

# Statement of Needs



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# Our diocese today

The Diocese of Chester would like to express its thanks to Bishop Peter Forster who led and served this diocese for over 22 years.

The next Bishop of Chester will be joining a diocese in good heart, in a place where there is much for which to treasure and be thankful.

The Diocese of Chester contains a rich diversity of places, cultures and church traditions. Whilst there is an evangelical centre of gravity to the diocese, there is a wide variety of traditions and a strong sense of family identity.

Whoever is appointed must come with their eyes open and be able and willing to honour and embrace our distinctiveness and differences in tradition, theological conviction and opinion, for it is here that our greatest strength lies.

The Diocese of Chester has retained a parish-focused approach, one that is well supported and welcomed by clergy and laity alike. The parish system is still believed in, and relatively strong and healthy across the diocese.

Having said that, it is also widely recognised that there would be real value in developing a more sharply defined diocesan vision behind which parishes can mobilise.

Moulding the parish-focused approach with a shared vision will be part of the challenge for the next Bishop of Chester.

Latest church statistics show an overall acceleration in previous trends towards decline and we are not neglectful or wilfully blind to the reality we face. We seek a person with vigour and energy who has an awareness of the spiritual and material needs of our parishes and the skill and expertise to lead us into growth.

**The next Bishop of Chester will be joining the diocese at a time of great opportunity as we seek to reach our communities with the love and grace of God.**



# Who we are seeking

## An inspiring catalyst for church growth

An individual who has experience of growing a church in a local parish context and truly understands the challenges and opportunities local parish ministry presents. The diocese would benefit from someone with a proven track record of bringing people to faith and developing thriving congregations. He or she must have experience of leading congregations in a renewal of faith in new mission initiatives and in clear apologetics.

## A pastoral, relational leader

An exemplary faithful and prayerful leader who has an easy manner, humour and a down-to-earth touch. He or she must be loving, compassionate and caring and able to exemplify and communicate this in a visible way to our parishes and beyond.

## An encourager of responsible risk-taking

Someone who is openhearted, filled with humility and a readiness to listen to and act upon the advice of others. He or she must be ready to foster a culture of responsible risk-taking where people and parishes are encouraged to bring a splash of creativity into their missional and ministerial activities. This must be done strategically and with thought, recognising the urgency of the missional task that we face, whilst walking humbly and modelling grace. The ability to lead complex organisations and a willingness to challenge the status quo is essential.

## A skilful diplomat with integrity

A man or woman of integrity, who can skilfully uphold, defend and teach afresh to each generation, with conviction and authenticity, the teaching of Christ as it has been received by the Church of England. He or she must do so whilst simultaneously honouring and allowing to flourish, all Christians who hold, with equal conviction, differing views.

## A visionary, parish-first minister

Someone with experience of and a strong vision for sharing the Gospel and growing the Church. He or she should have the ability to use data to inform action and strategic intervention and be able to spot potential and facilitate connections. The next bishop should inspire and mobilise people to work together with a shared vision whilst respecting the strengths of our missional communities.

## A natural communicator

Someone with a natural ability and willingness to actively seek out the appropriate and necessary opportunities to communicate confidently the Christian message to a secular society. With an appreciation and understanding of our younger generations, he or she should encourage and support our people and parishes to articulate clearly the unchanging biblical Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in an ever-changing world.

# Our region

The Diocese of Chester is a vibrant part of the country with a significant history in the life of the Church of England and our nation. It is a diverse diocese with dynamic towns and cities and beautiful, picturesque countryside.

For many unfamiliar with the diocese, the prevalent narrative speaks of a leafy, rural diocese, home to wealthy footballers and rich business leaders. Whilst this is true, it is also home to some of the most deprived communities in England.

A varied local industry thrives in the Diocese of Chester and includes pharmaceutical and chemical companies in Wirral and Macclesfield; Vauxhall and Bentley car manufacturing and development plants in Ellesmere Port and Crewe; a celebrated history of shipbuilding in Birkenhead; technology parks and business incubators; and, Manchester Airport, the biggest and busiest regional airport in the UK. And that's all before mentioning the ancient history of the Roman City of Chester, plus a notable history of cheese, salt and silk exportation.



The diocese spans from Wirral and the Welsh border in the west to the limestone hills of the Derbyshire Peak District in the east. The north of the diocese reaches up to the rivers Mersey and Tame and the conurbations of south and east Manchester, and south to the towns of Crewe, Sandbach and Nantwich on the outskirts of Stoke-on-Trent and Shropshire.

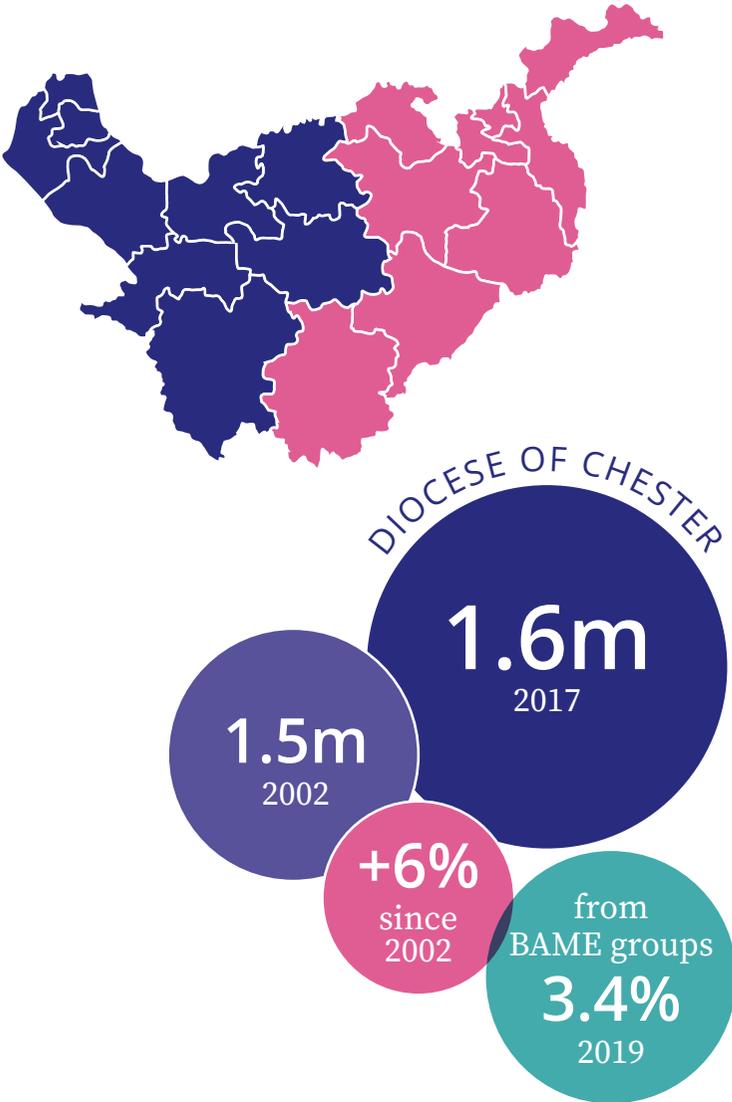
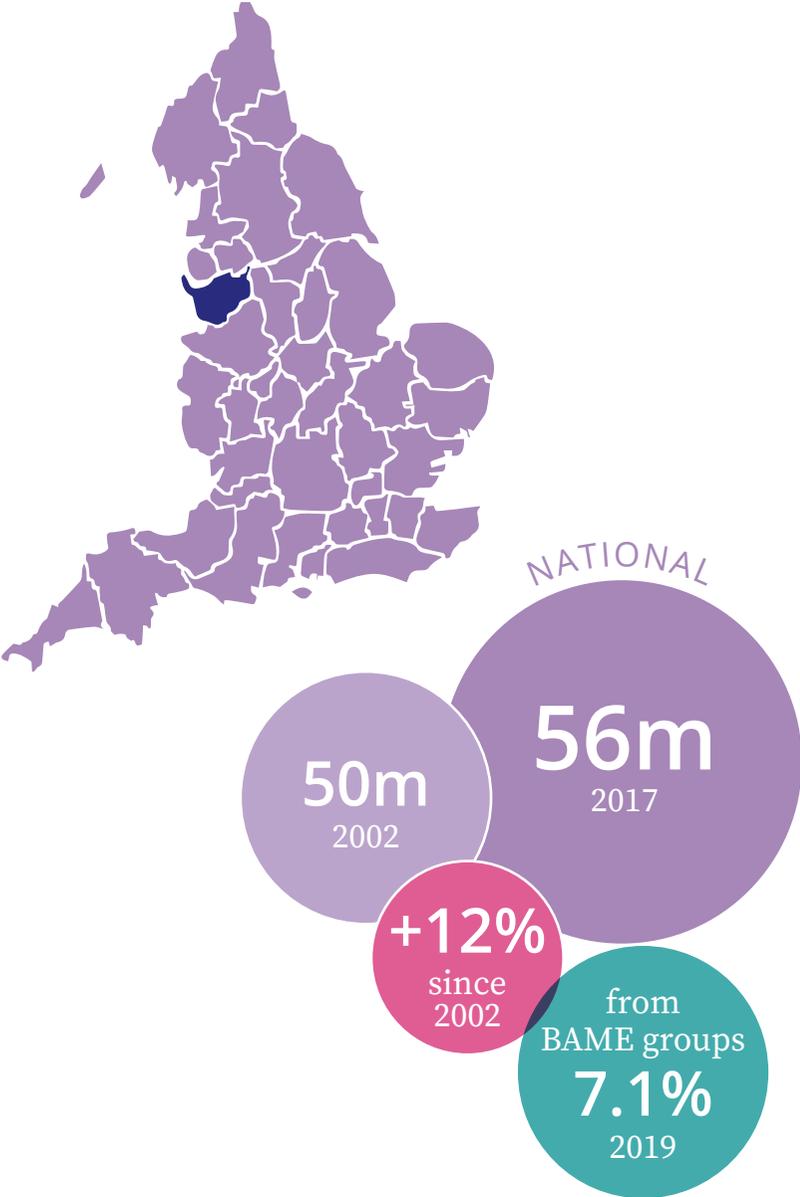


## A brief look at the diocese

The Diocese of Chester is...

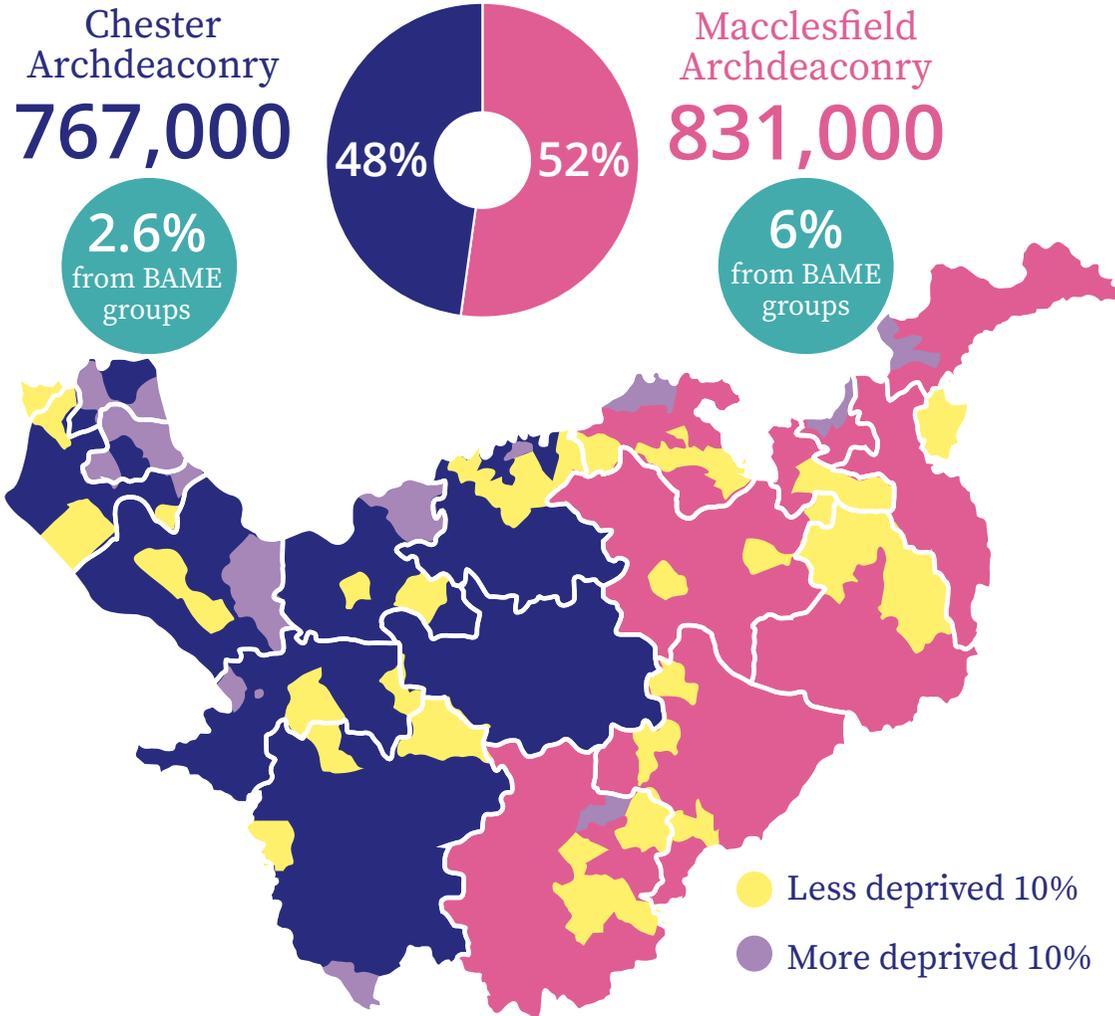
- 1 home to some of the most deprived and least deprived communities in our nation.
- 2 the only diocese in the Northern Province currently not receiving allocations from the Church Commissioners.
- 3 accepting of its complex identity and mix of traditions, theological convictions, and cultural influences.
- 4 the diocese in which the first woman bishop in the Church of England was appointed.
- 5 parish-focused, enjoying a precious heritage of parishes as missional communities.
- 6 partner to vibrant overseas links with the Church of Melanesia made up of dioceses in the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and New Caledonia and with the dioceses of Aru and Boga in the north-east of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

# Population



# Population of the archdeaconries

The archdeaconries of Chester and Macclesfield are roughly separated by the M6 which runs north and south through the heart of the diocese. Each archdeaconry has a broad mix of parishes and socio-cultural areas.



# Deprivation ranking

Parishes in our diocese include communities in the most and in the least deprived 0.1% of neighbourhoods. The disparity could not be clearer.



# Local Authorities

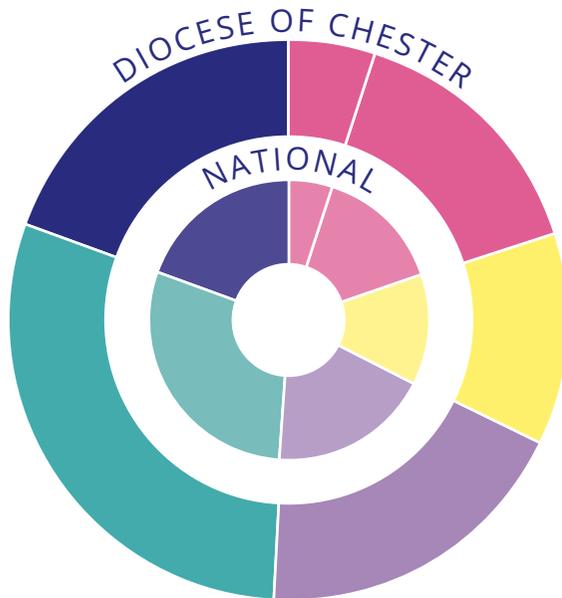
There are 11 local authorities within the boundaries of the Diocese of Chester, including two Welsh authorities.

The local authorities are:

- Cheshire East Council
- Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Flintshire County Council
- Halton Borough Council
- Manchester City Council
- Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
- Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
- Trafford Council
- Warrington Borough Council
- Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council
- Wrexham County Borough Council

## Age

The Diocese of Chester follows almost exactly the national average in terms of the age profile of its population.



<b>&lt;18</b> 20.2% 20%	<b>0-4</b> 5.2% 5.2%	<b>5-17</b> 15% 14.8%
<b>18-29</b> 12.2% 12.8%	<b>45-64</b> 29.6% 29.6%	
<b>30-44</b> 18.6% 18.4%	<b>65+</b> 19.4% 19.3%	

## Religion

DIOCESE OF CHESTER

**68%**  
identify as  
Christian

**1.11m**  
2017

NATIONAL

**59%**  
identify as  
Christian

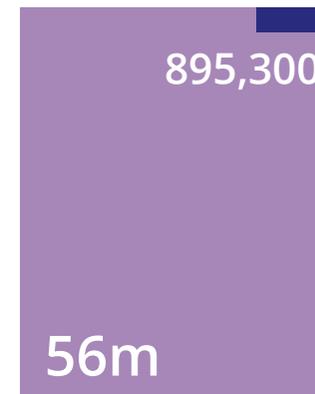
**33.06m**  
2017

## Church attendance

(all age average weekly attendance)



**2.1%**  
of the diocesan  
population



**1.6%**  
of the national  
population

# Cultural and social landscape

The population of the diocese is spread across rural and urban areas, affluent and poor. There is a broadly urban perimeter and a central swathe containing smaller villages and towns. Given the mix of urban, town and village contexts in which we minister, there are variations in size and make up of congregations and benefices.

The Cheshire area lacks the strong metropolitan focus of our neighbours to the north in Manchester and Liverpool. The towns of Macclesfield and Crewe are more likely to look south to The Potteries, whilst Chester has strong links with Wirral and Wales. The Wirral peninsula looks to Liverpool, and the northern conurbations hugging the arterial link of the M56 steer towards Liverpool, Warrington and Manchester. Parishes to the east of Manchester are as much about the Pennine fells as they are the city and often have only a fleeting affinity with Cheshire's heartlands.

The Diocese of Chester is served predominantly by BBC Radio Merseyside and BBC Radio Manchester. Some parts of the diocese are technically served by BBC Shropshire, BBC Stoke and BBC Radio Wales and significant commercial radio stations, adding to the varied identity of the diocese. BBC North West Tonight is our primary local TV news outlet.



## Cultural highlights

There is a rich offering of cultural events found in the Diocese of Chester. The following is just a sample:



**Chester Cathedral** welcomes a million visitors from all over the world every year and is an important cultural hub for the city, as well as being the Mother church of the diocese.



The City of Chester is the setting of the spectacular Chester Mystery Plays, performed every five years, mainly by members of the local community.



The **Royal Cheshire Show** is described as the premier summertime agricultural event in the North West of England and has been for 181 years.



**Creamfields** is an electronic dance music festival attracting 75,000 people over August Bank Holiday every year.



**RHS Flower Show** Tatton Park describes itself as a day out bursting with colourful gardening inspiration.



**Chester Racecourse** is known nationally and attracts over 300,000 visitors annually at raceday fixtures and non-raceday events.



**Chester Zoo** is the most visited zoo in the UK and a conservation and education charity committed to preventing extinction.



**Bluedot Festival** is a music, science and culture event held in July at Jodrell Bank Observatory.



Nantwich is home to the **International Cheese and Dairy Awards**, one of the biggest cheese festivals in the world.



The **University of Chester** offers an extensive range of single and combined honours courses to over 20,700 students across a number of specialist sites in Chester, Birkenhead, Warrington, and Shrewsbury.



The diocese is also home to an extensive canal network, the **Cheshire Ring**.

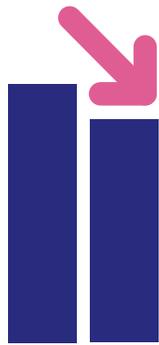
# Ministry and mission

Whilst there has been growth in school services, which is extremely encouraging, usual Sunday attendance among adults and children is down significantly, as is weekly average attendance.

Whilst there are encouragements, the overall picture is one of decline. In a recent survey, 76% of Christians said that they came to faith under the age of 18. This indicates the importance of focusing on how children and young people are helped to grow in their relationship with Jesus so that their faith is firmly rooted in the Christian community.

Over 50 youth and children's ministers are employed by parishes in the Diocese of Chester. We recognise that purposeful action and a redoubling of our efforts to inspire and enable every church to share the gospel with children, families and young people is of utmost importance.

In the Diocese of Chester, statistics suggest that:

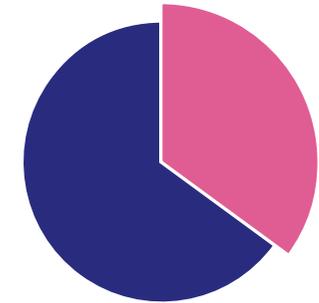


There has been a **10%** decline in children and young people attending church in one year.



**50%**

of parishes have **five or fewer** under 16s attending a church service each Sunday.



**35%**

of church members are **aged 70 or above** whilst 19.3% of the population of England is aged over 65.

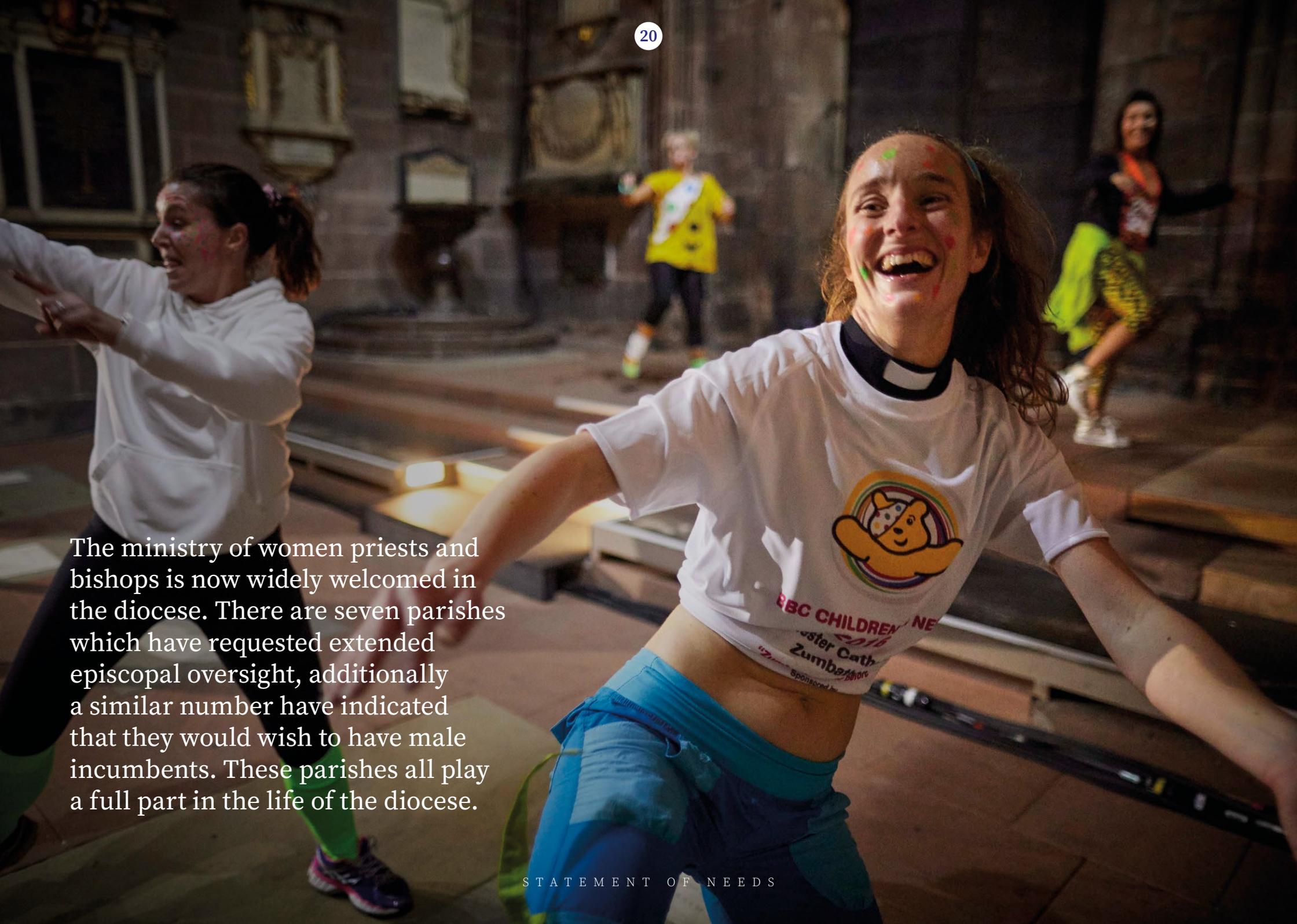
Source: all figures cited from Statistics for Mission 2018

## Church traditions

Church traditions in our parishes range widely, including evangelical, central, liberal, and Anglo-Catholic. Although no single strand of church identity dominates, different sorts of evangelical tradition - conservative, open and charismatic - represent the diocesan centre of gravity today.

An overall commitment to orthodox approaches to doctrine and ethics is an evident feature of the diocese. The priestly and episcopal ministry of women is widely accepted and welcomed. Where this is not possible, there is a notable commitment and respect for the Church of England's Five Guiding Principles as the basis for mutual flourishing across the traditions.

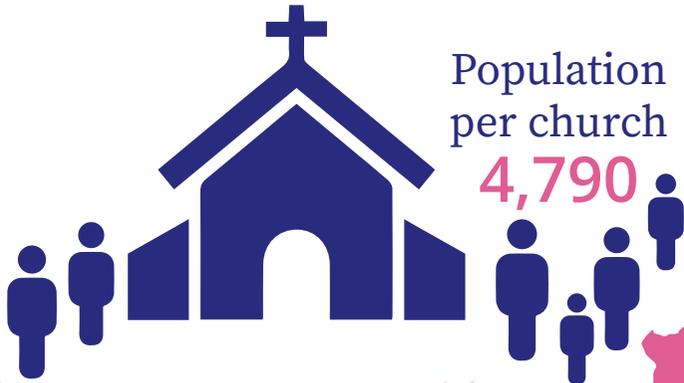
Similarly, the diocese does not have a single mind on other contested issues. Some people and parishes in the diocese hold more liberal views on matters such as human sexuality and marriage.



The ministry of women priests and bishops is now widely welcomed in the diocese. There are seven parishes which have requested extended episcopal oversight, additionally a similar number have indicated that they would wish to have male incumbents. These parishes all play a full part in the life of the diocese.

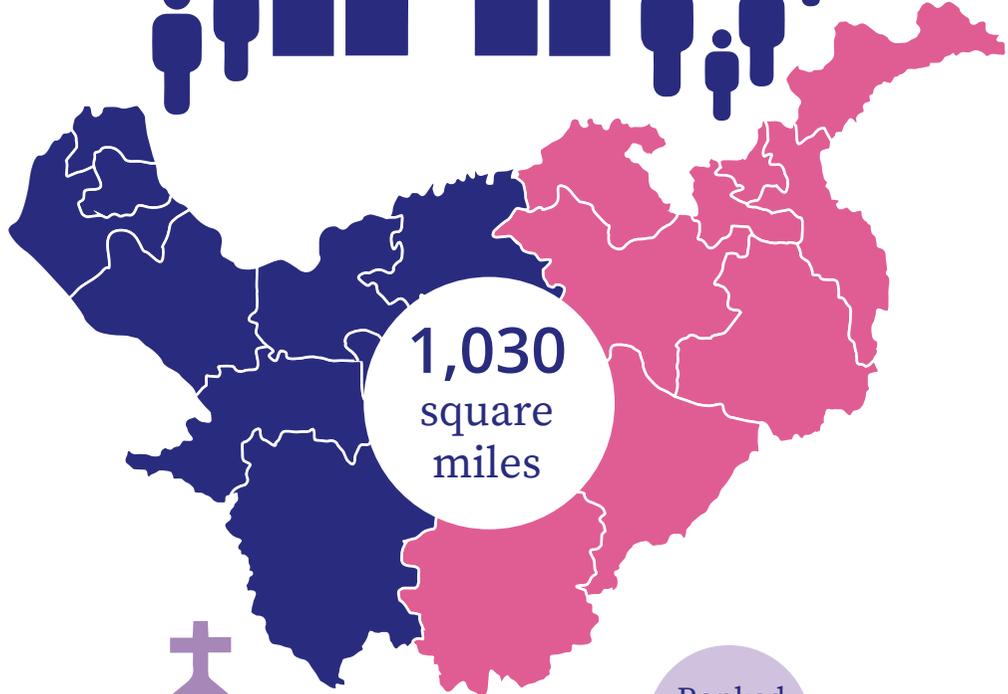


Population  
**1.6m**



Population  
per church  
**4,790**

Ranked  
**13\***



**1,030**  
square  
miles

Square  
miles per  
church  
**3.0**



Ranked  
**17\***



Christian  
population  
**1.1m**



Christian  
population  
per church  
**3,270**

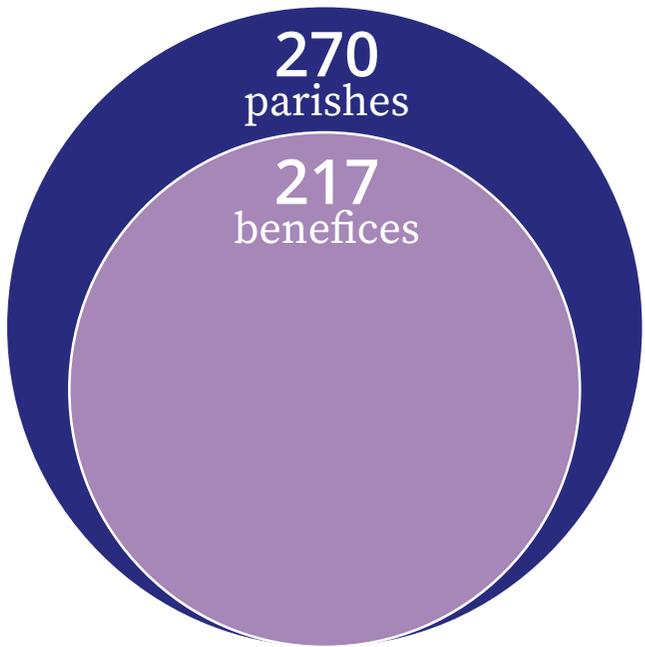
Ranked  
**9\***

Population  
density  
(people per  
square mile)  
**1,590**

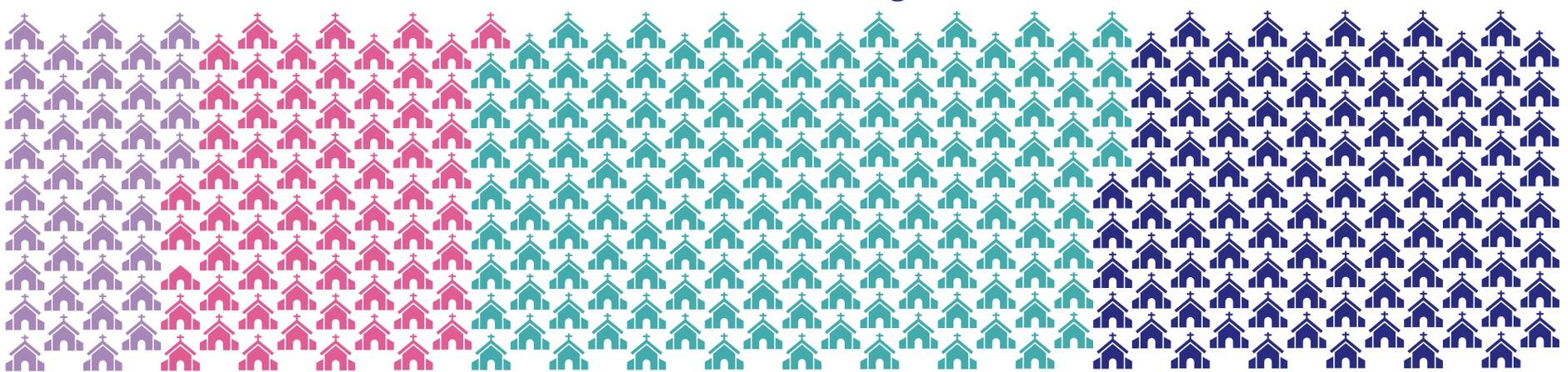


\* the greater the number, the higher the ranking in a list of 41 dioceses.

Source: all figures cited from Statistics for Mission 2017



340 church buildings



Grade I  
38

Grade 2\*  
65

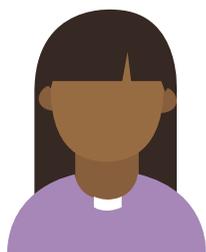
Grade 2  
139

Unlisted  
98

Source: all figures cited from Statistics for Mission 2017

## Ministry training

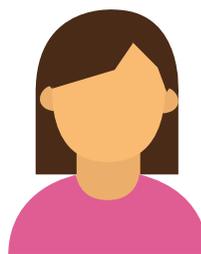
Ministry training in this diocese is in good shape. The Foundations for Ministry programme continues to be a notable success. Now into its 22nd year, over a thousand people have completed the training. Many have gone on to become our ordinands, Readers and Pastoral Workers and others have seen their faith enriched and have continued to witness more effectively in non-licensed ministry. The diocese has one of the highest proportions of licensed lay people in the country.



**250** stipendiary clergy posts of which **47** are part-time but receive some stipendiary, and **70** are self-supporting



Over **200** licensed Readers



Nearly **100** licensed Pastoral Workers

## All Saints Centre for Mission and Ministry

The Diocese of Chester is a joint shareholder in All Saints Centre for Mission and Ministry. It trains clergy and Readers across five of the northwest dioceses: Chester, Liverpool, Manchester, Blackburn, and Sodor and Man. It also trains Readers and clergy for other dioceses. All Saints is fully embedded through its governance structure into the Diocese of Chester, which appoints three of its directors.

## St Mellitus College, North West

St Mellitus College, North West, was formed as a partnership between five north-west dioceses in 2013, including the Diocese of Chester. It is the only full-time ordination college in the North West and equips people from all walks of life for ministry and leadership. St Mellitus offers a variety of learning pathways.

“As a self-supporting minister with an ongoing job at Manchester Royal Infirmary, I am different from most ordinands, but that’s kind of what’s exciting and challenging. My colleagues are more supportive than I had expected. A lot of them are agnostic, there are a few atheists, and there are a few believers. I’ll share my faith with colleagues but not with patients unless I am explicitly asked about it. I have occasionally prayed with patients, but I will very frequently pray for patients.”

The Revd Professor Peter Selby  
Self-Supporting Minister, Cheadle Hulme; and  
Consultant Physician and Honorary Clinical  
Professor, University of Manchester

## Education and youth ministry

The Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) has seen several changes and improvements both in terms of the central team of officers and the services available to schools through its Family of Schools.

The Church of England's vision for education provides the basis for the DBE's work as it looks to support schools in ensuring that all children and adults are enabled to live "life in all its fullness" (John 10:10).

Chester Diocesan Academies Trust (CDAT) is the diocesan multi-academy trust which is open to both church and community schools. Currently there are six schools in the Trust with four more schools anticipated to join by Easter 2020, equating to approximately 2,100 children and 300+ members of school staff. The DBE has a close working relationship and partnership with CDAT, with all members being appointed by the DBE.

Our schools can be wellsprings of spirituality and complement our network of churches.



## Mission initiatives

Transforming Lives Together (TLT) is a joint venture between the Diocese of Chester and the Church Urban Fund (CUF) and is part of the Together Network. Initiatives include, *Places of Welcome* and *Filling the Gap*.

The Diocese of Chester has been an active participant in *Thy Kingdom Come* over the years and it continues to be an important mission activity in the life of the diocese.

The Diocese of Chester was one of the first pilot dioceses to take part in *Setting God's People Free*. A task group has been working with a cohort of parishes to develop practical tools and establish the common challenges. Resources and a programme of activities are planned for the wider diocese in 2020.

The Diocese of Chester is beginning to explore *Growing Faith* and is committed to pursuing the House of Bishops' vision for dioceses to view mission and ministry through the lens of children, young people and households.

The Mothers' Union boasts 72 branches, affiliated with local parishes across the Diocese of Chester.



## Safeguarding

Safeguarding is an important part of our mission and ministry. Our bishop must be a champion of safeguarding best practice and build on the work already undertaken here to ensure our churches are safer spaces for all those who use them. Whilst we recognise that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone, the bishop plays a special role in setting the standard and needs to be seen to be a public advocate for safeguarding at all levels.



## Chester Cathedral



The Dean and Chapter have recently agreed a new five-year plan for the cathedral addressing its purpose statement that journeys from intrigue to insight:

Chester Cathedral will follow Christ through:

Discovery;  
Encounter; and  
Faith

Alongside the new strategic plan, the cathedral has reshaped its staffing to ensure it remains sustainable, outward-facing, God-facing and church-facing. The cathedral is home to a number of vibrant congregations and is supported by an able and ambitious choir. It is served by a large lay staff who are keen to share its story and make it a home for eye-catching installations that inspire godliness. It seeks to serve the diocese well, to be an exemplar of mission and to be a place where the bishop can confidently gather the Christian community.

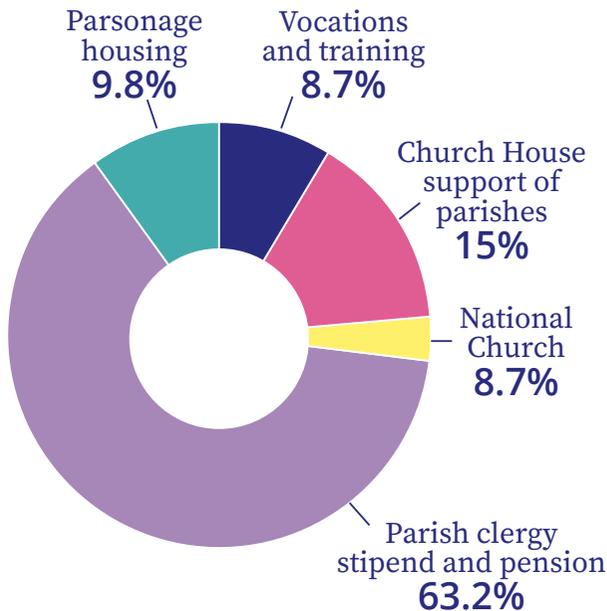
# Finance and resources

The budget for 2018 was just over £13m.

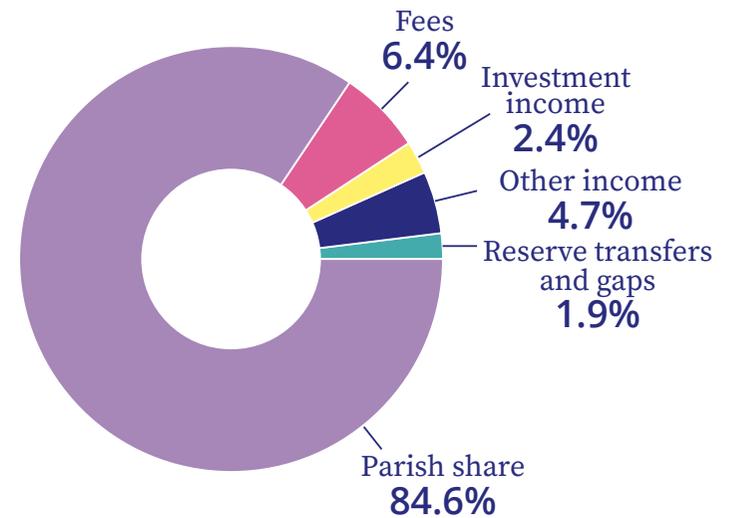
The Diocese of Chester is the only diocese in the Northern Province currently not receiving allocations from the Church Commissioners. The Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) has relatively low levels of historic investments and the vast majority of its income comes from parish share contributions.

We give thanks to God that parishes have a strong commitment to meeting requests for parish share, in order to fund mission and ministry in their own parish and across the diocese. As a result of this commitment the DBF is in a relatively stable financial position, but challenges remain as to how we maintain that position.

## Expenditure



## Income



# Who's who

The Bishop of Chester has a staff team of senior clergy and lay officers. The Bishop's Staff has been committed to an ethos of overall collaboration, sharing decisions as far as possible.

There has been a considerable emphasis on a co-operative and collaborative mode of working, which reflects a certain "family feel" in the diocese as a whole.

The Bishop's Staff Meeting currently takes place every three weeks.

### Senior staff

\*Denotes that they are a member of the Bishop’s Staff.

 **+Keith Sinclair**  
Bishop of Birkenhead\*

 **Christopher Burkett**  
Director of Ministry

 **Bishop of Stockport**  
Currently in vacancy\*

 **Chris Penn**  
Director of Education

 **Tim Stratford**  
Dean of Chester\*

 **Debbie Dalby** Director of  
Committee for Social Responsibility

 **Mike Gilbertson**  
Archdeacon of Chester\*

 **Director of Mission**  
Currently in vacancy

 **Ian Bishop**  
Archdeacon of Macclesfield\*

 **Liz Geddes**  
Director of Human Resources\*

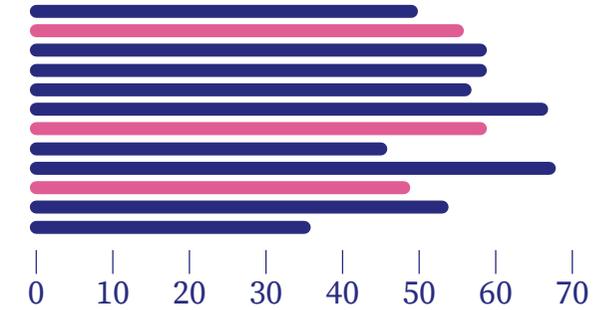
 **Christine Broad**  
Dean of Women in Ministry\*

 **Nigel Strange**  
Head of Finance

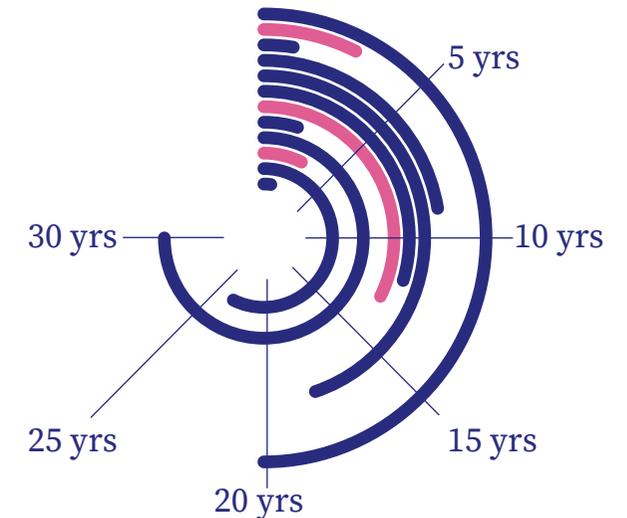
 **George Colville**  
Diocesan Secretary\*

 **Jim Butterworth**  
Director of Communications

### Age of senior staff



### Years in the diocese



The central administration of the diocese is conducted from Church House, a modern purpose-built building at Daresbury Park about 12 miles east of Chester. Satellite offices of the bishops of Birkenhead and Stockport are based in Prenton, Wirral, and Dunham Town, Altrincham, respectively.

Bishop’s House is located at Abbey Square, Chester. The Bishop’s Office staff includes:

**Muriel Green**, Senior Personal Secretary  
**Alex Duncan-Price**, Senior Personal Secretary  
**Jane Charensol**, Secretary  
**Roger Clarke**, Chaplain to the Bishop of Chester

Almighty God,  
who sent Jesus Christ  
to be the cornerstone of your Kingdom  
and to call us to follow him;  
guide your Church, by the Holy Spirit,  
to show love and mercy as we build your Kingdom.

We pray for the person you are calling to be the next  
Bishop of Chester; bless, guide and strengthen them  
to answer your call; in the name of Jesus Christ and  
in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

# Prayer

Church House  
5500 Daresbury Park  
Daresbury  
Warrington  
WA4 4GE  
Tel: 01928 718834

 @ChesterDiocese

 /DioceseOfChester

 /DioceseOfChester

Chester Diocesan Board of Finance is a company limited by guarantee registered in England (no. 7826) and a registered charity (no. 248968)

[www.chester.anglican.org](http://www.chester.anglican.org)