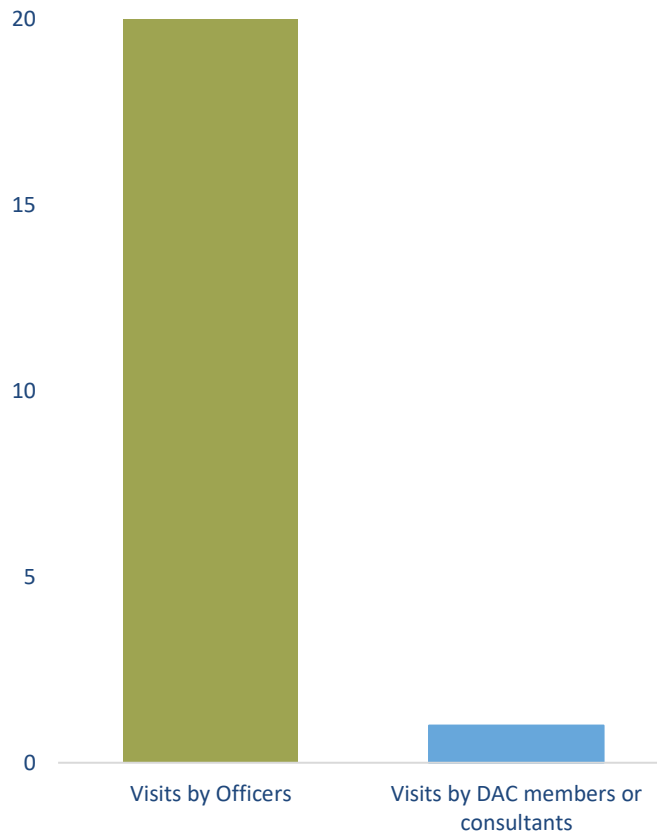
Faculty Applications	Total no. of cases considered by DAC	New Applications	No. of new applications progressed at first review	Resubmissions	Number of resubmissions progressed
Q4	33	20	6	13	8

List B	Received	Approved	Undetermined at the end of the Quarter*
Q4	41	41	7

*Not all cases will be from the current quarter, so the number approved/undetermined will not equal the number received each quarter

Number of Site Visits Completed – Q4, 2023

Number of Site Visits Completed	Q4
By Officers	20
By DAC members or consultants	1



School Building Projects

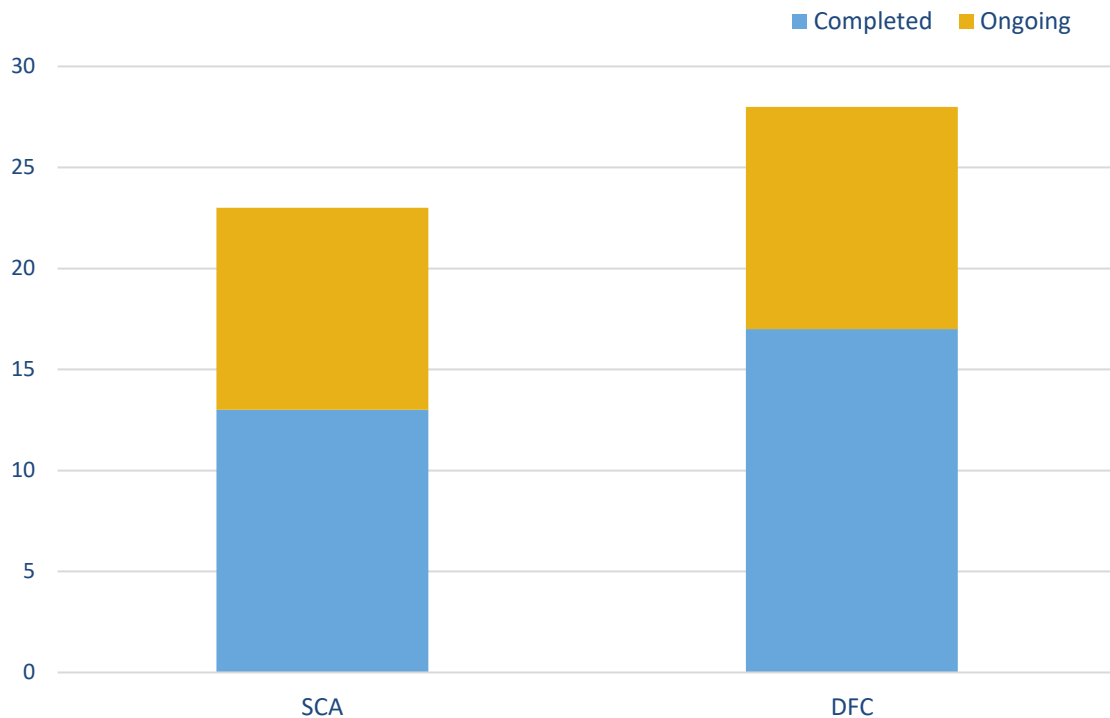
Ongoing School Building Projects

2023/24 Projects	Number of Projects Ongoing	Number of Projects Completed	Total Projects
SCA Funding*	10	13	23
DFC** (no SCA Funding)	11	17	28
Total Number of Projects	21	30	51

*SCA - School Condition Allocation Funding (funds paid to eligible bodies responsible for maintaining school buildings)

**DFC - Devolved Formula Capital (allocated for individual schools and other eligible institutions to spend on capital projects that meet their own priorities)

2023/2024 Projects

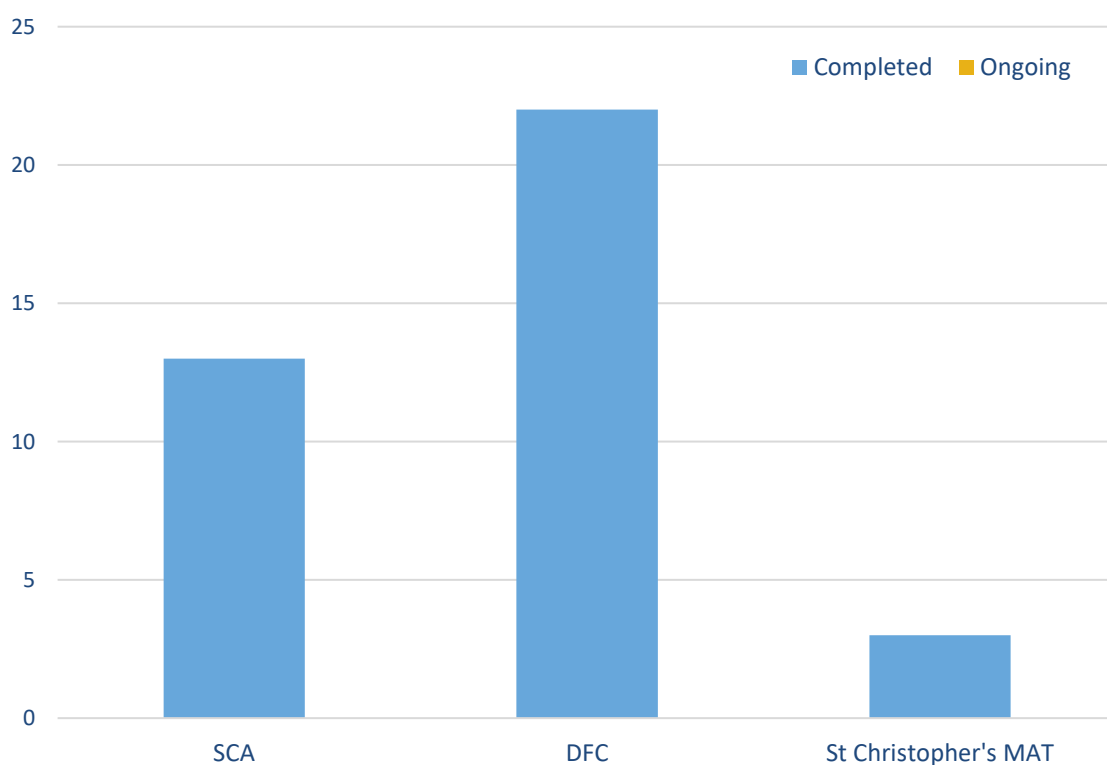


2022/23 Projects	Number of Projects Ongoing	Number of Projects Completed	Total Projects
SCA Funding*	0	13	13
DFC** (no SCA Funding)	0	22	22
St Christopher's Multi-Academy Trust	0	3	3
Total Number of Projects	0	38	38

*SCA - School Condition Allocation Funding (funds paid to eligible bodies responsible for maintaining school buildings)

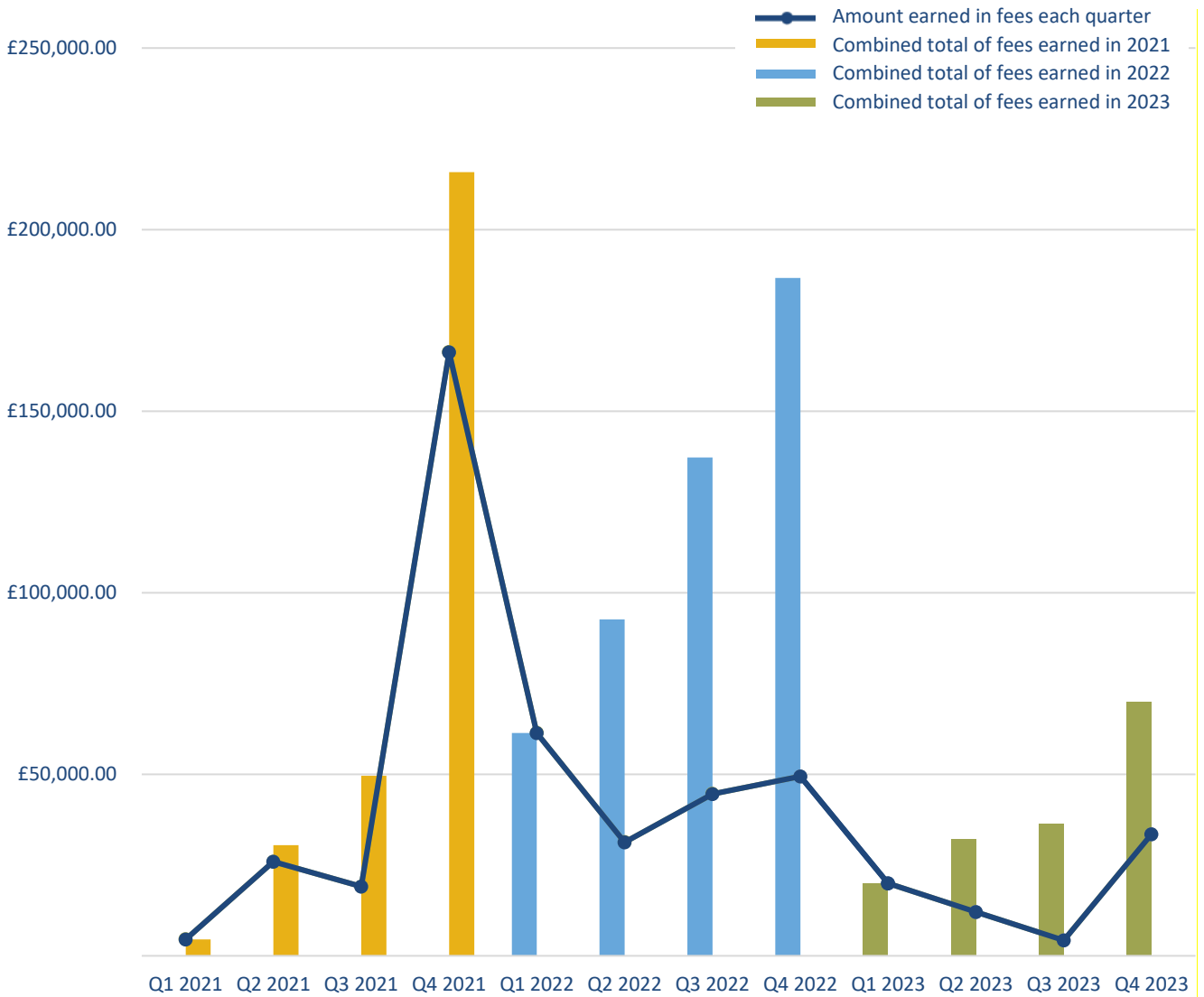
**DFC - Devolved Formula Capital (allocated for individual schools and other eligible institutions to spend on capital projects that meet their own priorities)

2022/2023 Projects



Fees	Fees 2021	Fees 2022	Fees 2023
Q1 January - March	£4,547.84	£61,371.95	£19,965.40
Q2 April - June	£25,920.60	£31,303.96	£12,108.38
Q3 July - September	£19,077.49	£44,583.38	£4,621.86
Q4 October - December	£166,242.50	£49,386.93	£33,525.77
Total Fees	£215,788.43	£92,675.91	£69,861.43

Fees Q1 2021 to Q4 2023



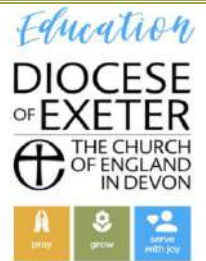
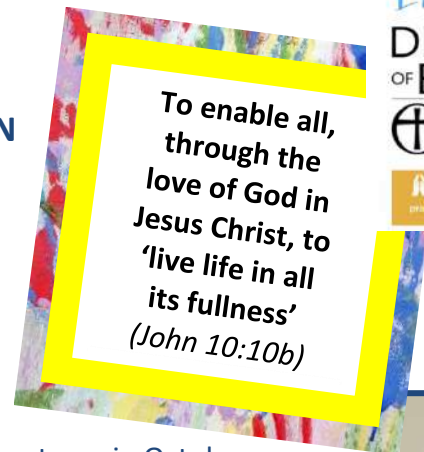
Education

EXETER DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION VISION

Nurture vision-inspired education,

Nourish personal and spiritual growth,

Enable connected communities that Flourish



Staffing update

We were delighted to welcome Jo Hunter and Pete Brown to our team in October.

Jo Hunter, Senior Education Adviser for School Effectiveness: Church Schools Flourishing previously worked for the education team at the Diocese of Gloucester. Prior to that she has worked in primary schools, including as a Headteacher in Gloucestershire, West Sussex and East Sussex.



Pete Brown, Education Adviser for School Organisation, Governance and Admissions worked for 27 years in Secondary Schools across the Southwest in a variety of roles, including Headteacher at St Cuthbert Mayne School in Torbay. For the last 4 years, Pete was Head of Centre at an alternative education provision for young people with complex needs. Pete is working closely with Christina Mabin who is our Senior Adviser in this area.



Inspections: Ofsted and SIAMS

In this quarter, six of our Church of England Schools have been inspected under the SIAMS framework and are judged to be living up to their foundation as a Church school. Those inspected are shown in the table below. Their full SIAMS reports can be searched for and viewed [here](#).

SCHOOL	Previous / Type	SCHOOL GROUPING	DATE OF SIAMS INSPECTION	SIAMS GRADE*
Drakes, East Budleigh	VA	Link Academy Trust	Dec-23	J1
St Peter's, Tavistock	VA	St Christopher's CE Primary	Dec-23	J1
Compton, Plymouth	VC	Stand-alone school	Nov-23	J1
St Marychurch, Torbay	VA	St Christopher's CE Primary	Nov-23	J1
Chagford	VC	Dartmoor MAT (DMAT)	Nov-23	J1
All Saints Marsh, Newton Abbot	VA	Learning Academy Partnership	Nov-23	J1

The SIAMS Framework has moved away from providing a single word judgement and instead assesses whether the school is living up to its Christian Foundation. All Church of England schools are expected to have a Christian vision which is underpinned by theology, and this is central to SIAMS inspections. All reports give a good overview of strengths and areas for further development.

In this quarter, nine of our Church of England Schools have been inspected by Ofsted. Seven were judged as Good and two as Requires Improvement against the Ofsted Inspection Framework.



Some highlights from Schools...

The Archbishop of Canterbury has recently visited two schools in North Devon: **Ilfracombe CofE Academy** and **Ilfracombe CofE Junior School**. During his visit to Ilfracombe Academy the Archbishop spoke with staff and students, and led collective worship in which he opened up about how he had experienced a difficult childhood. [Click here](#) to read the full news story on our website.



The Archbishop also met Pupil Chaplains from **Torre Church of England Academy** at Remembrance Day events in Torquay.



Eighteen year 6 pupils have taken on the position of Pupil Chaplain and are linked to a class in the school. Part of their role is to develop a relationship with the class, to ensure they can deliver engaging and age-appropriate opportunities for worship and reflection. Read the full news story [here](#).

Pupils at **The Beacon Church of England Primary School** in Exmouth have starred in a film calling for change that was shown at the COP28 Conference in December 2023 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The Beacon's year six class have been working with the Green Futures team at the University of Exeter on the Schools Across the Ocean Project. The video ends with a call to the audience to act. Read the article [here](#) and watch the video [here](#). Anne Billington, Headteacher at The Beacon Church of England Primary School said, "Asking the big questions about and becoming courageous advocates in caring for God's world is rooted in our Christian vision to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10)."



The Education Team



Pete Brown



Jo Hunter



Sue Lockwood



Christina Mabin



Alex Mihnovits



Marilyn Pearce

Mission and Ministry

The high-profile events in the fourth quarter have been the Come and See mission weekend with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Day of Prayer, which you can read more about below. In October we welcomed Sarah Charker, our new Creation Care Officer, who has brought more energy and ideas to the team. Christmas brought the carol service and a brief hour to reflect on the bittersweetness of the Christmas story then and the Christmas season now.



More in the background has been a review of all our training to develop a more integrated strategy for the next ten years. Firm proposals are yet to be agreed but the broad themes are that we'd like more vocations events to appeal to a variety of different demographics; Foundations in Christian Ministry to be available in different formats to make it more accessible to more people; self-supporting ordained curates and stipendiary curates to be able to do their core training together; more ongoing training (CMD) to be open to everyone, lay and ordained; and a single training hub so that all our training, and that offered by other agencies, is more accessible.

Revd Ian Bussell

Director of Mission & Ministry

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I have been a part of the Lay Ministries section of the Training Review over the past 6 months, and as this report comes to its conclusion, plenty of time has been spent on it. The next phase may well also produce significant work.

The Mission Community Health Checks are still proving useful to the Mission Communities who have completed them, I would encourage more Mission Communities to sign up for them.

Lay Discipleship

"There are different kinds of working but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God working." (1 Corinthians 12:6)

This quarter has seen a rewritten Preaching Grow Course. Philip Sourbut's expertise made this course a brilliant one over the last two years, so without him this year, I rejigged it to try and manage it myself. This is an enjoyable course to be a part of, and we had 21 attendees this year. I also recently ran a Leading Informal Worship course for the first time. It seems to be the area that lots of people are looking for support in at the moment.

Dr Jon Curtis

Lay Discipleship Project Manager

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 @joncurtis82



Making connections

This quarter, Sharon has been continuing to build connections and develop links with 100+ churches/volunteers/workers/partners across the Diocese. During this time, she has visited or met with at least 15 different churches/workers, the highlights of which have been:

- Working closely with Kath Entrican from South West Youth Ministries - meeting regularly to share links and plan events together, including two network meetings in January and The Gathering Kids in March.
- Part of Devon County Show planning team, having met with, reviewed and planned ideas for 2024.
- Worked with ICE Exeter and was part of two days of the Narnia school outreach event in November.
- Planned and supported First Aid training in November.
- Met with teams at churches to help develop strategies for change – including Ruby County Mission Community.
- Supported and promoted light parties at churches across the Diocese, running a prayer space at one.
- Meeting regularly with Sue Lockwood, Director of Education, to develop an even closer working relationship with the Education team.
- Developed links with Cathedral Education team; we are planning a Pentecost event in May 2024.

Schools and Church connections are a crucial aspect of mission to children and families – so this remains a focus in many discussions with individual parishes. Sharon became a Trustee for a local Multi Academy Trust and continues to develop connections with other Trusts. She and has led termly collective worship in four schools.



Sharing learning and training opportunities

- Visited and led discussion at further Deanery Synods, and initiated more visits, which are booked in the next six months.
- Planned, produced and promoted a Families Prayer Space at Come and Pray event in Cathedral.
- Introduced new potential courses and initiatives including Truth Be Told (Intergenerational Storytelling); Kids Matter Parenting Support.
- Booked in Walk Through the Bible training in March.
- Planned and organised Prayer Spaces training in further locations in April.
- Built on current key projects: Begin Well; Messy Church; Toddler Groups support. Encouraged and supported new 'Bubble Church' in Thorverton, and talking to other churches about developing this.
- Booked in 'Begin Well' network meeting for January.



Sharon Blyth

Children & Families Mission Enabler

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[Sharon Children's Mission Enabler](#)

[@shaz1childrenme](#)



To find out more about the JOIN campaign, visit the Church of England website:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/JOIN>

Resourcing and communicating

- Supported the development of Come and See materials construction and created children's materials.
- Engaged with National Church events and initiatives, including **Join In** Volunteer pilot and **Catalyst** training programme for youth and children's workers.
- Reviewed planning and key events with the Diocesan Mission Enabler Jeremy Putnam, and drafted a strategy for Children and Families linked to this and to National Church initiatives.
- Building on Baptism connections and support after meeting with Rev Joanne Wetherall of the Diocese of Gloucester. Date has been set for Baptism training on 3rd March. 2023 at the Old Deanery.
- We are undergoing a review of our resources: website, Seedlings, Facebook page, Twitter – now known as X, databases and other communications.



Why not join our **Facebook** group?

[Children and Families in Devon - Exeter Diocese](#)

Bishop's Advisory Panel (BAP) Candidates & discernment process

Seven candidates attended a Stage 1 panel in this quarter, beginning the national element of their shared discernment process with a carousel day of six short interviews online. A further four candidates are expected to attend Stage 1 in the early part of 2024. The two-stage process of discernment allows for some time between Stage 1 and the Stage 2 residential panels, which take place between March and July, for candidates to further develop their skills and experience.

Vocations

At the time of writing (January 2024) we have 29 candidates in discernment working with an Assistant Diocesan Director of Ordinands, including a number of recent referrals from the vocations team who continue to support those in the early stages of discernment and signpost them towards appropriate next steps.

Ordinands in training

We currently have 20 ordinands in training. This year ordinands and their spouses were welcomed to a tea party hosted by Bishop Jackie at Christmas. Plans are well under way with setting up curacies for those due to be ordained in 2024. The ordination of deacons and of priests will all take place in June this year (over different weekends), completing the move to ordain at Petertide rather than at Michaelmas.

Social Justice and Creation Care (SJCC)

More Capacity - Thanks to grant funding!

In November, Sarah Charker joined as Creation Care Engagement Officer, a role which has been funded by the National Church. Her role will be to support churches across the diocese to work towards Eco Church awards. Sarah got stuck in early, organising an Eco Church drop-in advice session in Sidmouth. Sarah will also be managing our growing team of Living Churchyards volunteers who provide free advice to PCCs on how to improve biodiversity in their churchyards.



Net Zero Action Plan (NZAP) received by Diocesan Synod

You can view the Net Zero Carbon Action Plan for the Diocese of Exeter here

**Net Zero
Action Plan**



At October Synod Bishop James and Sophie Phillips (Net Zero Carbon Officer) took the NZAP to Synod. No voting was required at this time. The Actions and milestone within the NZAP are consistent with the National Routemap to Net Zero 2030.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/net-zero-carbon-routemap>

<https://exeter.anglican.org/environment/net-zero-carbon-2030/>

Diocese of Exeter: *Operational Report – Q4 2023*

Match-funded grants pilot underway

We have learnt a lot from taking part in the pilot phase of Give to Go Green (G2GG) with the Diocese of Leeds. Despite very short timescales, we received 18 brilliant applications in November and have been able to offer funding to all the projects that applied. Currently, representatives from the churches are busy setting up their Give A Little accounts and preparing their G2GG fundraising campaigns, with one-to-one support available from our Mission Resources Advisers.



Parishes will do a 6-week targeted campaign, starting in February, asking their congregations and wider communities to raise 50% of their project costs through digital giving - online donations via a website or digital giving machines. Money raised will be match funded, and projects need to be completed in 12 months. We are working closely with our Church Buildings Officers and the Diocesan Advisory Committee to ensure that any necessary permission processes are underway.

So far, applications received include double and secondary glazing, LED lighting, window repairs, suspended ceiling insulation in a hall, pew heaters, heating controls, pipe insulation and more. We have even had a couple of applications for solar PV (Photovoltaic Cells) where other energy efficiency improvements have already been made. The total grant funding to be awarded if each participating church in the Diocese of Exeter reaches their fundraising target is £115k.

Energy audits – subsidised for 2024!

42 energy audits took place in Q4 – most reports have now been received. In 2024, Inspired Efficiency audited a total of 80 churches (including a small handful of church halls). We have now audited about 50% of our highest energy consuming churches.

It is *technically* possible to reach net zero in these buildings, the challenges are capital funding and having people with the time and skills to push the projects forward – and that is a huge ask for many PCCs. Officers across the diocese are working hard to offer support where needed and access to grant funding as much as possible.

Several churches have used their audit reports to help them apply for grant funding and develop their projects. There are also some PCCs who didn't find the report very helpful so we're looking at how to improve the process.

Diocesan Synod has approved a continuation of funding to subsidise energy audits throughout 2024.

For more information about subsidised energy audits, and to register your interest, please visit our website at:

<https://exeter.anglican.org/environment/church-energy-audits>

We have had a new smart gas meter installed, and can now monitor our gas usage data more closely via an online portal. This is recorded for every half hour period and means we can analyse our consumption patterns to plan future low carbon heating systems and identify when something is wrong.

The next part of this project will be to install better heating controls and zoning so that the system can be adapted more easily to ensure that the heating is turned off or down when the building is empty. To achieve this currently means having to manually adjust the boiler temperature and individual radiators each day.

Smart gas meter
at the Old Deanery

Formal planning consultation responses submitted / processes engaged with:

Consultation response submitted concerning the Water Lane, Exeter Supplementary Planning Document.

Consultation response submitted to the Teignbridge Local Plan 2020 – 2040.

Headline description of developments in New Housing Areas during the period:

Work is continuing to secure the future planning use of the western Cranbrook site for a place of worship and has commenced on initial planning for delivery.

A Conventional District has been created for Cranbrook and a scheme of variation under Part 9 of the Church Representation Rules for the creation of an ecumenical PCC has been approved.







Discussions about the delivery of a vicarage in Sherford are underway.

Meetings of the Diocesan Church Planting and Revitalisation Strategy Group (CPRSG)

The CPRSG met on 15th November. Topics discussed included updates on local projects, church planting curacies and a re-worked application for grant funding to support NHAs outreach work in Alphington.

Diocesan New Housing Areas Growth Fund projects in preparation and delivery:



Concluded

-  Derriford, Plymouth
-  East Okehampton
-  St Jude's, Plymouth
-  Sherford
-  Tavistock
-  Trinity, Exeter

In Delivery

-  Pinhoe, Exeter

In Preparation

-  Alphington
-  Sticklepath and Landkey



Strategic Programmes

In the final quarter of 2023, the Strategic Programmes team joined with the Bishops, Archdeacons and Senior Leadership Team to discern God's will for the mission and ministry of the Diocese in the coming years. This has led to the further development of a strategy for market and coastal towns which, in the event of a successful funding bid, will result in significant investment in select towns from 2025 and beyond.

Work was also undertaken to review the Growing the Rural Church initiative, which began in 2017, as we look forward to the appointment of a Rural Officer who will continue this important work especially in the Archdeaconry of Barnstaple.



<https://www.growingtheruralchurch.org/resource/>

Find out more about our strategic projects by clicking the links below...



We continue to support the flourishing of Plymouth Partnership in Mission, a collective of revitalised churches and local missions in northwest Plymouth. We are delighted that the Bishop's Mission Order was extended into 2024, and plans to establish a long term future for these vital ministries are progressing well.



<https://www.staidansernesettle.co.uk/>



<https://stmatsexeter.org/>



WELCOME HOME

<https://www.stchadswhiteleigh.org/>



BAYCHURCH

<https://www.bay.church/>



<https://www.stjamesplymouth.com/>



Please do join us in prayer for all of these important programmes.

Diocese of Exeter: Operational Report – Q4 2023



Archdeaconry News



from the Exeter Archdeaconry

Some of the highlights from the Exeter Archdeaconry during Q4 included:

Meeting one or two of the more rustic locals at Chardstock,



Commemorating Remembrance at St Paul's, Tiverton, and St David's, Exeter.



Joining in with worship at St Basil's Rural Church.





Leading the Advent service worship at St Mary's, Kentisbeare, and following the Angel Trail around the village. 🙌

Exploring Advent JOY at Axminster



Celebrating Christingle, including one at Clyst St Mary and a BSL interpreted service at Exeter Deaf Church .

