

archdeacons' visitation news

Spring 2020 - issue 17

I had written this article well before we knew we would be placed in lockdown. I have adjusted it slightly but as we start to think about the future beyond the current restraints, much of the original is, I trust, still helpful.

'Healthy church communities have a positive and transformative impact on our society'

I hope these words are both familiar to you. They are, of course, a key part of our diocesan Vision 2026. When I was considering coming to this diocese, they were words that certainly stuck a chord with me. I led on a project in my former diocese called 'Transforming Churches' a few years ago. I trust you see the link. Where and who we wish to be is contained in the aspirational desire to transform, a gospel-focused desire. As we look to a new national situation in the light of the pandemic crisis, never will a transformed Britain be more needed. I am humbled by how much we have achieved as a diocesan community in recent months. There is much to be done in the society that emerges from lockdown.

We need to transform our churches before we help to transform society. Naturally enough, this might involve some work on our buildings and an audit of how they serve the parish is always a worthwhile exercise. However, a transformed Church really involves us, 'the living stones', being changed by God. The time of lockdown



has, I know, led many Christians to look afresh at their own relationship with God. Many of us have found more time for prayer, have experienced Sunday as a true day of reflection and renewal. As we move into a new phase in national life, we need to think about how our places of worship play a part in the national landscape. Many have missed being able to worship in 'their' church, whilst appreciating the chance to worship in a new way.

The months ahead will give us a chance to re-open well so that we do not just unlock our buildings but our hearts and lives to build on the desire of many to know us better. So, please do consider how best the fabric you are responsible

for helps you 'proclaim the gospel afresh in each generation'. I also urge you, however, to consider how you are open to God's transforming and how you (and I) care for our own spiritual welfare as we look to share Good News with others and help those who, in pandemic, looked to us for a message of hope can continue to learn more of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In one diocese, part of our vision was to 'create vibrant Christian communities'. It is not straightforward to define what that means, but I do know when I am in one! Being a place where it is a joy to be, a place of welcome and hospitality and a place where an encounter with the living God is enabled through word and sacrament and loving service.

There has ever been a greater need for the gospel of peace and joy to be heard by our nation. Seek to stay healthy in your spirit that the church may be a healthy local expression of the Body of Christ. As you know your own communities well, so you will know where transformation is most needed. That may be social and physical welfare as well as spiritual renewal. Loving service is a core Christian trait and is so often expressed well through the office of churchwarden.

I look forward in the years ahead to praying, learning and planning with you. Above all, I look forward to our fellowship in finding 'courage to follow in the footsteps of Jesus', to paraphrase our Diocesan Vision Prayer.

David, Archdeacon of Lancaster

Inside...

- Vision Champions – progress and plans
- Hope – a new start
- PCC – Prayer, Care and Courage

Churchwardens' Briefings

The Churchwardens' Briefings have been postponed until it is possible to swear in wardens; this will hopefully happen in November. As soon as arrangements are made we will inform you. In the meantime, thank you again for all you do.



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Transforming Plans with Vision 2026

We are now approaching the half-way point of our diocesan 'Vision 2026' to see 'Healthy Churches Transforming Communities', writes Carolyn Barton, Vision Co-ordinator. The impact of our focus on making disciples, being witnesses, growing leaders and prioritising work among children and young people is clear to see.

An increasing number of churches are starting new local congregations to reach out to new groups of people. There has been a remarkable recovery in the number of candidates for licensed ministry. We are also seeing a real appetite to engage with the Bible across the diocese with individuals and small groups establishing daily patterns of bible reading, using the 'Knowing the Scriptures Better' leaflet. More churches are stepping out into youth work with the support of the Youth Provision Development Project.

It's good to take time to reflect on how things are going in delivering the Vision to encourage us, to inform our prayers and to help to focus resources. The responses to the Vision 2026 questionnaire sent to all parishes earlier this year have been

invaluable in understanding common opportunities and challenges being faced across the diocese.

"Thank you to all involved completing them." said Carolyn. "The outcomes will be used to inform the planning of the next phase of the implementation of Vision 2026, to be launched at deanery synods across the diocese in the Autumn."

As a diocese, we now have a network of over 200 predominantly lay Vision Champions in over 85% of parishes. Their enthusiasm and creativity are a great blessing as they support their local churches in taking forward the goals of Vision 2026 in ways that are appropriate for their local communities. Another round of Vision Champion meetings is planned for the summer to enable the sharing of ideas and

to provide information about the support available in delivering Vision 2026. "In the meantime, please do get in touch if I can help in any way as we press on towards the goal of seeing healthy churches that transform communities across Lancashire."

Carolyn's email is:

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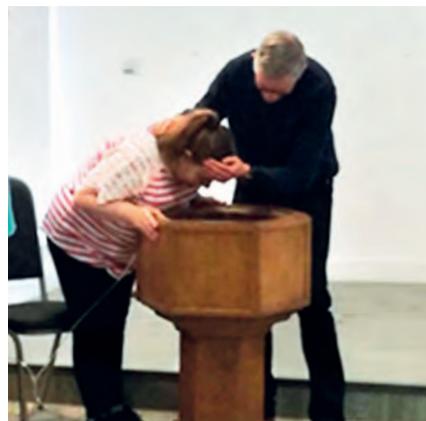


Growing our church

Andrea Bettany, Vision Champion at St James Briercliffe

Vision 2026 has encouraged us to increasingly look outward to our local community and to engage in active discipleship. One result of this is that our Thursday Worship, which is aimed at young and new-to-church families, has greatly increased in numbers in the last few months. The service has also seen steady growth in new leaders stepping forward to plan, prepare and deliver lively and engaging worship. We have people of all ages at this service not just children and it is lovely to see all generations interacting with each other and sharing our experiences in our faith.

Hope Church celebrates first Baptism for 10 years



In September last year, Hope Community Church held its very first baptism. This was a special occasion for a number of reasons. First and foremost, it marked the commitment of Liz, a resident of Grange Park who was keen to be a part a new congregation on the estate.

"Before we began our Sunday services, we had run a small group meeting at the vicarage" said Capt Matt Rowley, Lead Evangelist. "Liz showed a great desire to learn more about the Christian faith and she was keen to make a commitment to follow Jesus. She is always an encouragement when sharing because her face shows the desire to listen and learn!" Liz's journey involved study to have a full understanding of what baptism means.

It was so special that this was the first baptism on the Grange Park estate for 10 years and we used the baptism font from the now demolished Anglican church of St Michaels with All Angels. Liz had wanted to be Baptized after making the commitment to follow Jesus. However, due to her poor health, we had to rearrange it three times, but she was delighted to be able to finally make this commitment in front of her family and friends.

Changes to Church Representation Rules

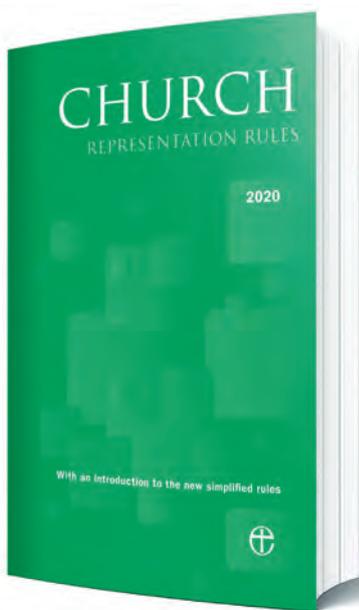
For Churchwardens and the PCC, the new edition of Church Representation Rules 2020 (CRR) gives up-to-date chapter and verse on the legalities of governing a church. The revisions are part of the national church's simplification work - they have been streamlined, and hopefully become less burdensome.

Every Parish should have a copy of the new Rules – available on the Church of England website. Some of the key changes are...

- 1) Simplification of the **revision of electoral rolls** – names no longer need to be removed during the year. Electronic publication also possible. The published roll must include names but not addresses.
- 2) **Annual meeting** – this must now be held between 1 Jan and 31 May. Therefore in 2021, Archdeacons' visitations will take place in June and not May. Sidesmen are now appointed by the PCC not at the APCM.
- 3) **Elections to Deanery Synod** – changes in the CRR2020 rules are under review and will be confirmed after the July 2020 Synod.
- 4) **Lay members of a PCC** must be in the majority.
- 5) The minimum number of **PCC meetings** a year is no longer specified, only enough to ensure efficient transaction of business.
- 6) **Joint PCCs** – churches within the same benefice can now opt to form a single PCC.
- 7) **Bishop's Mission Orders** must now keep a membership roll, and those on it are entitled to be represented on deanery synods, and to stand for diocesan and general synod.

- 8) **GDPR** – the new rules have been designed to avoid any need to obtain consent from individuals for using their data for the purposes of the Rules.
- 9) **Electronic communication** – is now provided for, including electronic voting methods.

The dates for the 2021 Visitations are to be found on the diocesan website. www.blackburn.anglican.org/archdeacons-annual-deanery-visitations



PCC matters! Pie, Chips and Cake? Or Prayer, Care and Courage...

Rev Linda Tomkinson was licensed as Priest-in-Charge of Freedom Church Mereside St Wilfrid's in May 2019. She was faced with the task of putting together a PCC from scratch, from a congregation of mostly new Christians many of whom had never even heard of a PCC, let alone served on one.

Linda said, "I contemplated bribing them to join the PCC by telling them it stood for Pie, Chips and Cake - that would be enough to convince me to join! And many indeed did ask what the letters PCC stood for as we talked about forming our PCC."

In time, God brought the PCC together and they have now had two successful PCC meetings. They decided to think about what the role of the PCC was to achieve, and came up with their own acronym.

"So we believe that it stands for Prayer, Care and Courage" said Linda. "At the top of every PCC agenda we start with these three items. When and where are we Praying, who are we praying for? Where are we Caring for the people God has given us in our parish, do we need to do anything more or do something differently? And finally, where are we showing Courage; where are we stepping out in faith, sharing our faith, sharing our vision for what we believe God wants for our lives?"

"All this sets the atmosphere for the rest of the meeting and these three things help us make decisions and support each other in all we do."

Lead theft a distressing problem

The bane of some parishes is continued lead theft – some churches have been targeted repeatedly. "There are more instances of lead theft in Lancashire than almost anywhere else," said Fr Andrew Sage, Vicar of St Stephen's Blackpool. "At St Stephen's, we installed a roof alarm and we know this has stopped further attacks."

The Diocese of Blackburn has received funding from Allchurches Trust to help parishes install roof alarms, and via the it can offer parishes £1,000 towards the cost. More information can be found on



the Diocesan website on the Diocesan Advisory Committee faculty page. www.blackburn.anglican.org/faculties

None of us can ignore the risk of cyber-attack (as much as we may want to!)

Cyber risk is real and attacks are significantly increasing in frequency. It is estimated around 80% of attacks can be prevented or mitigated by basic risk management practices that we could all be doing with little effort or cost



Everyone faces risks

Most cyber-attacks are 'scatter gun'. Cyber criminals don't care who you are until they know whether they can get through your defences. They may be sending out millions of emails a day to target victims. These emails don't discriminate between a corporate CEO, volunteer in your church or an Archdeacon. Follow a link in one of those emails... and suddenly your cyber threat becomes real. Your attacker will want to know all about you now – and how they can exploit or steal from you and the people whose information you hold!

Understand what is most important to you and why

What would happen if someone stole all the personal data you hold about staff, volunteers and the vulnerable people

you support? What if abusive messages were sent to those people from somebody posing as your church? Or if those people had their bank accounts hacked because you lost control of their personal information? What if your organisational accounts, records and files were irreversibly corrupted by a computer virus?

Think about the worst ways that your church, diocese or cathedral could be compromised by a cyber-attack and then work backwards to minimize your risks and protect your finances, reputation and operational capacity. It's not a cheerful task, but it is necessary.

Get the basics right with these five free and easy things you can do

These five simple steps from the National Cyber Security Centre (www.ncsc.gov.uk)

will go a long way to protecting you from cyber-attack... and they won't cost a penny:

1. Use firewalls to secure your internet connections from potential threat.
2. Ensure all devices (computers, laptops, tablets and phones) have the most secure settings enabled.
3. Use passwords for every device and change them regularly.
4. Control access to your information; discriminate between general access for staff and volunteers, and restricted administrative access with password protection.
5. Install updates as soon as you receive them. Manufacturers send you updates to protect you from the latest vulnerabilities they've discovered – don't ignore them!

You can download more guidance on how you can protect yourself from the threat of a cyber-attack here: <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/cyber-security/>



Cyber insurance cover

Ecclesiastical's cyber insurance cover is comprehensive and flexible and will dovetail with your existing insurance policy. You can choose a cover limit appropriate to your level of risk, which can include equipment replacement costs, investigation costs, legal advice, liability and data breach costs, and data restoration. Call us on **0345 777 3322** to speak about your level of risk and whether Cyber insurance cover is right for you.

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