



# Vision Document

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Shaping Our Future

Advent 2018

## DIOCESAN PRAYER

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Almighty and merciful Father,  
bestow your grace upon the Diocese of Brentwood.

We give thanks for the witness of past generations and pray for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit that we may be ever more faithful to proclaiming the Gospel of Christ.

Bless our Bishop, the Clergy, Religious and Faithful of our Diocese as we work together to evangelise our Diocese and fulfil our Vision, and graciously grant plentiful vocations to the Priesthood, the Consecrated Life, Single Life and the Sacrament of Marriage.

Strengthen us in the communion of faith, hope and charity, united in prayer with our Holy Father the Pope and the Universal Church.

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

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

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

## **OUR VISION**

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

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

## **OUR OBJECTIVES**

Maximise the opportunities for evangelisation

Maximise sacramental provision

Maximise the opportunities for putting faith into action through charitable works

## **OUR STRATEGY**

Renewal and Restructuring

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Renewal: A 12-Strand Plan

Restructuring: Parish Partnerships



# Introduction

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

# Introduction

## WELCOME TO OUR SECOND CENTURY AS A DIOCESE

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This Vision Document will shape our diocese for the foreseeable future. It is with a sense of joy that together we present to you a discerned response to God's love for us as we move into the second century of our diocese.

We write the first part of this introduction as your Bishop and Director of Development working with the Diocesan Strategic Planning Group. This is symbolic of a future where lay people and clergy work together to evangelise our diocese.

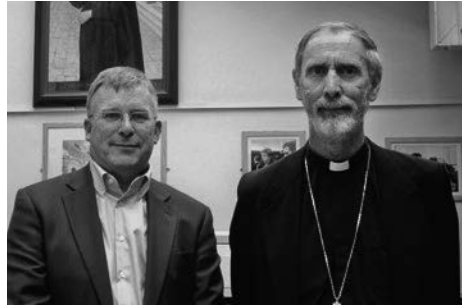
Change is never easy but we have been impressed by how people have moved from a state of anxiety to a position where we are facing our challenges head on with a prayerful and constructive attitude.

*“Act justly, love tenderly, walk humbly with God.”*

Micah 6:8

Our discernment process has been a wonderful example of combining prayer, thought, discussion and reflection. It highlights how everyone can work together to evangelise our diocese. It also reminds all of us how careful we need to be to ensure that we always act in a loving and caring way.

This is a moment of opportunity to look at all things anew and to renew and restructure ourselves to proclaim afresh



the Gospel message to a changing world. We ask everyone to seize this opportunity and to work with us.

As we all change together we must be mindful of the sensibilities of others and change carefully, with love for God and for one another.

Our discernment process (as depicted on page 4) has brought us to the end of the beginning of our journey together. Thank you to all who have contributed.

Conscious that we are a Holy and Apostolic Church, the second part of this introduction is from Bishop Alan alone.

*Alan Webb SM, SJ*

**Bishop Alan SM**

*Steven Webb*

**Steven Webb**

Director of Development

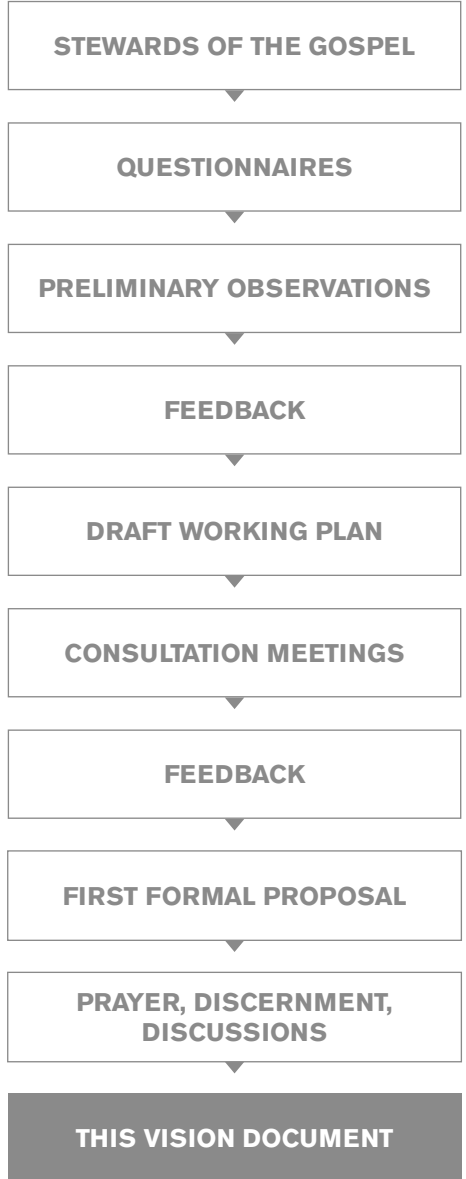
# Introduction



As your Bishop, I am pleased to present this Vision Document to you. It falls to me to make these important decisions about our shared future. With the help of God and everyone who has participated in this process I have prayed about how we should all move forward together. This is the result of that discernment process and trusting in Christ and Mary I now commend it to you and ask that you implement it together.

*Alan Williams, SM*

**Bishop Alan Williams SM**



## Parish Partnerships

This Vision Document contains a new concept of a “Parish Partnership”. On pages 22 to 26 you will find 21 groupings of parishes that we are calling Parish Partnerships. This term can and should mean different things in different places. It has no formal standing in Canon Law. A Parish Partnership will work together to discern the best long-term future for the parishes that make up the partnership.

Every Parish Partnership will be a temporary entity that will evolve into something else over a year or two. For example a Parish Partnership could evolve into:

- A formal Parish Partnership with a written co-operation agreement
- Linked parishes with a formal linking agreement
- A merged parish

[tinyurl.com/diocesevision](http://tinyurl.com/diocesevision)

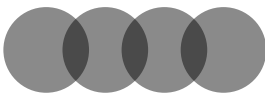
Each Parish Partnership should now join together in worship and prayer, socially and in meetings over the coming months.

Each parish in a Parish Partnership should think firstly about what it can contribute to the partnership and also what it would like from the partnership now and in the future.

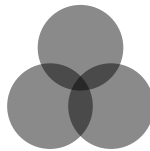
Each parish should be given a full voice during discussions. Everything we have, we have through the grace of God and we are all working together to evangelise our diocese. Together we are the stewards of God’s kingdom in our diocese.

Each Parish Partnership can decide how best to go about organising things but the Director of Development will be on hand to assist with the process and your deliberations. He is a resource at your disposal through 2019 and into 2020.

Please remember that the key thing in all of this is that each Parish Partnership will not merely look at how to structure itself for the future but **more importantly** it will look at how to use that structure for the evangelisation of our diocese through the 12 Strands of Renewal.



Four parishes working side by side in a co-operative manner

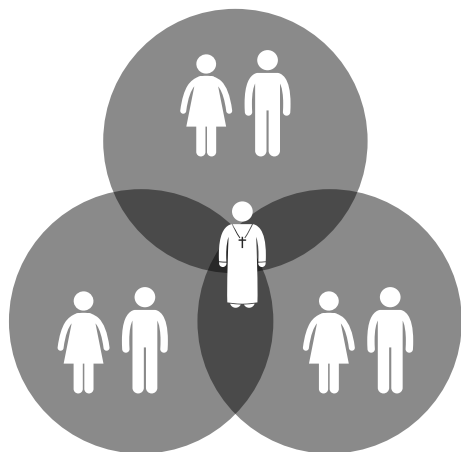


Three parishes working in a more integrated, linked fashion



Two parishes merged together completely

# Introduction



Restructuring without Renewal is merely managing decline and that is not what we are about. Renewal based upon Restructuring is pruning and tending the vineyard to produce something that is good and acceptable to God.

[tinyurl.com/diocesevision](http://tinyurl.com/diocesevision)

## **How Did We Get Here and How Do We Move Forward?**

At every stage of the discernment process views and opinions have been shared. Ideas that were set out in the original Draft Working Plan evolved into the First Formal Proposal. Since Advent 2017, your thoughts on the possible structure of our diocese have been fed into the Diocean Strategic Planning Group (DSPG) and in turn responses were fed back to parishes, and now this Vision Document sets out the new structure that Bishop Alan asks everyone to work with.

For over 18 months he has listened carefully during a rich discernment process and now Bishop Alan asks every one of us to come together in this new structure and to make it work for us all.

Everyone is asked to set aside individual preferences and accept this new structure for the common good. You are asked to work together within this new structure as the platform for our Renewal.

Together let us tend the vineyard of Essex and East London and grow something good and acceptable to God.

In the following pages you will find 21 Parish Partnerships that Bishop Alan has decided upon, together with the anticipated number of priests that each will have in the long term.

Your challenge in your Parish Partnership is to find ways of making things work where you are. We will help you along the way.

You will need to work together as priests and people to find new ways to celebrate the sacraments, to evangelise and to exercise the ministry of charity, based on the platform of these new Parish Partnerships. You will need to think creatively and to pray about how your Parish Partnership might evolve in the near future. Do you simply want to co-operate with the other parishes, do you want to formally link or do you want to move to a formal merger?

Do you want to keep every building open and to use them as what they are currently used for or do you want to close some or put them to new uses? What can you afford?



What will your Mass schedule look like in the future?

How will you get from where you are now to where you will need to be in the long term?

Some parishes want to move ahead very quickly but not all are yet ready. Every Parish Partnership is asked to come up with its own long-term plan by Easter 2020 at the absolute latest. Take a little time to get to know each other better during that time but meet to discuss how you would like things to work in the long term as soon as you can.

Priests will be ordained, come to our diocese, retire or die according to God's plan rather than ours. We will work with His plan.

Bishop Alan will work with these Parish Partnerships and from now on will appoint priests in accordance with this Vision. That necessarily means that things will happen differently in different Parish Partnerships BUT everyone is asked to work towards the long-term position as quickly as is possible.

Please think of the medium term merely as a period of time that you move through to get to the long-term position. Always think of the long term when planning Mass times or use of buildings and use the medium term as a transition from where you are now to where you will need to be in the long-term.

Above all do not plan for the medium term in the hope that the long-term solution might not become necessary. It will.

Always focus on the long-term position in all you do.

It is recommended that a period of time is set aside between agreeing what you would like to do in the long term and putting formal arrangements into place, so that everyone can reflect before setting things in stone. Then we will move together to formalise the new arrangements that evolve from your Parish Partnership.

Together we will celebrate all the great things that have been done in the past and also celebrate the opportunity we have given ourselves for our shared future.

Together we will celebrate the many gifts of the Holy Spirit and the chance we have been given to be God's instruments in our ever changing world.

[tinyurl.com/diocesevision](http://tinyurl.com/diocesevision)





# Renewal

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12-Strand Plan for the  
Renewal of Our Diocese

# Renewal in Parish Partnerships

To effectively proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ in East London and Essex we must all continually find new ways of doing it.

Our challenge is to “proclaim” effectively to a world that sometimes does not want to hear.

Our challenge is to share the Good News in an ever changing world and to be the new disciples sent out to tell the Good News in new ways.

Parish Partnerships will create a new environment for us to work together prayerfully and creatively to meet these challenges. We pray that through Restructuring and creating this new environment we can Renew ourselves and our diocese.

Everyone is asked to enter into their new Parish Partnership, focusing upon how this new environment can become a platform for Renewal and evangelising your part of our diocese.

By pooling your time, talents and treasures in this creative prayerful environment we pray that you will find new ways to express the timeless truths of our faith in an ever changing world.

Many wonderful things have come about during the first part of this process and we give thanks for them all.

Parishes have started many new initiatives in response to this process. We give thanks for each of them. There is a new spirit of co-operation and a clear desire to work together to evangelise our diocese.

Let us continue that work in each of the 12 Strands of Renewal.

Each Strand stands on its own but all 12 intertwined create a whole that is far stronger than the sum of the parts.

## **1 Charity, Justice and Social Action**

Caritas Diocese of Brentwood was formally launched on the World Day of the Poor in November, following a year of conversations with those involved in charity, justice and social action.

It supports groups working in parishes, schools and across the diocese, to help share good practice, and to publicise their work. As a member of the Caritas Social Action Network we participate in national conversations. We have just launched a website which will help volunteers find opportunities – and help groups find volunteers! The website will showcase all that is good about taking our faith out to those who find themselves on the margins of Church and society and – alongside an annual training and resources day – will help to build new bridges between experienced practitioners and those wanting to get involved.

“Whatever you did to the least of my sisters and brothers, you did to me.”

Matthew 25:40

Based at Walsingham House at Abbotswick it has the specific aim of helping young adults to find pathways into social justice projects in their parishes. The natural link with the BCYS and

# Renewal in Parish Partnerships

Vicariate for Pastoral Formation will help form the next generations of lay leaders in our Church. Projects linked by Caritas Diocese of Brentwood offer exciting opportunities for the freshness and energy of youth to inspire and be inspired by the wisdom of different generations. This is a key element of parish renewal, and we hope these resources and opportunities will enhance and support the new Parish Partnerships in many different ways.

[tinyurl.com/diocesepastoral-formation](http://tinyurl.com/diocesepastoral-formation)



**2 Christian Life and Worship**  
As we now consider liturgy in the diocese, we recognise that, in the context of evangelisation, so often what we celebrate in our churches becomes a “shop window” for our faith. Those who attend our services are not only practising Catholics but also many others of different denominations, the occasional Mass-goer, the lapsed, and those who perhaps just want to have a “look-see”.

With this in mind, it is important that we re-capture the beauty of the liturgy, whether it be the way we celebrate the rites of the Church, the way we decorate our churches or in terms of the music.

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Matthew 28:19

St Thomas Aquinas said that when people are converted to Christ, they do so in stages; they are attracted first to the beauty of Christ, then to his goodness and finally to his truth. When we apply this to the liturgy, we realise that people can be drawn to Christ through the beauty of the liturgy, as it speaks of Christ’s sacred humanity.

Pope Benedict XVI in number 35 of the Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* wrote:

“The liturgy is a radiant expression of the paschal mystery, in which Christ draws us to himself and calls us to communion. The beauty of the liturgy is part of this mystery; it is a sublime expression of God’s glory and, in a certain sense, a glimpse of heaven on earth. The memorial of Jesus’ redemptive sacrifice contains something of that beauty which Peter, James and John beheld when the Master, making his way to Jerusalem, was transfigured before their eyes” (cf. Mk 9:2).

“Beauty,” he says, “is not mere decoration, but rather an essential element of the liturgical action, since it is an attribute of God himself and his revelation. These considerations should make us realize the care which is needed, if the liturgical action is to reflect its innate splendour”.

Therefore, it is necessary to exhibit all possible care and attention, so that the dignity of the liturgy would shine forth even in the smallest details in the form of true beauty. This will in turn aid us in our work of evangelisation or re-evangelisation.

[tinyurl.com/dioceseliturgy](http://tinyurl.com/dioceseliturgy)

### 3 Education

In the last year the Brentwood Diocesan Education Service (BDES) under the leadership provided by the Episcopal Vicar for Education and the Director of Education has been working with schools to build on the School to School Support Groups that were established in 2016. Eight groups are now working together towards the establishment of Multi Academy Trusts. This is part of how we will build upon existing collaborative working. Some MATs already exist in South Essex and Southend and Ilford while others are developing.

“Catholic education is above all a question of communicating Christ, of helping to form Christ in the lives of others.”

Pope St John Paul II

BDES is working hard to support all our schools and the team has grown and developed to do this. Our diocese is investing in the future of excellent Catholic education as an integral part of our efforts to work together to evangelise our diocese.

Extended Continued Personal Opportunities are being developed with a particular emphasis on Leadership and Governance. This will create more opportunities for leadership roles for lay people.

Everything is rooted in the five-year vision for education that can be read in full on the website. New resources and support have been provided to schools in order to strengthen the religious education in our schools and shortly FAQs will be produced along with a protocol for Catholic MATs and more detailed policies building on Bishop Alan’s recent pastoral letter. Parish Partnerships are urged to consider these and find ways for them to be enhanced in every part of our diocese. People are encouraged to step forward to be involved in supporting Catholic education. Details about how to get involved will be published to help lay people take on these additional lay leadership roles.



[tinyurl.com/diocesevision-document](http://tinyurl.com/diocesevision-document)

# Renewal in Parish Partnerships

## 4 Family

At parish level many people are working to support marriage and family life, from informal support and encouragement, to the vital work of preparing couples for marriage, involving clergy and lay people. Alongside this we have largely lay-led organisations, to support couples and families. At the World Meeting of Families in August, a new alliance of UK Catholic marriage organisations was launched. Following on from that the Diocesan Director and Chaplain of Marriage and Family Life is going to gather the various organisations in our diocese to hold conversations about how we support one another and help “every family to be a beacon of the joy of [God’s] love in our world” (Pope Francis, Message to the World Meeting of Families).

Parishes and schools are the best opportunities to proclaim the goodness of the family and find practical ways of supporting families. Explore helps teenagers gain an understanding of the reality of married life, and is looking at ways of supporting primary school parents to feel better equipped to form the home into a true domestic church.

“Protect your families! See in them your greatest treasure and nourish them always by prayer and the grace of the sacraments.”

Pope Francis

As most of these initiatives rely on lay leadership, we need to promote formation opportunities for leadership roles. Recent developments include a Certificate in Marriage and the Family offered by the Maryvale Institute and a collaboration between Catholic Marriage Care and Roehampton University entitled “Lay Leadership in a post-Millennial Age”.

“A healthy family life requires frequent use of three phrases: ‘May I?’ ‘Thank you’ and ‘I’m sorry’. And never, ever, end the day without making peace.”

Pope Francis

We have the joy and challenge of communicating a clear and positive vision of family and marriage because we believe in it, and that, with the help of God, it is attainable. We also believe that the welfare of the family is of vital importance for the welfare of the Church and the world, and finding new ways of supporting it is a vital part of the renewal of our diocese.



## 5 Formation

Formation is a life-long process of listening to what the Holy Spirit is calling and challenging us to be and to do, and getting the appropriate information, training and guidance to enable us to fulfil that mission, so it will permeate all the 12 strands of renewal. Formation is never complete so needs to be constantly refreshed, according to the needs of the Church in the world of today.

The Vicariate for Evangelisation is already providing many opportunities for formation, especially through the Stewards of the Gospel, part of whose ministry is to stimulate the interest and participation of members of their parish communities. A number of specific programmes are currently being trialled and explored including Pre-Evangelisation Groups, Parish Evangelisation Teams using the Landings Programme, which aims to welcome back those who have ceased going to church, the Reframe Course, increased attention to being able to speak confidently about our faith pioneered by Catholic Voices, and many others.

Specific formation relating to Education and Family is mentioned elsewhere.

The Vicariate for Evangelisation is seeking to respond to what is needed both by individuals and by specific groups within our diocese so it is important that needs and concerns are highlighted and made known to the Vicariate.

The Episcopal Vicariate for Pastoral Formation offers formation and training for catechists and youth leaders including the Bishop's Certificate in Catechesis and Youth Ministry which is a very accessible online course and Youth Leadership training is also being offered.

[tinyurl.com/diocesepastoral-formation](http://tinyurl.com/diocesepastoral-formation)

[tinyurl.com/dioceseevangelisation](http://tinyurl.com/dioceseevangelisation)

[tinyurl.com/diocesefuturedates-2018-19](http://tinyurl.com/diocesefuturedates-2018-19)

## 6 Integration

As Parish Partnerships form and evolve we ask everyone to take time to appreciate the rich diversity that exists within it. You will be creating a new community based upon the strong foundations of the existing communities. We often hear that “our people are our greatest resource” and in your new Parish Partnership you will have new people to meet and to engage with. New faces reflecting the image of God, and people doing things that you also do but also doing things you don't do. We are blessed with a variety of gifts and these include our many ethnic chaplaincies, the priests and people of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, several different religious orders and associations and of course the wide variety of people from every walk of life who are all part of our community.

# Renewal in Parish Partnerships

“Make sure that every person, of whatever background, can find in you a welcoming heart.”

Pope Benedict XVI

This is one area where every other Strand of Renewal comes together. As you grow and work together try to be as inclusive and as generous as you possibly can. When you meet ask yourselves if there is any group that is not represented in the room and how they might be invited to join in the conversation and how their needs can be accommodated. The word “together” features frequently in our discernment process and now is a good moment to make it more than just a word.

[www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/churches/](http://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/churches/)

[www.ordinariate.org.uk/](http://www.ordinariate.org.uk/)

## 7 Leaders

The diocese is the Local Church within the Universal Church. Our Bishop and the priests who assist him are called and formed to govern this Local Church, this part of the People of God, all of whom are called, by right of their Baptism, to fulfil their vocation as members of the People of God. This can only come about when all collaborate and work together, each offering his or her own particular and specific gifts.

The Stewards of the Gospel initiative is the framework for everyone, people, ministers, deacons, priests and Bishop to take their rightful place in a living and missionary Church.

Throughout this Vision Document you will find opportunities to get involved. Caritas, Education, Family, Prayer, and Young People all have specific opportunities for leadership and training that can be accessed.

The future of our Church depends on us all working together. Everyone is encouraged to discuss what it is that they can offer and the Vicariates are already responding and will continue to respond with suitable and appropriate training and formation. Parish Evangelisation Teams, Pastoral Care, Prayer and Spirituality are all being addressed and training offered.

[tinyurl.com/diocesefuturedates2018-19-July](http://tinyurl.com/diocesefuturedates2018-19-July)

## 8 Material Assets

Money and buildings are among the gifts we have to use to evangelise our diocese.

As stewards of all that God has given to us it is our responsibility to use those gifts as well as we can.

How we have used them in the past may not always be the best guide to how we should use them in the future.





The creation of Parish Partnerships will provide new opportunities to look afresh at:

- Our buildings as we decide how best to use them in the future
- The money that we have
- What we would like to have
- What we think is right for the future

We must live within our means and be conscious of what we can afford but how we live does not have to be how we have lived in the past.

[tinyurl.com/dioceseconference](http://tinyurl.com/dioceseconference)

Every Parish Partnership will need to look very carefully at what is possible and affordable.

Buildings do not all have to be kept open. We need to look afresh at how best we do things.

Buildings do not all need to be used

as they are now.

Every building has costs and benefits associated with it. Our challenge is to see how we maximise our objectives using the resources we have available.

The Finance Board (effectively the governing body of our diocese as a charity) has committed to review the way it operates so that our internal structures are organised to fully align with the programme of Renewal and Restructuring in this Vision Document.

We will shortly announce how that will work in practice, but using technology and new working methods it is anticipated that the work of our internal bodies can better support Parish Partnerships as we work together to evangelise our diocese.



**9 Prayer and Spirituality**  
Amongst the immense and wonderful diversity of the People of God in our diocese we all share a

# Renewal in Parish Partnerships

meaningful and important relationship with God in Jesus Christ. Like any relationship, this will only continue to develop and grow if we pay attention to it, which is why there will and must always be an emphasis on prayer and spirituality.

The Stewards of the Gospel are being encouraged and supported in their own prayer lives, for example through Stewards Host Informal Prayer Support (SHIPS), which has been hosted in a number of locations, at which the clergy, the Stewards and the parishes are prayed for, and with retreats. They are being trained to encourage and promote prayer initiatives within their parishes, including for children, such as prayer groups, retreats and input on prayer, scripture and spirituality. Recently Brentwood Diocese was represented at the Adoremus Eucharistic Congress in Liverpool.

It is only through prayer that we come to know both who God is and who we are. When we pray together, either silently or using the Word of God, or in sharing our deepest longings and concerns with one another, or in joining together in worship and praise, we help, encourage and support one another to journey on. This is the heart of our mission as a diocese and of all our efforts for Renewal.

“While prayer is a gift of God, it is also an art learned through constant practice.”

Pope Benedict XVI



## 10 **Priests and People**

There is a gap in our understanding of each other.

Many lay people do not understand the life of a priest and that can lead to unrealistic expectations. We will produce materials that will help priests and lay people work together with realistic expectations of one another and provide courses that will assist. As lay people and clergy move into an era when we all take greater co-responsibility for our church we must work together to recognise the gifts each of us possesses.

We will learn together about how we can work better and differently, and we will explore new ways to recognise each other's gifts, expertise and skills and to collaborate to the best of our combined ability so that we can bring our vision to reality.

We have seen new relationships during this process as Stewards and Clergy have worked together in new ways. Much good has come from this and many lessons are being learned that will stand us all in good stead for the future.

Additionally, Parish Partnerships that contain communities of the Ordinariate, Religious Orders or Associations and ethnic chaplaincies will need to consider this wide variety of gifts, how best to care for and protect them through this process and how to combine those gifts as we all work together to evangelise our diocese.

## 11 **Vocations to the Priesthood**

We give thanks that in the last year two priests have been ordained to secular priesthood and one to the religious priesthood. Also that two men have been ordained to the permanent diaconate and one as a deacon.

Furthermore we give thanks that two more men have answered God's call and started formation studies and that another is commencing his formation for the permanent diaconate.

Please keep all of these men in your prayers. As Pope Francis said, "we have to pray more, pray more tirelessly" for vocations. With this in mind Fr Graham has been touring the diocese asking priests and seminarians to share their vocation stories with their communities within a holy hour to pray for vocations. These stories can be heard at [tinyurl.com/brentwoodvocations-stories](http://tinyurl.com/brentwoodvocations-stories)

Prayer cards have been printed and sent out to parishes to help people pray for vocations at morning and evening prayer.

"Come, follow me," said Jesus."

Matthew 4:19

Fr Mark Swires has been appointed the Vocations Promoter. He has arranged times for those who would like an opportunity to enquire about vocations during the course of the year.

It is intended to continue with the enquirer evenings and the Holy Hour and vocation story evenings in 2019 and dates will be published.

[frgraham@brentwoodvocations.org](mailto:frgraham@brentwoodvocations.org)

[vocprom@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:vocprom@dioceseofbrentwood.org)

[www.brentwoodvocations.org/priesthood/](http://www.brentwoodvocations.org/priesthood/)

## 12 **Young People**

Young people, Faith and Vocational Discernment have just been the focus of the synod called by Pope Francis and held at the Vatican in October 2018 and the fruits of that synod will inform our future work.

To be a young person right now is to enjoy a blend of opportunities for discovery, travel, new technologies, and the ability to immediately communicate internationally. All this is set alongside family breakdown, living with stress and anxiety, and poverty. For parishes to be able to dialogue with young people about the timeless truths of our faith requires a

# Renewal in Parish Partnerships

cultural change and freshness of approach. Scriptural truths, our relationship with Jesus Christ, the value of prayer and sacramental devotion, as well as the moral compass offered by the Church, are elements which transform the lives of young people. The challenge we face is to bring them to a space where they are able to receive these truths, ask questions, and find pathways which make sense to them. You can also read more about this in the recent research by CYMFED, “Complex Catholicism”.

“You too, dear young people, can be joyful witnesses of his love, courageous witnesses of his Gospel, carrying to the world a ray of his light.”

Pope Francis

In our Diocese of Brentwood we face this challenge by living the words of Pope Francis: “Young people are the best evangelisers of other young people”. We are blessed with dedicated catechists, youth leaders and teachers; together with them, and through the BCYS, talented young leaders are nurtured and developed,

who bring young people to Lourdes, and journey with them on retreat at Walsingham House at Abbotswick. The treasures of the BCYS and Walsingham House are well used and we look forward to working with each of the new Parish Partnerships in any way that is helpful. It is a strategic aim of the Vicariate for Pastoral Formation to support and encourage each Parish Partnership that wishes to employ a parish Youth Co-ordinator. It is our belief that a full time, paid, trained and well-supported person in this role is the best way to provide the resources and relationships required to sustain youth ministry in the rapidly changing landscape faced by our young people.

“Dear young people, God has given you great gifts. Dare to dream of great things.”

Pope Francis

During 2018 youth ministry literally moved to the heart of the diocese. Walsingham House at Abbotswick welcomes around 5,000 young people each year; thousands more have retreats in the school or parish settings. We also welcome adult groups such as school lay chaplains, parish catechists, teachers on INSET days,

and those participating in the Bishop's Certificate in Catechesis and Youth Ministry. The grounds and chapel are open to all people seeking peace and tranquillity with the Lord, at any time.

“Do small things with  
great love.”

St Therese of Lisieux

Part of our provision for young people is University Chaplaincy. Our diocese includes three universities – the University of Essex, Anglia Ruskin University and the University of East London – spread over several locations. Each has a Chaplaincy, supported by a local priest. University can be extremely formative in all areas of a young person's life, and the presence of a Chaplaincy that is served by lay people and a priest is a great benefit to faith formation.

We encourage Parish Partnerships where universities are located to recognise the vital place of University Chaplaincy as a centre for evangelisation and engaging with young adults in their community.

[www.bcys.net](http://www.bcys.net)

[www.bcys.net/WHAbbotswick](http://www.bcys.net/WHAbbotswick)

[www.caminohouse.com](http://www.caminohouse.com)



# Restructuring

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Parish Partnerships

# Restructuring



This section shows 21 new Parish Partnerships for our Diocese of Brentwood. The Cathedral Parish is shown separately and not as part of a Parish Partnership. Our Cathedral has a unique role to play in our diocese and that goes beyond local and neighbourly connections. To fully enable it to maximise its impact as the Cathedral for our whole diocese it is a beacon of hope for us all and with us all.

“Having faith does not mean having no difficulties, but having the strength to face them, knowing we are not alone.”

Pope Francis

## [tinyurl.com/diocesevision](http://tinyurl.com/diocesevision)

We have shown the number of priests that will ultimately be working in each Parish Partnership. That is the situation that we must all work towards from now on. Please note that priests are not going to be moved to achieve this position tomorrow or next week. Rather this describes the situation that Bishop Alan is aiming for from now onwards. Therefore, deaths, new arrivals and retirements together with other factors such as what is best for individual priests and/or parishes will be responded to in line with the long-term position. Each Parish Partnership must now start to make plans to work with the number of priests forecast for the long term.

# Restructuring

As our number of priests reduces from the situation we currently have towards this long-term position we will go through a transitional period that we have previously referred to as the “medium term”. As we go through the transition over the next 15 years the number of priests will reduce as God sees fit. Against the list of parishes that form each Parish Partnership we show a number. That is the number of priests that will serve in that Parish Partnership in the long term. It makes no assumptions about where those priests will live. For some of the Parish Partnerships we show “+1”. This means that as priest numbers reduce Bishop Alan will try to

retain an extra priest for as long as possible in that Parish Partnership. This is not a guarantee, of course, but an “intention” and it will depend on many things.

“Holiness doesn’t mean doing extraordinary things, but doing ordinary things with love and faith.”

Pope Francis

All Parish Partnerships must now begin to make plans for their shared future based upon the long-term position.

## Parish Partnerships

	Number of Priests	
Colchester & Tendring	4	+1
St James the Less and St Helen Colchester		
St Teresa of Lisieux Lexden		
St Sabina Brightlingsea & St Monica Wivenhoe		
St John Payne Greenstead		
Our Lady of Light and St Osyth Clacton		
Sacred Heart and St Francis Frinton		
Our Lady Queen of Heaven Harwich		
North Essex	3	+1
Our Lady Queen of Peace Braintree		
Our Lady and St Anne Line Dunmow		
The Holy Spirit Great Bardfield		
St Francis of Assisi Halstead		
St Theresa of Lisieux Stansted Mountfitchet		
Our Lady of Compassion Saffron Walden		



	Number of Priests	
Harlow	2	+1
Our Lady of Fatima & St Thomas More		
St Luke & Holy Cross		
Church of The Assumption		
Loughton	1	+0.5*
St Edmund of Canterbury and St Thomas More Loughton		
St Thomas More and St Edward Waltham Abbey		
The Immaculate Conception Epping		
* An additional priest for the transitional phase will be shared with Mid Essex.		
Chingford	1	
Christ the King		
Our Lady of Grace and St Teresa of Avila		
Walthamstow and Leyton	3*	
Our Lady and St George		
Our Lady of the Rosary and St Patrick		
St Joseph Leyton		
* This assumes only one priest for each order/society currently present.		
Woodford and Wanstead	2*	
St Thomas of Canterbury Woodford Green		
St Anne Line South Woodford		
Our Lady of Lourdes Wanstead		
* This assumes only one priest for the Order currently present.		
Newham	6*	
St Anthony of Padua Forest Gate		
St Michael East Ham		
Our Lady of Compassion Upton Park		
St Francis Stratford		
St Margaret and All Saints Canning Town		
Our Lady of Walsingham The Royal Docks		
St Stephen Manor Park		
* This assumes only one priest at the Order currently present.		

# Restructuring

	Number of Priests	
Barking & Dagenham	3	
St Thomas More Barking		
St Vincent Becontree		
Holy Family Dagenham		
St Mary and St Ethelburga with St Mary and St Erconwald Barking		
Rainham, Elm Park & Dagenham	3*	
Our Lady of La Salette Rainham		
St Peter Dagenham		
St Alban Elm Park		
* This assumes only one priest at the Order currently present in Dagenham.		
Grays	2	
St Thomas of Canterbury Grays		
The Holy Cross South Ockendon		
Our Lady star of the Sea Tilbury		
Our Lady and St Joseph Stanford-le-Hope		
Rayleigh	1	+0.5*
Our Lady of Ransom Rayleigh		
Our Lady of Canvey and the English Martyrs Canvey Island		
Holy Family Benfleet		
* In the transitional phase an additional priest shared with Basildon/Billericay based at Wickford but assisting in this Parish Partnership.		
Southend	3	+1
The Sacred Heart Southend linked with St John Fisher Prittlewell		
Our Lady Help of Christians and St Helen Westcliff		
Our Lady of Lourdes Leigh		
St Peter Eastwood		
St Teresa of the Child Jesus Rochford		
St George and the English Martyrs Shoeburyness		

	Number of Priests	
Basildon & Billericay	3	0.5*
Our Lady and All Saints Basildon		
The Most Holy Redeemer Billericay		
Our Lady of Good Counsel Wickford		
* In the transitional phase an additional priest shared with Rayleigh based at Wickford but assisting in that Parish Partnership.		
Dengie & Blackwater	2	+1
The Holy Family and All Saints Witham		
St Mary Immaculate and the Holy Archangels Kelvedon		
English Martyrs Danbury		
Assumption of Our Lady Maldon		
St Cuthbert Burnham		
Chelmsford	2	+1
Our Lady Immaculate linked with The Holy Name		
The Blessed Sacrament		
St Augustine of Canterbury		
* Hopes two priests in the Order.		
Mid Essex	1**	+0.5*
St Joseph the Worker Hutton		
St Helen Ongar & St Margaret of Scotland Doddinghurst		
Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St Joseph Stock		
St John the Evangelist and St Erconwald Ingatestone		
* An additional priest for the transitional phase will be shared with Loughton.		
** Additionally the Episcopal Vicar for Pastoral Formation will be based at Abbotswick.		
Hornchurch & Upminster	2	
St Joseph Upminster		
St Mary Mother of God Hornchurch		
English Martyrs Hornchurch		

# Restructuring

	Number of Priests	
Romford	2	+1
St Edward the Confessor Romford		
Corpus Christi Collier Row		
Christ the Eternal High Priest Gidea Park		
Most Holy Redeemer Harold Hill		
St Dominic Harold Hill		
Ilford	4	
Ss Peter and Paul Ilford		
St John the Baptist Ilford		
St Bede Chadwell Heath		
St Teresa Newbury Park		
St Cedd Goodmayes		
Barkingside	2	
St Augustine of Canterbury Barkingside		
The Assumption Hainault		
St John Vianney Clayhall		
Brentwood Cathedral Parish of St Mary and St Helen	2	

## **Being Bold...**

As Parish Partnerships work together and with our diocese everyone will need to be very bold.

Reach high in your aspirations and dreams, do not settle for second best and rise to the challenge for the glory of God.

“We have always done it like that” is not a reason for continuing to do things that way.

Your challenge is to be as creative as you can with the resources He has given to us. Your response to God’s love for us must be radical in order to meet the challenges ahead.

You must not be afraid to look at closing a Church or turning it into a Chapel of Ease if that is the best way forward.

You must not be afraid to imagine new ways of using redundant presbyteries or Church halls. Change their use, use them to raise money or to fulfil your mission in new ways.

“Support your priests with your love and prayers, that they may always be shepherds after Christ’s heart.”

Pope Francis

Be bold in imagining new Mass schedules that best serve the entire Parish Partnership and respect the needs of our priests.

Being creative and innovative takes courage but you have plenty of that and with the help of God we can all do great things together.

Consider the documents at [tinyurl.com/diocesevision](http://tinyurl.com/diocesevision) relating to the Guide to Canon Law and Possible Scenarios.

## **The Deanery**

As Parish Partnerships evolve there will be fewer parishes and fewer deaneries. Over time we will move to fewer deaneries broadly in line with the new Multi Academy Trusts for our schools.

[tinyurl.com/dioceseliturgy](http://tinyurl.com/dioceseliturgy)

## **What Happens Now?**

This Vision Document marks the end of the first part of our work together. Together we now move into the implementation phase.

Everyone must move on from discussing which parishes will work with each other. That has been decided. The task now is to explore ways to make your Parish Partnership work to the best of your combined ability.

The first thing to do is arrange a parish meeting for your parish to explore what you can bring to the new Parish Partnership and what you want from it.

Arrange a Parish Partnership meeting for soon after that. Such meetings can take various forms but we suggest that priests, stewards, the PPC Chair and the Chair of Finance Committee meet in the first instance.

# Restructuring

Look at numbers. The number of parishioners, number of Churches, number of Masses, number of organisations in the parishes and number of opportunities for evangelisation in your area.

Start to think about how you would like your Parish Partnership to evolve over the next year or so. How do you want to work more closely together?

Start to think about your priests' working life. How can the Parish Partnership best care for and sustain your priests in the future?

What sort of team of lay people might be needed in your Parish Partnership?

What resources do you have as a Parish Partnership and what do you need to make things work?

Can existing resources be used differently?

Will you need all of your existing buildings in the future?

Stewards will need to play an important role in this and keep parishioners informed of what is going on. Your Steward and your priest have received separate information that they will share with you as this implementation process unfolds.

At least one Parish Partnership worship event and a social event should be organised.

Be Prayerful.

Be Creative.

Steven Webb, our Director of Development, is available to help with all of this. His role through 2019 and into 2020 will be to help you to make the most of your new Parish Partnership and to help you decide how that will evolve.

Your ideas will then be presented to Bishop Alan for his approval or amendment. No changes to Mass times or to Church usage can be made without his approval. Bishop Alan, the Director of Development and DSPG want to work together with you and so your ideas are key in all of this.

We want you to help shape your own future working together with Bishop Alan and the DSPG.

The implementation phase of this process will define the shape of our diocese for years to come.

Ours is the responsibility to make God's kingdom present in East London and Essex in our second century as a diocese.

Ours is the responsibility to transform ourselves and our world by going out as new disciples to evangelise our diocese.

Our prayers are with you as we all work together to achieve our Vision.

## STEWARDS OF THE GOSPEL PRAYER

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

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

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

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

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

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

Help us to welcome all into His embrace.

Guide us in our discernment.

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

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

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.



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