



## Summary of Feedback Received Basingstoke Laity Gathering 12 May 2022

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### General Notes

Approximately 25 people attended

The gathering was asked to discuss and submit feedback in small groups, 6 sets of feedback were received.

Unless otherwise stated each point refers to a point made by one group.

### A Time to See Discussion and Feedback

Reflecting on the information we have shared, were there any surprises?

- No surprises
- No mention of having considered our border communities e.g., other dioceses
- Extent of decline in attendance (2 groups)
- Parishes are able to spend other parishes' funds
- No mention of Living our Faith and its success
- Lack of interest in attending 'mainland' engagement sessions
- Baptism as the 'Sacrament of Exit'
- No mention of demographics
- Financial position (2 groups)
- No mention of social media and its impact on young people
- The age profile and decline in diocesan priests more acute than expected

What does the vibrant and flourishing Diocese of Portsmouth look like in 2032 to you?

- Parishes to be like a beehive, full of all kinds of activity – prayer, worship, evangelisation, charity and outreach
- Schools a beacon of developing pupils' relationship with Jesus Christ
- Critical importance of small groups to foster prayer, understanding of scripture and relationship with Jesus Christ
- Thriving collaboration between clergy and laity with delegation to laity according to their gifts, skills and experience
- Women will be more prominent in the life of the Church; especially women deacons, altar servers, etc.
- Greater outreach to the poor and vulnerable both inside and outside the Catholic community
- Much more ecumenical activity, both in worship and practical outreach
- A flatter hierarchy and creative ways of communicating
- Active youth, participating at all levels in parishes and Diocese



- Great awareness of own gifts/charisms and awareness of each others' gifts/charisms
- A stepped approach, looking at 3-4 priorities
- A focus of resources and energy on areas flourishing now
- Schools made a number 1 priority
- Rationalise estate and release people from property management
- Focus on growing centres of community, that will drive more than the physical church building
- Communication and engagement to reflect the reality of each local community, rather than central, top-down, views
- Embracing the reality which is already here; we already have married priests, the church needs more on this
- Build a strong lay leadership for the financial/operational work of the Diocese, release priests to focus on spiritual leadership
- [Priests?] fairly recompensed in a similar way to other roles in society e.g. with a market rate salary
- Roles need to be questioned: is the role required, and does it need to be done by a member of the clergy
- Estate should be managed in a more holistic, business-like and transparent manner
- Larger participation of those who support current projects and new participation encouraged (clergy and lay).
- Less bureaucracy
- Diocese to embrace the opportunity to heal people post-covid, both physically and spiritually.
- Provide mental health sessions, grief counselling, yoga, mindfulness, meditation, etc. to plug the gap which the NHS has been unable to fill.
- Elderly population is well looked after and not lonely
- Bible study groups run by priests
- Youth are confident to be witnesses to their faith and have the knowledge to answer questions about their faith

### **A Time to Choose Discussion and Feedback**

Reflecting on the emerging priorities; is there anything else which is important to you to add?

- A specific focus on women
- Our religious communities and their role in the Diocese

Looking at each of the priorities in turn; what do you think we need to do in order to achieve this?

Christ at the Centre: Liturgy and Prayer

- 24hrs webcam so that parishioners can be "in" the church and pray
- Open and accessible churches (2 groups)



- Teaching on prayer
- Encourage small groups for specific purposes (e.g. rosary, prayer)
- Better formation in the faith
- High quality and engaging homilies
- Varied and creative liturgy
- More participation in liturgy by all ages

#### Vibrant & Welcoming Missionary Parishes

- Start reaching out, go to where people are and welcome them before they arrive
- Let people know the Church is there for them, including lapsed Catholics
- Priest to recognise their role in making all welcome; sometimes there are favourites or people are excluded
- Social opportunities after Sunday Mass
- Mid-week parish groups
- Training on how to engage with people/visitors who are different from us
- Clear identification of all the small groups in a parish so that new people can be invited to join (e.g. in parish welcome pack, directory)
- Volunteers who are not Catholic encouraged
- Activities outside church premises (e.g. foodbanks, coffee mornings, etc.)

#### Church Without Walls: Charity, Outreach & Creation

- More partnerships with other groups, communities and charities (2 groups)
- Be more visible
- Priests involved in reaching out
- Encourage Catholic teachers to work in Catholic schools
- Funding for pastoral workers
- Retired priests to assist with chaplaincy
- Consider USA model
- Caritas/outreach to focus on schools, not just parishes, to engage pupils, staff, parents and wider community who may not attend church
- Prioritise environmental projects as young people are passionate about environmental issues

#### Clergy Leaders, Pastors, Teachers & Brothers

- Allow women deacons; women are the influencers, teaching children and taking them to church
- Provide better support for priests
- Provide space for discussion on married and female priests
- Priority to include religious sisters (2 groups)
- Engage laity in supporting priest through feedback (360° exercise)
- Laity to be more central to the journey – more collaboration and less hierarchy – parish councils are essential, and they also need training and support



- Religious orders/communities are very valuable but there needs to be a clear definition of priorities to avoid tension between the priorities of the community and the priorities of the Diocese
- Improved communication between priests and their parish community
- Priests in a pastoral area to all work together and share their time and skills across the pastoral area.
- Retired priests to continue to be attached to a parish or faith community (e.g school or chaplaincy)
- Allow for different models of parish leadership depending on gifts of each priest and the gifts of the laity
- Longer terms for parish priest tenures to reduce frequency and impact of change
- Better transition/change management where priests move
- Provide formation for non-Catholic teachers to help recruitment and retention

### Laity Formed, Inspired, Involved

- Recognise that everyone is at different stage of their spiritual journey and have a clearly defined offer to support each stage of the journey
- Priests open to accepting help from laity
- Standardised catechesis across the Diocese
- Less focus on “properly catechised”, move to “properly engaged”. Formation is important but not dictatorial
- Develop true welcome and acceptance
- Provide quality ongoing formation
- Opportunities to gather
- Accessible liturgy
- Explain why the Church says what it does on challenging issues such as gender equality, sex, social issues, LGBTQ+
- Ensure laity understand their practical responsibilities
- Provide regular retreats

### The Young Church Today and Tomorrow

- Mother and toddler groups
- Baptism preparation to be followed-up between baptism and first holy communion.
- Young families brought together for prayer and social activities
- Special mission of trained priests to engage with schools, they need to be familiar with technology and communication platforms young people use.
- Build communities on social media channels
- Schools should welcome priests and support them
- Need to go where young people are, not where we think they should be. Less focus on Mass and more on shared experiences (e.g. pilgrimages, socials, intergenerational activities).
- Listen to young people and encourage peer ministry



- Make the Church relevant and a provider of support for young people. What is needed should be discerned by young people.

### Engagement with Secular Culture, Inter-Faith & Ecumenical Dialogue

- Redistribute funds to fund pastoral workers
- Vocation to the diaconate and vocation for teachers
- Clergy are key in these relationships, there should be more collaborative relationship-building and less territorialism
- Ecumenism should come before the secular world

### Foundations for Mission

- Encourage people to face facts; presenting the reality so that there is support for the difficult decisions to be made on the estate
- Decisions to be made collectively; laity and clergy (2 groups)
- Radical re-shaping of estate is needed
- Presbyteries should be down-sized
- Priests in a pastoral area to live together
- Shared administration and training across a pastoral area
- Significant rationalisation of property portfolio to release funds for evangelisation and mission

### Effective & Transparent Stewardship of Resources

- Restructuring of diocesan levy and parishes
- Strong, trained parish councils
- Clear definitions of roles for the priest and laity
- Laity to have ownership of financial accountability
- Improved communications to ensure parish laity are reached

### Re-Imagining the Future

- Important to support those who can't use technology
- Both technology and other media should be used, to reach everyone
- Communications provided in multiple languages
- Use of social platforms is only valuable if there is clarity of message and audience
- Invest in technological infrastructure
- Social media channels used to reach young people (2 groups)
- Use skills where they are, don't expect priests to be adept at everything, empower the laity
- Better use of online facilities to reduce travel and make efficient use of time, e.g. online meetings

