**In this document you will find the transcripts of all the questions and answers from the Panel Q&A sessions at the Shaped By God Together Deanery Webinars (of which there were 6 in total).**

**They are “as spoken”. Many of the questions were answered by more than one panellist and there were times when very similar questions were asked at different webinars.**

**They are the best answers we could give at the time.**

# Mission/Ministry

**Q1: “…Of all of the people of God” - what training and resources are likely to be available in order to develop lay people so that they can support and deliver ministry and what kind of role do you foresee for the Laity in whatever model we end up adopting?**

A: We do see a key part of the shift that we're looking towards is clergy and lay teams of ministers working together. Whether it's networks or mission areas or minsters, we think that does mean we're going to have to up our game in terms of training and how that is rolled out, so that we can work with communities on that.

People will then need to be appropriately trained, according to the needs of the local context and the needs of the Communities. Looking ahead to September vocations and training, we're really trying to be creative, trying to honour prior experience and gifting, and find ways to appropriately authorise and train people to do what God is calling them to do, not necessarily to “hit the criteria” that we have always worked with in the past, but trying a new way of creatively bringing people through.

**Q2: Regarding all three of the models showing different kinds of ministry teams, does this imply that the link between a church, parish, or benefice and its individual Minister is broken?**

A: We are talking about a different sort of relationship, so let's be clear: we've been working with a particular model of ministry, up to now, which is focused primarily on the Stipendiary priest, which has been the history of the Church of England. Now there's a question about *why* the stipendiary priests, rather than the non-stipendiary priests? And what about lay ministry within all of this as well? This is a different approach, but we are also very clear that churches need leadership and there needs to be very clearly set out leadership within any community. There does need to be priestly ministry within any Community, but whilst we're very clear on that, the question is around stipendiary and around the place of lay ministry. We're not saying we've got clear answers to that and that's part of what we're trying to work out through these models. But we are clear that there will need to be a leader or some sort and there will need to be some sort of Priestly ministry within local communities, but what exactly that will look like, as we say, is still unknown.

**Q3: The video refers to a growing gap between income and expenditure. Presumably this will have an impact on clergy numbers and the question is, if we know yet, what type of number or percentage reduction the diocese might be anticipating if indeed it is at all? Will this result in clergy redundancies?**

A: We appreciate you asking those questions. We realise it is a difficult time right now with rumours spreading around what different dioceses are doing across the Church of England. All we can say at the moment is it is too early to give a definitive answer to that question. We've said in a number of conversations that our financial position at the moment is challenging and that's partly as a result of covering a lost income over the last year, but there are also other factors involved in it so we're still trying to get a really accurate picture of that to be able to determine, then the exact number of clergy or stipendiary clergy, that we will be able to work with in the future.

This is absolutely about how we go from being a church that focuses so much on ordained ministry to being a church which focuses a lot more on how every baptised Christian can be involved in ministry. That's what we want for the future and that's where we want to keep the focus, while also making sure that we take care of those clergy who are in stipendiary ministry.

**Q4: How do you, broadly speaking, see the roles of clergy and Laity going forward?**

A: We think, as Bishop Martyn said in the video, yes, there will be a change, in terms of what we are referring to as more of an oversight ministry for clergy. Now I know that phrase is easily bandied around and can be understood in in different ways. For us, it's an extension of what most clergy are already doing. Most clergy already oversee other ministers who may be running small groups or run different outreach activities or whatever, so we’re already doing a lot of that but potentially extending it further in all of these three models.

It’s the idea of empowering the whole church. We believe everybody is called to ministry, which is really important, and for some people that means working within the church and serving the Church in that way or having a particular license as licensed lay or otherwise as licensed clergy. For others, it's serving God where God has placed you and empowering people to live out faithful Christian witness and faithful Christian lives in their place of work, in their school in the places where they shop, in the groups that they're a part of. It’s trying to help all God's people doing all of that together. So that's really the aim for us in doing the reshaping of this, to make it easier for us to both equip and help people disciple each other and discover what God is calling you to do as both your individual self but also as your community, and we think finding your own call within your community within your church community is really key to that.

**Q5: How will ordained clergy whose training and vocation has, to date, been based around immersion in a “pastoral model: being “amongst the flock smelling of their sheep”, how will they be prepared, retrained and supported in this new role, which is much more about oversight and facilitation?**

A: It does get to the heart of what we're talking about here. Absolutely we're going to need to put in place a whole program of support, coaching, mentoring and training, all these different things to help clergy think about this new shape of ministry. We want to stress that, so perhaps within the question is a sense of that this is a moving away from any sort of local Ministry - where a clergy person is based in a local community and deeply involved in that Community “smelling of the sheep” using that phrase from Pope Francis. We don't think we're moving away from that at all. We want to keep with that principle, and that's really important. But the subtle difference may be when it comes to Stipendiary Ministry, and how we can allocate Stipends in the diocese. Yes, it may well be that those roles are more focused on oversight ministry, and where others ordained and lay will be involved in the locality much more. We've not worked through all the details of that yet, by any means.

For many years we've been trying to train clergy and lay ministers together in our diocese through the leadership program, we've purposely tried to open all of our training to mixed cohorts because that's a richer place to be enriched in our learning. We think we're learning how to do that better and actually that the ordinands and the curates who are coming through now are used to that enabling-focussed ministry. There is a challenge for us to learn how to do that most effectively and there will be a transition piece that we do need to pay attention to, but it does come from our own original calling in many ways as priests, to enable others and to further the Kingdom that way.

**Q6: Will communities accept and respect non-ordained leaders? Is there anything we can say about recruitment and training for those that have not been ordained into Ministry?**

A: Whenever we talk about change, whenever we talk about doing things differently there are always questions about how will people respond and will they accept these changes in one way or another, and we would want to emphasize that for a long time within the Church of England we have been very wedded to one particular model of Ministry with this focus people wear dog collars. We don't think that's been healthy. We actually think that's been extremely unhealthy that we have focused so exclusively on ordained Ministry. We think what we're trying to do now is actually rebalance things more so that there's a better balance between the Ministry of the whole people of God. It will be a challenge to bring about that change.

There's something in us that says “well why on earth wouldn't we accept the Ministry of every Member of our church communities?” and precisely because we are all baptised believers and we all spend our lives trying to discern God's calling to us. We have no doubt of that in any of our church communities right across the diocese, whatever shape or form they may take, but the reality is that sometimes people have that very embedded expectation that somebody turns up with a dog collar or with the title of the lead minister or whatever. And we think that's something we've just got to tackle head on, as lay people actually, we need to value each other and God's calling in each of our lives, but that doesn't mean it's going to be easy.

From this Summer, will be not only be launching a revised a selection process that involves local context more but also a much more accessible and flexible training program that helps people prepare again for the diversity of ministries and recognising that people have busy lives and it needs to fit around that and support that integration of the different parts of our lives.

It's worth saying, that sometimes running alongside this is a fear that if we don't have enough clergy, then the sacraments will disappear from the life of the church and they really won't. We are a sacramental church and that one way or another, will still be the case, so if that's something you're worried about, be assured: holy communion and baptism will not disappear!

**Q7: Does the way that when we talk about those tensions that emerged from the conversations, just couching the tension around developing our faith in the language of *either* my responsibility *or* my priests reveal that we're still not serious about lay ministry: it’s either the individual’s or the priest’s, but not necessarily the responsibility of other *lay ministers* who might be a part of that process? Are any of these new models going to rely on a kind of greater level of lay ministry? How are we going to recruit and train for and recognise those ministries?**

A: We’ve kept it expressed in that language, because that was the language which arose from the stories. So it's always a temptation when you deliver what you gather in stories that you then reinterpret the question into what you think it means using all the data and what you think you think it means! And it was quite noticeable that that was the language used. The language in the stories and the insights that we gained often didn't distinguish between Laity and licensed Laity, but it focused on clergy and Laity so we reflected that back. It tells us something that the question is getting to the two really important points about how we both recognise and honour local ministry in all its forms and recognise the role of the clergy in helping other local ministers to fulfil that local ministry as well.

There is a need for us to learn how to recognise and honour the mutuality of ministry of laypeople, licensed laypeople and clergy and work out where their best their roles fit best. We think that feeds into the question of leadership and the availability of volunteers and how much time people have and all of that. The more a community is able to express why it's doing what it's doing, the more people are willing to be a part of that, and to find time to be engaged and to release themselves to do that, the less ministry looks like clergy/laity.

It’s about enabling people to see that they're part of something which is bigger than them, rather than just filling a gap which we can't provide, that is really important. But it's an honest conversation around the availability of volunteers, what we're asking volunteers and lay leaders to do, how we train them, and we're looking at all of those in terms of our training and our selection and our local contextual training as well, so trying to make it as easy and yet as consistent and rigorous as possible.

We think it is up to us to really question ourselves as to what we expect, for example when we think of ministry, is our expectation of a pastoral visitor always someone with a dog collar? And then we need to be asking ourselves why, and not just asking for our clarity, and so there's some reflection there for what our expectations are and to make sure that we're valuing all the ministry that's offered from within our communities.

**Q8: It has been very much a sense of how priests see themselves that it’s not a “job”, but an identity, a “sacramental state” and those might appear to be threatened by Shaped By God Together. Is it trying to change that understanding?**

A: We don't think it is, although we think we will end up expressing that that incarnation or ministry in different ways. But there is a real question there about the role of the priesthood and one of the books that we've said will be helpful for people to read, or we thought would be a good resource for local conversations, is Stephen Cottrell’s book called “On priesthood”. Cottrell's written a very good introduction and he takes each one of those conditions of the ordinal that speaks of shepherd and the sacramental state, but he really very helpfully challenges the idea of priests are a kind of local chaplain to a local community. Cottrell talks about his learning that he went through about how to be a leader in mission, rather than a leader in chaplaincy. It's worth thinking about.

We're not seeking to change it. We're trying to work out the way that we can best make use of all our priests, those who are going to be in receipt of a stipend and those who are going to be working or who support themselves in other ways but are still ordained. We don't think we're trying to change it fundamentally. The other question was whether we need to rewrite the ordinal. We don't think we need to rewrite the ordinal as it says absolutely everything that we need to be doing! The national church in the last three years has rewritten the characteristics and competencies and criteria for ordained Ministry. We think that shows as a church nationally we've been learning that actually there are things that we need to look for in our clergy that perhaps we haven't recognised before and a lot of that is leading into enabling others and releasing of others and oversight ministry, then perhaps had previously been for the for the last time they were written 20 years earlier.

# Models

**Q9: How would mission areas work (or how would any of these models work) with different traditions where in those traditions, maybe values and beliefs clash, and it might not be easy to work together.**

A: We do have different traditions, we have people with different backgrounds and different styles of worship, all of which we value as part of the Anglican tradition. And I suppose I would simply say, of course, this is exactly what we do already in the diocese. The diocese is, in effect, a network of churches that seek to learn from one another, to support one another, even though we may not agree on everything. And so that's what we'll be asking people to do in all three of these models. It'll work out slightly differently, no doubt, according to which model we eventually go for, but I think it's the same principle. We want to keep the diversity and we want to ensure that we do learn from one another and support one another across all our differences.

**Q10: Is the process about only choosing one of these models or might it be possible that more than one model be operative at the same time in the diocese? Why isn't it possible, or is it possible to have more than one of those three models working simultaneously in the diocese?**

A: We're particularly mindful that this is going to be a big change and therefore we do need to strive for a certain level of simplicity in all of this. And that's actually realising that trying to start from a point of one model which we work with across the whole diocese is going to be the simplest form. Now that's not to rule out the possibility of some sort of hybrid models within all of this, but it's just to say that, in order to make the transition from where we are to where we think we need to be there's going to need to be a degree of simplicity, to enable that to happen.

It's important to remember that with each of these models, it doesn't mean that every church within it will look or feel the same, and it's not about uniformity and a choice of one model. It's about giving us a basis and a structure, on which we can we can build upon this framework, and the framework is like a skeleton that just provides enough structure to enable each individual church community within it to flourish within the mission that is it's called to serve, but you retain your local autonomy and your local mission and as a local worshiping community within a bigger framework.

We want to be able to honour the different contexts, the variety of the diversity that we have around the diocese. Two things just to emphasize, and that is what we're talking about here is a framework for the whole diocese within which we can then have different flexible models, if you like, on a local level. So we're talking about a whole framework within which will be lots of flexibility, we can assure you we want to honour the principle of local contextual knowledge and your ability to be able to discern God's mission in your own local areas, but that has to be done within a wider framework around how we use money for mutual support across the diocese how we deploy our ministers, all that sort of thing.

We're not entirely ruling out that there could be some sort of mix within the framework, but we're keen that there should be a simplicity to this model as well, and getting from where we are now to any of these new frameworks, will be a difficult and a highly complex task. So the more complexity, we add into it by trying to have more variety, the more difficult it will be to implement well, so we're just trying to keep that balance really around simplicity but absolutely wanting to ensure local contextualization as well.

**Q11: How is the Ministry model different from the mission partnerships that we had a few years ago, but which were abandoned? What can we learn from that experience?**

A: There's a lot to be learned from mission partnerships. We spent a lot of time at the beginning of mission partnerships trying to define what a partnership was compared to a deanery and what a mission partnership convener was compared to an area Dean, and I think we got quite side-tracked by bureaucracy and in some places, perhaps effectively took our eyes off the original imperative behind it. So there's real learning from the mission partnerships, because we think they worked really well in some places, and still in some work today. But then there were real areas where we restricted leadership in some ways, for instance we began by saying that if you are a mission partnership convener you have to be clergy.

So there was learning, all the way through, but there is definitely something worthwhile going back and looking back at lessons learned through the mission partnerships, so we'd love to hear the learning from those who took part as that would be really important to hear.

**Q12: All of the models seem to be dependent on clergy teams and there's perhaps not a great record of clergy working together in team ministries, for instance. Perhaps that has partly been because of the way clergy are formed, or what they imagine they will be doing in the role of clergy. How are clergy going to be enabled to adapt to a different way of doing things when the majority were trained to be self-sufficient leaders?**

A: This is about the increasing importance of lay ministry within the church, and we do believe that in all three of these models we would be placing a much greater emphasis on lay Ministry. But the question is perfectly valid in terms of clergy and in working within teams and it does come down to training, to modelling what people see through their ministry and how they're trained on the job, if you like. So we are going to have to look at that, and we will be wanting to support clergy and lay in this transition to a very different way of working.

**Q13: Why have we said that there's only one model that will be taken forward, given the diversity of the diocese? With the emphasis placed upon the mixed economy of church, how can one model fit all?**

A: As an Anglican, part of that Anglican identity that's a real treasure is the diversity of the Anglican Church - the fact that each of our churches and fresh expressions is absolutely rooted in its own particular identity and calling to serve the Community within which it finds itself. And so, on that level, of course, no one size fits all in terms of what a church is and does. As a diocese, if we shift our thinking and lift our horizons a little bit, what we're looking for is a framework that gives us enough structure to be able to organise the resources we have, and resource doesn't just mean finance it means how do we organise our ministry and our people who are called to particular types of ministry in a way that best serves the mission that we're called to. Whatever framework and whichever model we choose, or whatever the framework looks like, that would then be applied differently within each particular local context.

It's absolutely about a framework within which there can be lots of diversity. In terms of the transition from where we are now to where we'll need to be with any one of these models, we are very conscious we're talking here about a big change process. And therefore, there is an element from which we are going to have to look at what is the simplest approach to doing this. If we try and work with multiple different models, that's going to get very, very complex very quickly so we're trying to get a balance, yet having the sense of diversity, responding to local context but trying to keep it simple as well.

**Q14: One weakness of the models may be that churches in groups don't always share good practice with one another, nor with the wider church, and that might risk specialized networks not communicating in a coherent way, and thereby dividing the body of Christ throughout the diocese.**

A: We are very conscious with the network model that there is a huge risk within it, namely that it ends up becoming people of a particular church tradition, a particular theology, and particular style whatever that may be, just forming together in the network. We're absolutely determined that is not going to happen. We value the diversity of the diocese. We value the learning between different traditions within the diocese and that absolutely has to be preserved. There's a clear risk within that model but there are also clear advantages as well.

The approach that we've made to the network of the intercultural worshiping communities and the process that we've engaged in with those at the moment means we have five churches that have said “that's what we're going to do, that is going to be our focus. We're going to become integral worshipping communities within a network and that's really important to us. We're going to be part of a core for that.”

As a core network around that, there's also a group of churches, who said, “you know we're really interested in doing this, but we don't think it's the main thing that we're being asked to do, but we'd love to learn. And we'd love to find out more about how to do it and how to do what we're doing better.” And they're in a kind of a separate core, if you like, around that that first network and they're getting the learning and it's about sharing the learning and sharing the experience.

The danger is we become so passionate about one thing that we take our eye off the shared learning and the whole family, but being part of a diocese that has many networks will hopefully allow the learning to flow, rather than to stagnate.

**Q15: How can we join up local vision and wider diocese into some kind of framework or model, and eventually plan how we how we can join those together?**

A: It's that thing that we always live with and it refers back to some of those insights tensions. Each individual fresh expression or parish church or worshipping community within our diocese has its particular context, it's particular community that it serves. And we will, of course, be wanting to listen to God's call for you in your particular place, and that's really important.

A lovely part of being part of the Anglican Church is that sense of belonging to something bigger, as we belong to the diocese, and the way that we've chosen as a diocese to do this process together (and very deliberately calling it Shaped By God *Together*) is that we're trying to do it as a process of shared discernment. We could have got a little bunch of us and stuck ourselves in a room somewhere and come up with all sorts of plans and just presented them across the diocese. But we've quite deliberately chosen not to do that because we've wanted to draw on the wisdom and the prayerful reflection and have many more people in our local Churches to do that discernment collectively together so there is a sharing of that vision and that call, even if it's worked out differently in each particular local context.

**Q16: Would the changes that would ensue from the choice of any of those models be brought about by formal legal structure or covenant, or would you foresee them being more about informal relationships? How would the legal side be likely to work?**

A: It's too early to give a full answer to that. Any sort of structures are dependent on good relationships, so we would absolutely want to have that foundation of good relationships between churches, but there can come a point where it's then right for that to be formalized and to be within the Church of England system, to have what's called a pastoral scheme to bring about a legal change. It is possible we may go down that route, but we're not going to rush that. It's probably worth saying that we won't be rushing to make legal changes or anything like that. It will all be done in conversation involving people in local Churches and making sure it's done in agreement together.

**Q17: How did each of these models address firstly the finance issue, and secondly clergy often being too busy to do mission?**

A: On a very practical level, we will of course have to do some more detailed financial modelling and for whichever model is actually chosen, ultimately that will have to be done, going through line by line budget lines for those of us who spend our time of spreadsheets and take delight in it! Before that of course we also need to make sure that any of these options are actually possible for us financially.

And so, that is something at the level of just sense checking, or doing an initial feasibility and a bit of work around each of them. Work is ongoing, so Bishops Council meeting at the beginning of July when that decision will be made will have some initial financial information about each of the models that will give us the confidence that we need, we don't want to be doing too much detailed work across three separate models, because we just don't have the time to do that in a lot of detail. We need to do enough to know and enable us to make the decision in the first instance.

But we are confident with the information we've already got that any of them could be tailored within reasonable expectations of our financial position. It’s just a very practical thing. On the second bit of that question, one of the groups as part of the process, led by Dean David Monteith, have been considering in some detail the whole range of support that already exists for on the ground ministry, and that is feeding into the thinking of the process.

Within each of these models there is the possibility of the opportunity for us to be considering what more could be done, particularly around things like administrative support for church working alongside clergy and where churches, maybe have been struggling to find a treasurer or people to help care for the buildings and so on. Potentially that could be done across more than one church, so there could be a sharing of some of that across churches and again that could work in each of these models. At the foundation is the realisation in all of this, that we cannot ask our Stipendiary clergy to carry on spreading themselves even thinner across more and more churches. And that's why we need a different model of ministry which isn't just dependent on Stipendiary clergy, but is much more focused on how we enable the whole people of God to be involved in Ministry in the whole of their lives. This is about a broadening out of a model of ministry and which we hope will mean a much greater sharing of ministry across clergy and Laity.

**Q18: Why would only one model be chosen for the whole of the diocese rather than perhaps the most appropriate one in each area? Why can we not have more than one model running simultaneously?**

A: That's most people's immediate sort of reactions to the presentation. At the moment we're working on that assumption that we're going to try and work with one framework for the whole diocese within which local churches in particular contexts will then have to work out their own way of working within that model. This is not about imposing one way of doing things on every part of the diocese. It's about a framework which then “holds” local contextual discernment about what God is doing in your context and the best way to shape ministry in your context. That's why at the moment we're working on that assumption that we will just go for one of these, while not entirely ruling out the possibility of hybrid models.

We're very conscious that actually getting from where we are now to where we need to be in terms of buildings, finance and ministry is going to be a hugely complex task, so we want to try and keep it as simple as we possibly can. And the difficulty with hybrid models is it will potentially just increase the complexity and make it even more difficult to actually implement. In the diocese for the moment we're holding out that some sort of singular framework for the whole diocese can be found, but we've got a way to go yet in this journey before any definite decisions are made. The reassurance for people to hear there is that the local sense of calling and mission will still remain paramount along with local eccentricities and idiosyncrasies, but it will be held in one big broad framework.

**Q19: How do digital services and similar setups fit into these models?**

A: We've all discovered a stronger need for digital interaction in our lives and who'd have thought that so many churches across our diocese would have embraced it the way that we have? It's not for everybody, and it's not the same as gathering physically together whether that's in a church building or wherever, and it links into the question about local church and the flexibility and freedom for a local church to be what that local church needs to be. There is the view of the future of the church where digital is part of it in one way or another, and I think we've discovered it as a rich resource for us as church communities and who knows where that might go? What we can see, is that we believe it should fit in with whichever model is worked up into the chosen framework.

We are very conscious and very aware many of our churches obviously have been doing a lot of stuff online in this last year, and now as we're on the cusp of going back to in person worship we are very conscious of the churches that are facing that difficult dynamic about how do you do both. The expectation has slightly changed, and seems to be now that you'll have both in person services, while also keeping going with the online stuff. We realise that's hugely demanding on our churches. The importance at this point is actually a partnership in this whole area, as not every church can do this, so this is about churches working in partnership to help each other out. And why not just have one church in the deanery doing the digital stuff and others can log on from wherever they happen to be? There are different ways of doing these things, but in the process it makes us self-conscious of what we are doing as a church, which is quite demanding, even as we're experiencing today’s changes.

**Q20: How would these models operate? What if a parish or group of churches are operating in a kind of “Churches Together” way across its denominations and working well ecumenically?**

A: We've tried to have an idea that as we started these conversations, (and at all sorts of levels of church leaders across the regional areas we've had conversations around all of this, and we've spoken with counterparts and other denominations) it absolutely makes sense for us to join up where we can as obviously we're all facing the same questions. Primarily this will happen on a local level rather than regional level, so this will be about where we are in a local context, whether that’s a particular town or village where there are strong relationships. All three of these models could work ecumenically in different ways, so we're absolutely keeping that as part of the equation, as we seek to work this out. A lot of it will probably come down to the level of the detailed conversations when we're clear on what the overall framework is that we're working with.

**Q21: Thinking about the Minster model, how would we ensure that it didn't become more divisive and hierarchical?**

A: In different ways, all of these models require some level of working within teams and, from what we can see, there are benefits that we already see from what we formally call a team Ministry. In our own benefices, by deanery, and right across the diocese many clergy are already working in teams and with lay ministers, and with people who perhaps don't even have an official title within their church Community but are very much a part of the ongoing living life of that church, and we think that's what we've got to be to be working towards and it's only if each of us plays our part in them that we avoid falling into the trap of a very hierarchical model that may not be the best expression of leadership for a church community.

The diversity question within that is absolutely the core of our Anglican identity - that we are a diverse church in all sorts of different ways. We want to preserve that identity and diversity, and so pleased to be assured again that within each of these models where we're having a particular focus not just on the different contexts (urban and rural and so on) but also different church traditions and in all sorts of ways the diversity is absolutely valued as we learn from one another, across all our differences.

**Q22: How do you anticipate clergy working across a Minster or in additional areas or in Networks when they might be being asked to work across very different tradition theological traditions, where there might be challenges of conscience? We know this applies not just to clergy and licensed lay ministers, but would it also perhaps be true of the churches themselves, which will have their own to have DNA and characteristics, so how will working across traditions work?**

A: It's something we definitely need to pay attention to and I think there's a balance in there between recognizing our calling to be reconciled communities as we've identified in our priorities, and that means being able to engage across difference, and so we think that it’s important to find a balance; to be honest about the fact that we've got divisions amongst us and yet we're called to be reconciled community. We're called to be the people of God, and yet we've got divisions, some of those divisions are formal and we have regulations and laws to enable those so we can live together in that that way, and some of those divisions are informal. We've discovered new divisions too, as we've gone through lockdown including technological access and things like that.

**Q23: Is there a danger that potentially a minister model could create a sense of two classes of church?**

A: That's why these local conversations are really, really important because that will really help us as we begin to discern. The fear here is when mission is done *to* you as a local congregation or as a local Parish. But it's how we form the ownership and the identity around what we gather around, and we gather around Christ. The intent is resourcing “sending and gathering.”

When we say gathering and sending we're not anticipating that the people are all from the Minster. It's about creating that sense of relationship and fellowship across all of those churches that are connected together around a particular Minster. This is a sort of thing that we're really hoping will come out in a little bit more detail, through the feedback we’ve been receiving.

**Q24: How are we looking at the experience of other dioceses and learning from them as we think about our own?**

A: Being part of the Church of England, with over 40 dioceses means that there are at least 40 ways of doing everything out there! Absolutely, we've been trying to stay in touch with people who are doing similar things and feeding some of that learning into what we're doing. Equally we've also been trying to learn from rather than then specifically emulate or copy, because each diocese does things differently. Because we are different, we have a slightly different context from other dioceses so it's that mixture.

**Q25: Researchers demonstrate a strong correlation between paid church leadership (could be ordained, could be lay) and growth, how do these models reflect that?**

A: The models are intended to work in a variety of ways and with a variety of resources, so they're not dependent upon a deployment issue to be to begin with. They all need to be appropriately resourced, and we have a limited amount of resource, so the choice and decision for us as a diocese, (and that's part of our conversations) is where we put the resource and where we put those paid posts, be they paid administration posts, paid clergy posts, paid youth workers and this conversation is going across the whole of the diocese.

So it's how we best find that the best use of our resources in the in the places which will be the most appropriate for our priorities and for our mission, and the recognition as we look at what we have now that we might *not* have those posts in the right places, because we've made decisions in the past about where we place the things and people we need that haven't always been based on a strategic overview, like we did with the deployment in 2020 and I think we've learned a lot from doing it in that way. We need to know what the mission is first and then how can we resource the mission. 2020 was very much kind of divvying up of resource before mission, and that has been one of our learnings. When you look at the stats, they do result in church growth, in many ways, so for effective mission and ministry the question is where is the best place for us to put those paid roles and what are we asking them to do?

**Q26: How do we avoid large holes in the net in the Network model?**

A: That's a great image. It speaks about how we all as a diocese engage in this process, not just up to the decision being made in October, but in so many ways the even more significant bit of this is what happens after that. Now there are all sorts of questions about how do we go about actually doing whatever it is that we decide to do, and we don't have answers specifically to that yet.

But there will be an expectation that all of our churches and worshipping communities engage in this. And we will support you and be in conversation with you to help you find the way in which you connect in and for some that may be quite straightforward, whilst for others it might be a much more difficult situation, and there may be some difficult conversations. Some longer accompaniment will be needed to do help those get there, but it's about all of us stepping up and being part of the diocese and finding a way to belong.

# Types of Church

**Q27: The point has been made that the Church of God is more than just Anglicanism. How are we thinking that this might work in partnership and alongside other Christian churches and, in some cases, perhaps even on some projects with people from other or groups or other faiths? Where would you see Christian connection with churches that aren't Anglican in this big plan?**

A: The starting point of this is just to say we're very aware that all the main denominations (and many independent churches) are all facing the same questions. And so, absolutely we're in conversation with them. We have good ecumenical structures that mean we're in conversation with, and trying to learn from, one another. But a lot of this will come down to particular localities so where within a local area there are strong links with other churches with already good relationships between ministers we want to be open to.

Thinking of churches working together, in our video with Bishop Martyn he mentioned about a Network model Carlisle Diocese has, where they have done a number of networks, and a they have a very strong ecumenical network as well, so they've had a particular approach that is very open to things like that. At the same time, it's worth acknowledging again the importance of simplicity. We're going to have to be honest about the fact that there will be limits to what we can do within all of this, and we're not starting with a complete blank sheet of paper. We have a limited capacity to bring about change in a good way so we’re holding together the simplicity with the desire to want to work with others, and to be as local as possible, as we make those decisions.

**Q28: If churches or fresh expressions or whatever kind of Christian communities are being grouped together in any of those models with people that they're quite different from theologically, how can we ensure that works for all involved? How do we ensure that it doesn't become a point of pain?**

A: Actually most of our churches contain a very high degree of diversity within them. When you talk to people within those congregations you find actually there are people with all sorts of different theological views and so on with it within them and, of course, certain churches do tend to sort of be part of one particular tradition within the church or another. What we're looking for within whichever of these frameworks that we go for is absolutely to preserve the diversity of the diocese and to find the right way of ensuring that there are good relationships and mutual learning between people who have different views and different backgrounds and understandings. People of like mind will naturally gravitate together so we understand that that will happen, but the diocese exists to ensure that Christians that have different views, and different backgrounds are able to learn from one another and work together in different ways, so it's a delicate balance and that's what the Anglican Church has done for centuries and is what we will continue doing with any of these frameworks.

# Diversity/Inclusion

**Q29: How are minorities, going to be supported, particularly if they might be in smaller churches or churches that are often already struggling, if they become Network churches and merge with other areas? How will minorities still be supported, and most importantly safeguarded?**

A: We will absolutely want to have an eye on that in terms of how these would work, and how we make sure that minority voices are heard and indeed are safeguarded within it all, so there's a level of detail we haven't gone into yet other than looking at the process itself.

**Q30: Is there a desire to increase the diversity of resourcing churches, and is it worth us emphasizing the fact that model (Minster) is also talking about intercultural worshiping communities, minsters and other churches, but do you want to comment on that current similarity?**

A: In terms of Minster churches, it is much broader than resourcing churches, so we see resourcing churches as potentially part of that model. We now have four churches that have been designated as intercultural worshiping communities that have received extra resources from the national church in order to grow their diversity, and they are all from very different traditions as well. Within this model we are potentially talking about market town churches and those that have quite a strong civic role within a market town, who could well be designated as ministers to help support churches across a wider area so we're convinced that we will both need and be able to get the sort of diversity that we need, among Minster churches.

**Q31: How important will sacraments be in each of the models? How do we envisage the sacraments working when lay ministers and volunteers will be relied on for many local parishes? Will this stretch priests or will people have to travel for the Eucharist (which goes against inclusion)- any thoughts?**

A: The sacraments are hugely important and central to our Anglican identity. Therefore, a key consideration within all of this is that we don't believe that any of these models would necessarily radically alter that, but it does mean a slightly different way of expressing Priestly ministry, and we would have to consider very carefully how that works. And we're not necessarily so sure that it would mean people having to travel to receive the sacraments. We're great believers in local ministry. All these are parts of what we will need to consider, and are on our list to keep an eye on as we delve more deeply into these models.

# Other

**Q32: What Bible passages inform our understanding of church and ministry in these different models?**

A: We're not going to necessarily pick particular passages as there are all sorts of possible passages we could go to, but the really key thing in terms of Ministry is absolutely to want to draw more and more on a New Testament understanding of every member of the body of Christ having a role to play in the body of Christ. Every one of us being gifted by the risen Lord Jesus Christ, such that we're asked to use those gifts for building up the body. So that is a large part of what this is about, and we have to be honest about the fact that the Church of England hasn't been great in doing that. We have tended to assume that ministry belongs to people who wear these sorts of collars and that everybody else is somehow almost a consumer of Ministry.

It’s a really important New Testament principle about getting back to understanding everyone. Beyond that, in terms of these models, the New Testament doesn't give us a particular model of church. I think we need to just state that, clearly, we get a huge variety of different models actually within the New Testament church and indeed the early church from what we know of history post New Testament, so in terms of structures, things are fairly neutral and the question really is what best enables the body of Christ, to be the body of Christ, and to serve the world? That's why this is very much about this particular moment in history, about the particular context that we're part of in the Diocese of Leicester and answering those questions for us. We can do that strategically, that is clear from the Book of Acts when Paul and others were very strategic in the way that they went about their missionary endeavour and that's what we're trying to do as well, but not working with necessarily any particular model from the New Testament but rather seeking and discerning what God is saying to us.

**Q33: When will Deanery Synods get an opportunity to discuss and vote on these proposals?**

A: It's a process and the process is really for much more local conversations where it is possible. That's quite a deliberate decision because we want more people to be involved than just those who would be involved through the deanery synod structure, so those local conversations are the really important part. How you do that, is entirely up to you, as you work out the best way for your community to do that, and that's why we're not asking deaneries at this point for to have a more formal role in generating that feedback. The local feedback will help Bishop’s Council us in our discernment role, and we're doing that, (alongside Bishops Council) with area deans and lay chairs and, obviously, they will be feeding in from their experiences rooted deeply within their individual deaneries and then the formal decision-making process, which would be the formal vote, will be a Diocesan Synod decision.

And so that will that will take place, obviously, leading up to the autumn and Diocesan Synod in October and, of course, the members of Diocesan Synod are drawn from deaneries right across the diocese so every deanery will have its representation within that process.

**Q34: What learning do we bring from the original Shaped By God? What we learning from that as we move forward with Shaped By God Together?**

A: It’s a really interesting question because obviously Shaped By God has been part of the life of the diocese for a long time. One of the strengths of it has been that we've been working with this understanding of our desire to be shaped by God together for a long time. There's all sorts of learning that we've done around that. A couple of highlights: we’re aware that this is not the first time we've been through this sort of process, thinking of the 2020 process when deaneries were asked to look at how they might be reshaped, but what we're trying to do this time around is to do it in a quite different way, so we’re learning from the experience of 2020.

We're also conscious that these conversations can quickly become about structures and maybe even the bureaucracy of the diocese. Whereas, what we really want the conversations to be about is this mission and how do we reach people in our society who have never really experienced the love of God for themselves, never encountered the risen Lord Jesus Christ, and that's what we really want to do. What we want from all of these new structures is that they can help us with that. But they could also detract from it, so we're trying to keep to the main thing and not get too distracted by other things.