



Consultancy for Mission and Ministry

Church consultancy enables, provides, creates and offers opportunities for consultancy and coaching support and development for ministers, teams and church communities

Contents

What's it about?

Background – How the concept developed and how it can help

How church consultancy can help

What is consultancy?

How does it work?

Who is involved?

What are the aims?

Statement of Concept –

How church consultancy works and what can it do for you

What can I expect?

Principles of engagement –

What you can expect from using the service

Who benefits?

Case Studies – real life recent examples

Further Reading

Useful sources of information

How can I find out more?

Contact details for churches and consultants wishing to know more

NOTE:

The terms “consultancy” and “consultants” are used as inclusive terms to embrace consultancy, coaching, facilitation and work consultancy – they are not intended to privilege one form of support over any other.

The term “consultor” is used to denote the person, group, church or organisation requesting consultancy.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

How church consultancy can help

We can all benefit from external perspectives and support. Work consultancy enables development in both church contexts and secular organisations. The Diocese of Chester has developed a framework to match churches with expert external consultants who can help shape mission and practice for the benefit of local churches.

What is consultancy?

George Lovell defines consultancy in this context as:

‘a process of seeking, giving and receiving help aimed at aiding a person, group, church or organisation to achieve their purposes in specific situations and circumstances.’

How does it work?

Church consultancy is a collaborative process:

‘Analyses and designs are produced through creative interplay between consultors and consultants as they focus on their work, the what and why and how of what they want to achieve in the circumstances in which they operate.’

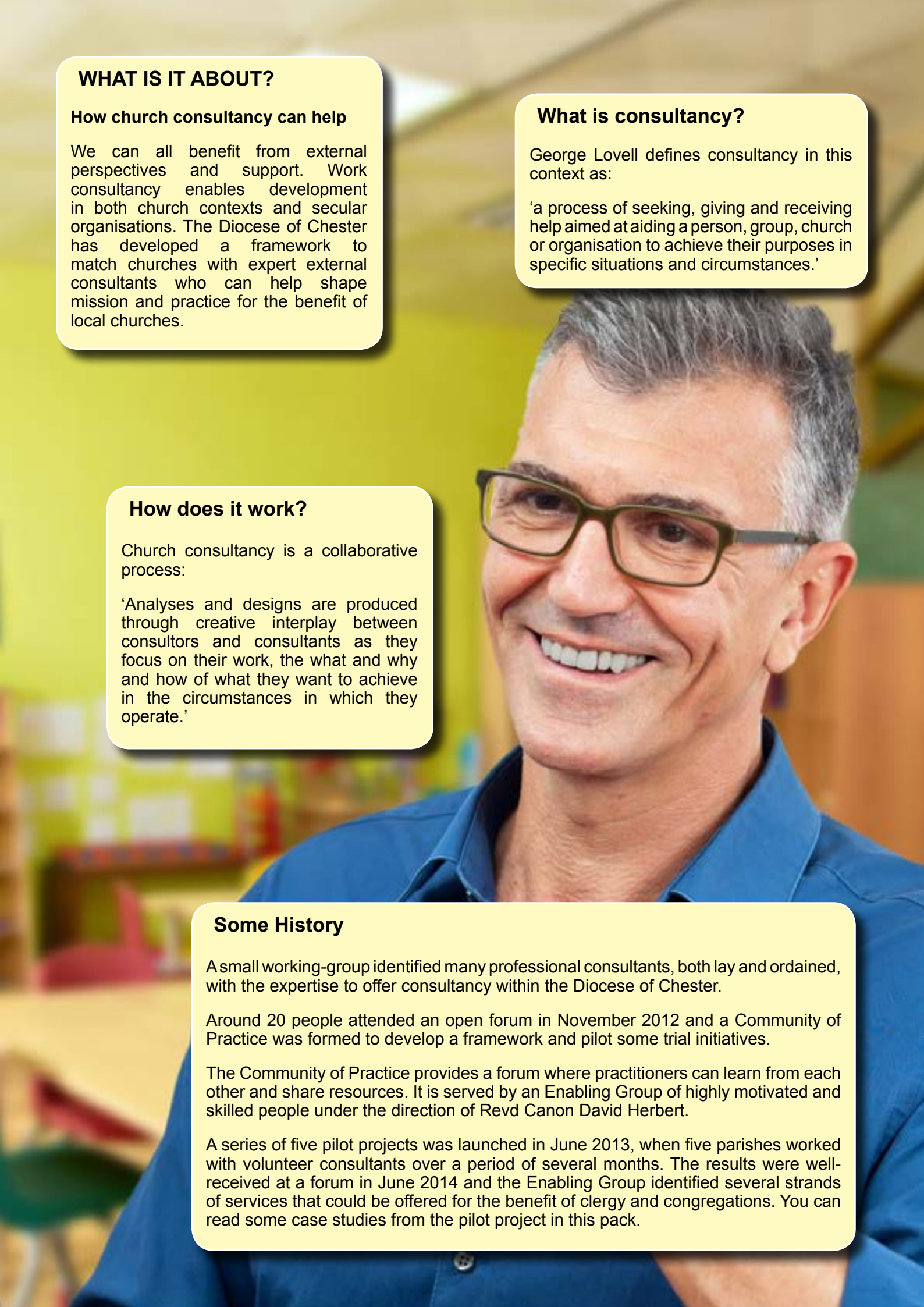
Some History

A small working-group identified many professional consultants, both lay and ordained, with the expertise to offer consultancy within the Diocese of Chester.

Around 20 people attended an open forum in November 2012 and a Community of Practice was formed to develop a framework and pilot some trial initiatives.

The Community of Practice provides a forum where practitioners can learn from each other and share resources. It is served by an Enabling Group of highly motivated and skilled people under the direction of Revd Canon David Herbert.

A series of five pilot projects was launched in June 2013, when five parishes worked with volunteer consultants over a period of several months. The results were well-received at a forum in June 2014 and the Enabling Group identified several strands of services that could be offered for the benefit of clergy and congregations. You can read some case studies from the pilot project in this pack.



WHAT ARE THE AIMS?

Church consultancy enables, provides, creates and offers opportunities for consultancy and coaching support and development for ministers, teams and church communities.

Statement of Concept

How church consultancy works and what can it do for you

Church consultancy will:

- Help the Body of Christ to articulate and fulfil its mission and ministry.
- Effect change and development for good.
- Provide consultancy and coaching, support and development for ministries, teams and church communities.
- Be informed, organic, inclusive, confidential and free of baggage.
- Work through a diverse and multi-skilled Community of Practice.
- Recognise that the Church is a Learning Church in which discipleship is a call to lifelong learning.
- Embed cultural change at parish level and provide stories/reports of development.
- Produce a tangible and visible increase in demand for consultancy services.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

Principles of engagement

What you can expect from using the service

Consultancy is a collaborative process. To ensure its success, both consultors and consultants agree objectives and outcomes and work within an agreed frame of reference.

What YOU can expect from Consultants

As consultants, we will:

- Show commitment and dedication towards those with whom we agree to work, including modelling of appropriate behaviour and attitude.
- Maintain confidentiality appropriately and sensitively to the local situation to encourage cooperation and teamwork.
- Seek agreement of a clear remit and definition of boundaries.
- Encourage ownership and motivation from all those involved to deliver service quickly and efficiently.
- Aim for effective communication through the use of a common language, free from jargon.
- Focus on solutions and improvement to resolve problems.
- Present a positive and confident approach which engenders trust and collaboration.
- Maintain integrity and openness to ensure approachability and credibility.
- Encourage best practice, review and evaluation to ensure efficient and effective reporting/case studies are achieved.
- Be objective yet challenging when appropriate whilst remaining respectful; remember it is a faith journey and be open to the Spirit.

Examples of help which might be looked for

- Culture of blaming,
- Reclaiming Sunday,
- Communication,
- Apologetics and growing witnesses,
- Transitional arrangements in pastoral reorganisation,
- Support for lay people
- Managing change,
- Strategic thinking,
- Support at times of burnout,
- Offering support alongside MDR.

What You Can Expect From Consultants

As consultants, we will:

- Determine requirements, objectives and expectations to enlist the most appropriate help.
- Recognise that ownership and accountability remains with us.
- Ensuring all views/opinions can be listened to.
- Encourage good communication processes to facilitate action planning.
- Provide all necessary materials and equipment to resource eventual delivery.

All participants can rightly expect professional standards of confidentiality and support.

The Community of Practice is here to ensure that standards are maintained and that consultancy projects benefit all participants.



Examples of help consultants are offering

- Vision and strategy,
- planning for the future,
- mid-ministry support
- organisational processes,
- leadership and education,
- community planning,
- team work,
- financial management
- networking/partnering.

WHO BENEFITS?

Case Studies – real life recent examples

An underlying principle behind Church Consultancy is that all participants benefit in some way. Clergy and congregations benefit from an external, expert focus on particular projects or issues. The consultants benefit from the opportunity to use their experience and expertise for the good of the community of faith.

Consultancy can help in all kinds of ways – with planning and construction projects, with relationship issues and communications, with the management of change or setting new directions for mission.

Some stories from the initial pilot schemes illustrate the range of services and benefits available.

CASE STUDY 1

Web and communications consultancy

A short consultancy project developed from conversations between the Vicar and a freelance marketing communications consultant as part of the pilot 'community of practice project.' The Vicar was wondering how to develop and deploy the parish website more effectively, within time and budget constraints.

A meeting was arranged between the consultant, the Vicar and the volunteer responsible for maintaining the website after the consultant had first visited a service in order to get a 'feel' for the church and community. The consultant then prepared a document outlining recommendations and giving examples of how other churches presented themselves online. The key issue was the way information had been previously displayed, with little demarcation or distinction between different sections or the needs of various audiences.

The consultant recommended dividing service and worship details from the broader community aspects – so that people wanting to use the building as a community resource could quickly find what they were looking for. The church offers various community services such as rooms for hire and a thriving nursery. The church is very reliant on a single volunteer for its website and this person was consulted and involved when the recommendations were drafted and presented. Due to subsequent external issues, the web volunteer was unable to implement all the recommendations but the website structure now conforms with the recommended plan.

CASE STUDY 2

Developing a Shared Parish Vision

In order to enable key people in the parish to build a shared vision a consultant met with both the Vicar and members of the parish on several separate occasions. He also worked with the Parish Team for one Saturday 'Away Day'.

The consultant, in his meetings with the Vicar, helped her to describe the church community at the beginning of her incumbency and as it was three years later, at the time of the consultancy. He also helped her to clarify her five point vision for the development of the parish over the next three years and to understand that the development of relationships, communication and teamwork needed to be at the heart of her parish work. In addition, a common understanding of how you lead people to get things done was developed between the consultant and the Vicar. The Vicar identified key people from the parish to work with in developing a shared vision and a number of key strategic actions.

Following an 'Away Day' to clarify shared vision and key strategic actions, wider teams within the parish were set up to help the core team implement the vision and actions. The Vicar and the consultant agreed a commitment to see the work through and have pledged to continue working together to develop teams who will deliver a shared vision.

It was noted that there is real value in having an outsider as consultant, working for both the Vicar and the parish, someone with awareness of the community but no stake in its development, and that the importance of taking time to get to know people in the parish is crucial. The value of a process which enables key people to build a shared vision and also enables them to listen, support and build agreement was also recognised.

CASE STUDY 3

Facilitation of workshops in preparation for Growth Action Planning

'I need to know what the congregation want but I'm not even sure that I speak the same language.' was the incumbent's description of the issue which had led him to taking part in the Church Consultancy pilot project. The consultant agreed to facilitate workshops in order to identify priorities for future activities. Ketso, a toolkit for creative engagement was used, in order to enable greater participation and to give scope for new ideas.

At an initial meeting with the incumbent and his wife, the consultant introduced the concepts underlying the Ketso method by using the kit to their gather ideas. This enabled them to identify what they felt were the key issues for them as church leaders as well as suggesting key avenues for exploration by the congregation.

Subsequently the consultant led a workshop for the five members of the PCC using the Ketso kit and it was agreed that it could be used to gather ideas from the congregation. A workshop was organised to take place during morning worship and following a short communion service 16 people worked in three groups to reflect on the activities already taking place and to identify ideas for the future.



At both of these workshops participants explored the following questions using the Ketso kit:

- What would I like from my ideal church?
- What works well at our church?
- What else would we like to see happening?
- What are the challenges to making them happen?
- What ideas do we have for overcoming the challenges?

Ideas could be grouped around four themes: Community; Personal Faith/Discipleship; Worship; Resources; with the possibility for extra themes to be identified.

Finally each group was asked to identify their priority for taking forward for future work.

Using the Ketso kit enabled everyone to have a voice, and young and old were able to participate together in developing priorities. At the meeting of the PCC, 87 ideas in total were gathered from the five members and 161 ideas were gathered from the 16 members of the congregation. These can now be used to give direction for future initiatives at the church.

FURTHER READING

There are number of key texts and sources that you may find useful.

These include:

Dadswell, D. (2011) *Consultancy Skills for Mission and Ministry – A Handbook*. Norwich: SCM Press.

Lovell, G. (2000) *Consultancy, Ministry and Mission: A Handbook for Practitioners and Work Consultants in Christian Organisations*. London: Burns and Oates.

Snow, M. and Thomas, H. (2008) *Coaching in the Church*. Cambridge: Grove Books

AVEC Resources offer a number of free downloads from their website <http://www.avecresources.org/index.php> including several books on church consultancy by George Lovell

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

Please contact David Herbert if you want to find out more.

His contact details are david.herbert@chester.anglican.org and 01928718834 (ext. 267)

