

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

A photograph of Bishop Mike Harrison standing in a vineyard. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a magenta clerical shirt and a large silver cross necklace. The background shows rows of grapevines and a distant landscape under a cloudy sky.

Bishop of Exeter's
Announcement Day

BISHOP MIKE'S INTRODUCTION

The Rt. Rev'd Dr Mike Harrison, Bishop of Exeter

To begin with I would like to extend my thanks for the warmth of welcome Rachel and I and the family have received since coming to the diocese in the late autumn of 2024. The service of enthronement at Exeter Cathedral on All Souls day was a very special day for us personally, not least beginning in Woolacombe with prayers on the beach. We remembered (on All Souls Day) witnesses to the Christian faith including those who've witnessed to us personally (such as my parents with whom we spent many happy times on Woolacombe beach), before sweeping down through Tiverton to Exeter for the actual installation. The hospitality, support and encouragement we have received since then has been truly touching and we are deeply grateful.

2024 was a year with considerable challenges nationally, and that has inevitably impacted our own diocese of Exeter. Safeguarding must be a primary concern of the Church and with the Makin report, a questioning of previous safeguarding practices and the resignation of Archbishop Justin, the need to attend to this primary concern has been further underlined. The recent independent INEQE safeguarding audits of dioceses, including our own diocese of Exeter, testify to the good practice we have locally. Nevertheless, we must be permanently vigilant and always continue to strive for best practice in this critical area of work and ministry. My thanks to all those contributing to this whether in the safeguarding team, as PSRs or more widely.

Event to celebrate the 30th anniversary
of the first women priests



Devon County
Show 2024



St Boniface Awards
2024



Continued

Having only joined the diocese in November 2024, I feel a little ill-equipped to provide an overview of the many significant events, activities and gatherings undertaken across the diocese in 2024. Nevertheless I have the witness of many in the diocese who have informed me of the continued commitment to the vision to grow in prayer, make new disciples and serve the people of Devon with joy. With the role of diocesan bishop being vacant, Bishop Jackie very ably stepped into the position of acting diocesan bishop and has navigated challenges and opportunities with great warmth, energy and creativity, ensuring that momentum has been maintained through 2024. It made the news of Bishop Jackie's retirement all the more difficult, and her departure in January 2025 was met with huge thankfulness for her ministry, deep sorrow for the end of that ministry among us, and much love and prayer for the next phase of life she is entering.

The annual report's pictures and text are evidence of the different ways in which that commitment to our pray, grow, serve vision and momentum have been sustained, whether via the celebration of 30 years of women's ordination, innovative ministry in pioneering, planting and missional outreach, expanding opportunities in lay ministry, the St Boniface Awards, the ordination of deacons and priests, community engagement of many kinds – from holiday clubs to Anna chaplaincy.

Shot through all of this, we recognise God's faithfulness and activity into which we are being caught up; may this same God equip us to share ever more fully in His mission and ministry as he leads us on together throughout 2025 and beyond.



DIOCESAN SECRETARY'S OVERVIEW

Stephen Hancock, Diocesan Secretary

2024 was another busy year as we continue to support our vision to grow in prayer, make new disciples, and service the people of Devon with joy.

The year marked the 30th Anniversary of the ordination of women, and quite fittingly, a significant moment in the life of the Diocese took place at the end of March, when Bishop Jackie became the first female bishop to ever lead the Chrism Eucharist at Exeter Cathedral. It was a year of change in our Episcopal leadership as Bishop Jackie also announced her retirement and we greeted Bishop Mike as our new Diocesan Bishop following his Installation in Exeter Cathedral on 2nd November.

You can read many highlights throughout this report such as our school leaders' event which recognised the dedication and hard work that takes place within our 134 church schools, our redevelopment of Foundations, our lay training programme, which delivers a wider range of training locally delivered in our archdeaconries. Also our outward-facing engagement at events such as the Devon County show and many others, we also celebrated the incredible contribution of some of our most outstanding lay people at the St Boniface Awards. We are blessed to have so many committed individuals who serve the Church in our Diocese. Another joy was our first ever Eco Church celebration at Exeter Cathedral, during which twenty of our churches received their Eco Church Awards. The Diocesan Board of Finance also received our Bronze Eco Church award and we are actively working towards silver.

The year also witnessed some challenges, such as national issues regarding the handling of safeguarding cases. We are aware of the impact this has on survivors, our staff and our volunteers. Locally we remain focused on creating a safe and welcoming culture, and our safeguarding work was audited in 2024 by INEQE as part of a five-year programme of audits which the Church of England has commissioned. Our audit was published in December, and you can read more in this report. Whilst there is always more to do and curiosity and vigilance remain key, we were pleased with the positive feedback and affirmation from the audit team, and we thank them for their recommendations to continue our journey of improvement.



Licensing of Lay
Ministers 2024



Bishop's Study
Morning 2024



Thy Kingdom
Come 2024

MISSION AND MINISTRY

Rev'd Prebendary Ian Bussell, Director of Mission and Ministry

The training review in 2023 decided to bring the Foundations course and Curate Training (IME2) into the diocese. Jon Curtis has worked on Foundations and we now have three courses, in Plymouth, Exeter and Barnstaple, all full and a waiting-list building. This has meant three times as many people as previous years are starting the exciting journey of discovering more about the Bible, mission and ministry and spirituality. If, as in previous years, a proportion of these take a step into other vocations (lay and ordained) we will be developing a range of new ministers and new ministries. As participation in traditional training events has declined since the pandemic, Foundations shows us that there is still a thirst for learning, and we need to adapt to make that learning accessible.

Curate training has also come under the diocesan umbrella from September 2024 and Kim Mathers has transferred from SWMTC to the department of Mission and Ministry. Core training has moved to Sundays to enable SSOMs and stipendiary curates to train together. Hopefully the benefits will outweigh the pain of this change but it is early days. We are delighted to have Kim in the team and realising at our team meetings how we have missed the crucial aspect of curate training from our discussions.

Another missing piece has been the oversight of LLM ministry and, while we take time to decide how to replace Archdeacon Andrew as Warden of Readers, we are grateful that Carol Price is Acting Warden of Readers, and Hannah Cross has stepped into the role of LLM Officer, taking on the day to day oversight and care of LLMs. So, at any team discussion on vocations, training and development and pastoral care of ministers we have the LLMs fully represented by Hannah.



MISSION AND MINISTRY

Continued

The success of Foundations asks the question 'what next?' Following the model of Anna Chaplains we are developing other areas where lay people can be commissioned to specific areas of ministry such as children and families, pioneering, evangelism, parish nursing and so on, focussing at first on those ministries where there is already an excellent training on offer from other organisations. We launched these in 2024 at the Bishop's study morning and there has been a lot of interest. In March 2025 we saw the first person commissioned as a Growing Faith Leader. More commissionings will be following later in the year.

The study morning in November was booked about a year ago before we knew when and if we would have a new diocesan bishop, but in the end the timing was perfect for a gathering of clergy and LLMs at St Peter's School in Exeter, to meet our new bishop, and for him to meet us. A keynote address from Lucy Moore set the tone for one of Bishop Mike's priorities, ministry and mission amongst children and families. Feedback was very good but the most positive feedback was for the huge homemade biscuits. They are already in the 'essential' list for the next study day!

Finally we are proud to have produced the first [Mission Community Field Guide](#) with the help of many contributors from the Old Deanery, the Cathedral and the wider diocese. Hard copies have been given to all licensed clergy and LLMs. Inevitably it goes out of date as soon as it is printed but the website version will be kept up to date and will always be available to read and download.



MISSION TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Sharon Blyth, Children and Families Mission Enabler

A key priority for the national CofE is Children, Young People and Families (CYF), and it is at the heart of our work in Mission and Ministry. This year we have focused on supporting and encouraging those who do this work, both in a paid and voluntary capacity, through a range of training opportunities and exciting national programmes. Engaging with the JOIN campaign and Catalyst as significant pilots, as well as developing essential links with the Growing Faith Foundation, has been crucial in creating confident and reflective networks. We have seen 10 CYF workers complete Catalyst, with a further 15 in the latest cohort. We have continued to build strong links with partnerships including the Devon County Show, Begin Well, Scripture Union, ICE Exeter, DCYC, Prayers Spaces in Schools and The Children's Society. Furthermore, initiating new training in toddler groups, festivals and rites of passage, and building teams has been crucial.

2025 is bringing deeper connections with work in Plymouth and Torbay, as well as building on local hubs. We are seeking to include new training in storytelling, using animals in ministry and Choir Church, whilst highlighting excellent practice in individual parishes and mission communities.



ENABLING MISSION

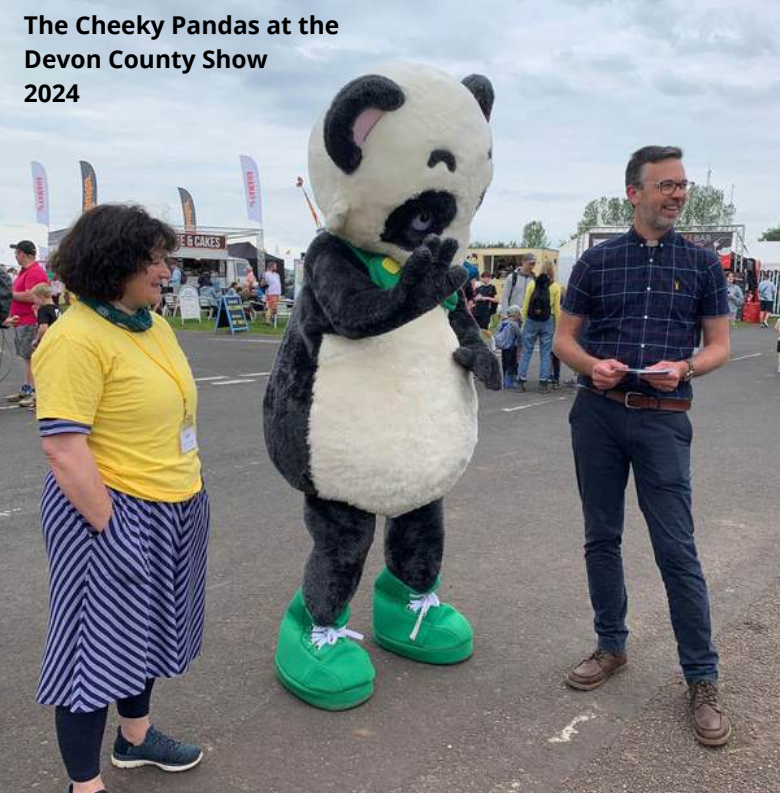
Rev'd Jeremy Putnam, Mission Enabler

This year Mission Enabling has seen a real breadth of activity, which has reflected, and continues to demonstrate the energy and innovation there is for mission across our churches.

2024 saw the return of 'Mission Shed' events, bringing people together to help encourage creativity and discussion around specific topics of mission. Mission Sheds were hosted in three archdeaconries, and included speakers like Sara and Sam Hargreaves of Engage Worship, Revd Chris Russell, Revd Dr Ben Aldous, the Church Army's Heidi Lewis, Paul Friend from SWYM, and Chris Curtis. There are four events planned in 2025.

The resources for the 'Come and See' campaign in 2023 were further developed so we could offer a Lent specific course on the topic of faith sharing. The material, printed resources, and videos can all be downloaded or ordered free of charge from the [diocesan website](#).

After a 5 year break, the Mission and Ministry, and Communications Team, led the organising of a special ecumenical Thy Kingdom Come event in Exeter Cathedral in June, which saw almost 600 people attend. Ruth Valerio spoke, Bishop Jackie led the service, with singer songwriter Andy Flannagan leading worship, and even writing a new song especially!



ENABLING MISSION

Continued

The Devon County Show continues to be an important opportunity for mission, and this year the show saw the arrival of the 'Cheeky Pandas' and their new bible story book resources. There were over 30 volunteers involved from Church of England churches across Devon, providing chaplaincy and pastoral support, offering (Thy Kingdom Come) prayer resources, and supporting the ministry of the Cheeky Pandas.

The Mission and Ministry team were able to offer 14 small Mustard Seed grants to Mission Communities starting new missional projects, which included projects like Hygge Church in Exmouth, Messy Church in Seaton, and Lifepath in Tiverton.

In order to support the outcomes of the training review in 2024, new contracts of working and partnership were forged for South West Youth Ministries (SWYM), and the Church Mission Society. As a result Jonny Schnarr joined the Mission and Ministry team as SWYM's youth advocate to the Diocese. Jonny's role includes delivering Launchpad training for clergy who are planning for new youth ministry or projects. The new partnerships mean that we can also offer training partnerships for the new Lay Commissioned leadership roles for Growing Faith, and Evangelism, Mission and Pioneering.

Further work associated with Enabling Mission included support offered through the Church Planting and Revitalization diocesan committee, which has been able to directly support new missional work in new housing developments near Exeter and in North Devon. Other activities in 2024 included hosting a special one-off Practicing the Way 'watch conference'; the development of prayer resources for walkers at the annual Archangel Way Pilgrimage celebrations, and joining-in with the Olympics-inspired mission breakfast at Exeter Cathedral.

Tiverton White Eagles Hockey Club,
Enthronement Day
Morning Pilgrimage 2024



Announcement Day of
the Bishop of Exeter



Thy Kingdom Come
2024



COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

Grace Stanhope, Communications & Engagement Officer: Website, Marketing and Publications

2024 was a busy and exciting year for the communications team as we continued to build connections and engagement through our storytelling, photography, videography, social media, marketing, events and training and support for churches and other diocesan departments. We helped plan and run a number of missional events including Thy Kingdom Come and the Devon County Show outreach. We filmed the Church of England's national online service at the show. The theme was Children and Families and it has been viewed 2,650 times so far on YouTube.

We planned and covered the announcement of the new Bishop of Exeter, the Rt. Rev'd Dr Mike Harrison on 4 June (Devon Day). It included a whistlestop tour of the county, from Cranbrook primary school, to Winkleigh vineyard and Unleashed Christian Theatre project in Torquay. It finished with a special Evensong at Exeter Cathedral. This was followed by Bishop Mike's formal election at Exeter Cathedral, his confirmation of election service at Lambeth Palace and his Enthronement at Exeter Cathedral in November.

We are delighted to have a diocesan bishop who enjoys an established social media presence (even being known as the Tik Tok bishop) We have been working with him to produce new content including the 'The 12 Reels of Christmas' and a Christmas video in which he demonstrated his favourite sausage roll recipe!



The 30th Anniversary of Women's Ordinations 2024



St Boniface Awards 2024



Tiverton White Eagles Hockey Club, Enthronement Day Morning Pilgrimage 2024

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

Continued

Other big events included covering the Eco Church Awards, St Boniface Awards, the 30th anniversary of Women's Ordination Celebration, the Bishop's Study Morning, ordinations, priestings and licensing of lay ministers. A key part of Chloe Axford's work as Communications and Engagement Director is to support the diocesan safeguarding team with communications guidance - and the publication of the diocesan response to the INEQE Safeguarding Audit was a major piece of work. We continue to run the Devon Church Weddings project and the This Is My Story project. We are also overseeing the digital and communications aspects of the Devon Pilgrim project and Growing the Rural Church and aim to keep both flourishing and developing as they are great ways of serving our parishes and engaging with our communities. Our newsletters, including Roots & Shoots, continue to be an effective way to share good news, 'nice to know' and 'need to know' items with churches and people interested in the life of the Church of England.

In October we said goodbye to our Communications and Engagement team Digital Lead, Matt Prior, who went to work for Tearfund. Matt was a key part of the Communications and Engagement team, and we wish him all the best in his new role. In February 2025 Cassie Long was appointed as the new Digital Content Creator and will start before Easter. A key part of our ongoing work is delivering communications training. This has included running the Digital Ministry Grow Course, online training sessions for churches, attending churchwarden training sessions and providing tailored support for parishes. If you would like communications training we would love to hear from you:

communications@exeter.anglican.org



EDUCATION

Sue Lockwood, Director of Education

As the Education arm of the Church of England in Devon, our vision, 'To enable all, through the love of God in Jesus Christ, to 'live life in all its fullness' (John 10:10b)' provides direction and focus to our work to: 'Nurture vision-inspired education; Nourish personal and spiritual growth; Enable connected communities that flourish'.

We always seek to ensure our work adds value to those with whom we are working. Many of our schools are now part of a larger grouping such as a federation or multi-academy trust (MAT) and therefore our pattern of work has evolved alongside the changing landscape. Whilst retaining that important link with individual schools, we have consciously started working more intentionally with the leaders of our multi-school groupings to ensure they understand the expectations around Church schools and have the understanding, knowledge and skills to support Church schools and Church school leaders to uphold the Christian Foundation and distinctiveness.

The Exeter Flourishing Partnership (EFP) is one example of our intentional work with our larger multi-school groupings. It is a deep, collaborative and beneficial relationship providing rich, meaningful and formative opportunities to enrich Church school distinctiveness. Four strategic lead roles (individuals identified by the academy trust or federation) are trained by the Diocesan Education Team in the following areas.

EDUCATION

Continued



The **Lead for Exeter Flourishing Partnership** works at a strategic level to ensure the church schools within the academy trust/federation are effective as church schools, embracing their original Anglican foundation. They will ensure that the distinctive Christian vision is established and promoted by leadership at all levels, enabling pupils and adults to flourish. The Lead is the main point of contact with the Diocesan Education Team. They are responsible for supporting the other Exeter Flourishing Partnership trust/federation Leads, in partnership with the diocese.



The role of **Religion and Worldviews Lead** can be combined with the **Collective Worship Lead**. These roles represent the axis around which strong Religion and Worldviews (RW) and Collective Worship (CW) in church schools and community schools is built and sustained across the whole academy trust/federation. This Lead works with existing leaders of RW and CW, to ensure that all schools are effective.



The **Recruitment and Induction Lead** will ensure that the academy trust/federation vision and the individual distinctively Christian church school's vision and values are embedded and lived out through recruitment and induction. They will advocate for church school flourishing.



The **Governance Lead** works across all tiers of governance to support those involved in knowing, understanding and fulfilling their responsibilities. This includes ensuring the academy trust/federation is conducted in accordance with the principles, practices and tenets of the Church of England, and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish.

Following two days training in each of the above areas, our team are undertaking partnership support visits with the MAT/federations involved to acknowledge strengths and identify areas for further growth.

EFP progresses two of the Exeter Diocese Board of Education Committee (DBE) strategic priorities: The Diocese of Exeter has a successful diocesan family of schools and Responding pro-actively to the changing educational landscape strengthens school performance, capacity, and sustainability.

2024 saw the launch of a new locally agreed RE syllabus. The new syllabus hasn't shifted significantly in its substantive content, but what is new is the way to approach its teaching. In recent years an enormous amount of thinking has gone into developing a more inclusive [religion and worldviews](#) approach to the subject, and the new syllabus captures these new, significant insights. The effectiveness of denominational education in Church schools is evaluated during the statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools (SIAMS) section 48 inspection. We continue to promote [Religious Education in Church of England Schools - A Statement of Entitlement](#) which sets out that a Church school is expected to provide an RE curriculum will enable pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice.



EDUCATION

Continued

The DBE and the Education Team are committed to furthering our work in the area of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion as we support schools in upholding their Christian Foundation. In January 2024, we held an Exeter Peace Feast which saw school leaders from across Devon gather together at an inspiring and moving event, to commit to creating kinder, fairer and more welcoming communities, where people of different cultures and races live well together. This event, inspired by [Bridges for Communities](#), encouraged CEOs, Executive Leaders and Chairs of Governance Boards to recognise the position of their organisations in relation to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and take positive action. [Click here](#) to read the full story.

Following the success of the Peace Feast, and in order to more fully and sustainably address and respond to the 'From Lament to Action' publication, and inclusion and belonging more widely, our team are now running a three-year peer-to-peer Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Justice support network for school leaders. By enlisting the national CofE Racial Justice Champions and with the generous funding of the St Wilfrid's Trust, we are offering a comprehensive and accessible programme for all schools within our diocesan family. This work was brought sharply into focus following the summer riots when tension was felt on some playgrounds at drop off/collection times. We are committed to supporting schools in addressing all types of discrimination and promoting belonging, equity, diversity and inclusion.

We continue to work with those involved in school governance, recognising their vital contribution and generous service to ensuring our schools are enabling all to live life in all its fullness. A joyous occasion this year was the governance reaffirmation and thanks event held in the Bishop's Palace Gardens. Foundation governance plays a vital part in the success of our schools and school groupings. Currently we have:

- 134 Church of England Schools, educating 26,871 children and young people (January 2024 census)
- 89% of CofE schools within a multi-school grouping with shared accountability through governance (federation or MAT)
- 15 federations and 15 MATs containing 119 CofE schools and over 100 community schools
- 15 schools who remain stand-alone (not in a formal partnership).



St Cuthbert Mayne visit
Shallowford Farm



Bishop of Exeter's
Enthronement Day 2024



Church Mentors at
Chulmleigh Secondary School



Choir School at St Michael's
Church of England Primary
Academy, Exeter

EDUCATION

Continued

We share good news stories through our regular 'Flourish' newsletter mailing to schools, and on the diocesan website. Examples from 2024 include:

- Pupil Chaplains at Torre Church of England Academy – [read the full news story here.](#)
- St Cuthbert Mayne students visited Shallowford Farm, a Christian Charitable Trust – [find out more here.](#)
- Children and young people involved with the Bishop of Exeter's Enthronement Day – [read the full story here.](#)
- Church Mentors help students and families to flourish at Chulmleigh Secondary School – [find out more here.](#)
- Choir Church: Developing Musical Excellence and Building Relationships – [find out more here.](#)

We continue to work closely with system leaders from the Department of Education, Local Authorities and the National Society for Education (Church of England's Education Office), and with our 134 schools, 15 academy trusts, and 15 federations. We are privileged to work with leaders, including those in governance, who serve with great integrity and passion to improve the opportunities and outcomes for our children, young people and their families, and seek to enable the flourishing of all.



FINANCE

Neil Williams, Director of Finance

Every year, it seems I talk about the challenges, but this is the financial reality that we are all currently facing. As the treasurer for my parish, I am all too aware of these challenges, both at the local and diocesan level across our church.

The final position on the Common Fund for 2023, was that we received 93.9% of the amount we requested, down from 95.5% in 2022. This was a shortfall of around £550,000. The forecast for 2024 is showing a continuing fall in the level of contributions being received, with a projected outturn of 92%, a shortfall of £725,000.

The financial out-turn for 2023, excluding the sale of surplus properties, was a deficit of £2m, which is not sustainable. The budget for 2024 has a similar underlying projected deficit, and we will again be relying on the sale of surplus property to cover this shortfall. Diocesan Synod has approved action in relation to the 2025 budget to reduce the deficit to just under £1m and this will allow us time to develop a sustainable longer term plan, working together with our parishes and the National Church.

Following the retirement of Bishop Robert in 2024, and the appointment of Bishop Mike, our key focus in 2025 will be on our Vision & Strategy and the development of Mission, People and Finance Plans to enable us to apply for additional funding support from the Church Commissioners for the period from 2026. Achieving a sustainable budget is imperative and securing additional funding is critical to avoid making further reductions in both clergy and staff. We need to shape our budget plans around the Vision & Strategy.



FINANCE

Continued

The Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) also continues to grow, with 62% of our parishes now registered, receiving £4m in gifts during the last 12 months. In late 2024, the Bishop's Diocesan Council approved our Giving Strategy for the period 2025 - 2027, which will focus on 7 key areas: Education and teaching on generosity, Materials to support stewardship and giving, Common Fund materials, Digital Giving, PGS, Gifts in Wills and Fundraising & Grants.

The privilege of my role is to work very closely with, and provide support to, our fantastic group of parish treasurers - we are so grateful for all that you do. The PCC treasurer training sessions we run each year are a real highlight. I must also say a huge 'thank you' for the work that our Deanery Treasurers do locally - we could not manage without you.

We must remain confident in the hope given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ, through his death and resurrection. As Paul says in his letter to the Philippians 4:19 - And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.



MISSION RESOURCES

Brigit Kiyaga, Mission Resources Adviser

In the past year, our team has been actively supporting parishes across the Diocese, particularly those involved in the digital giving roll-out launched in October 2023. Over one year, £133K in contactless donations was raised through these devices to support the local church. While digital giving has seen success, connectivity challenges remain a concern, especially in rural areas, and our team has worked closely with churches to identify and address these issues wherever possible. We have supported the Give 2 Go Green initiative, a match funding grant to help churches and church halls install measures that reduce their carbon emissions, hosted the Meet the Funders event whereby representatives of our churches could meet with grant funding bodies, like the Joseph Rank Trust, the Benefact Trust and the National Churches Trust and developed **guidance** for fundraising to assist churches embarking in this vital aspect of ministry. Please save the date for this year's Meet the Funders event on Thursday, the 26th of June, in Exeter (details will follow in R&S). An important piece of work has been the development of the Giving Strategy 2025-2028, which underpins our Diocese's commitment to growing a generous culture and, more specifically, summarises the key priorities of the Mission Resources team. With that in mind, we have a lot to look forward to in this new year, including the launch of the Cornerstone platform, designed to help churches grow generosity and giving in their communities and churches, and a mini digital roll-out in the autumn.

We remain committed to supporting parishes through various events, (PCC) meetings and resources.

Please get in touch with us at mission.resources@exeter.anglican.org if there is anything we can help you with.



Eco Church Awards
2024



Littleham Church
takes part in Give to
Go Green scheme



Bishop Jackie plants at
tree at Cranbrook School

NET ZERO AND CREATION CARE

Sarah Charker, Creation Care Engagement Officer

2024 was a busy year, Sophie our Net Zero Carbon Officer (NZCO) left in May to join the national team and, after a pause of a few months, we ended the year with advertising for a new NZCO who I hope will be in post by the time you read this. Our volunteer Biodiversity Advisors have had a busy year drawing ever more churches into our Living Churchyards project, increasingly churches are realising the huge value that their churchyards have for nature and the co-benefits this brings for the community. Staff, clergy and volunteers across the diocese continue to work hard to embed the 5th Mark of Mission, to Care for Creation, in our activities.

In February 2024 General Synod passed the Land and Nature Motion, this adds strength to the Net Zero 2030 goal and encourages churches to recognise and take joint action on the climate and biodiversity crises. Many churches have responded by registering for Eco Church and increasing their award level. This has been the biggest year to date for Eco Church in the diocese and we hope to smash this record again in 2025.



NET ZERO AND CREATION CARE

Continued

Imogen in the Church Buildings Team has been co-ordinating church energy audits, we now have a total of 72 churches who have made use of our 50% subsidy – this is continuing into 2025 and will benefit many more churches. The audits provide churches with a clear pathway to net zero including quick win actions and advice on low carbon heating. Many churches have gone on to successfully apply for net zero funding towards the cost of the works needed. Two grants schemes that have been particularly successful are the Give to Go Green (G2GG) scheme and the Quick Wins grants. The Quick Wins funding has now all been allocated to parishes enabling many smaller projects. The G2GG scheme has been particularly effective in 2024 bringing in over £280,000 to our parishes from a combination of church fundraising then match funded by the Church of England. The brilliant and unexpected effect of the G2GG programme has been the realisation that it's an incredible tool for mission. The eco themed fundraising events and publicity for carbon reducing projects in churches has come to the attention of people in the community who have never engaged with the church before. G2GG is continuing into 2025 and we anticipate many more churches benefitting from this funding. Creation Care is an exciting, evolving, and deeply missional area of work. Please do speak to Sarah if you'd like to find out more about what is planned for 2025.



PEOPLE

John Nosowski, People Officer

The People Services Team has had a successful year, continuing to adapt to a rapidly changing work environment whilst striving to provide the best possible working experience for all employees. The team has remained focused on supporting and enhancing the workplace, ensuring it meets the evolving needs of the workforce. Key achievements include a successful recruitment season in a challenging labour market, the implementation of an updated Performance and Development Review process, an enhanced wellbeing offering for employees featuring events aligned with our new wellbeing calendar, strategic support for the successful diocesan Safeguarding Audit and ongoing bespoke support for individuals and parishes as required.

Our work is organised into five key areas, which are outlined in turn below, with ongoing plans to build on these successes in the coming year.

Appointing People

In 2024, seven new appointments were made to the EDBF, largely to replace retired colleagues or where national funding has been received. Despite the ongoing challenges in the national recruitment environment, EDBF successfully attracted strong candidates benefiting from the broader offerings available within the organisation (such as flexible working) which has become well-established and highly valued by employees.

Although the labour market remains competitive, EDBF continues to compete successfully with larger organisations. These challenges are expected to persist into 2025 and it will need to maintain an innovative approach in our recruitment strategy. Furthermore, EDBF continues to attract a pool of applicants that is more diverse than the wider Devon population. In 2025, we plan to further enhance our recruitment strategies by rolling out new resources and guidance to support parishes in recruiting clergy, ensuring their processes are safe and attract the best possible candidates to the roles.

PEOPLE

Continued

Developing People

In 2024, the People Services Team introduced an updated system for Performance Development Reviews, incorporating feedback from the previous year. Training was conducted in the spring, followed by a successful launch in April. The team then carried out an analysis of training needs based on the review results, which will help inform future planning and improvements in the development process.

All clergy policies, including the clergy handbook, were comprehensively reviewed and updated. Work Experience Guidance was developed ahead of our first work experience placement and subsequently refined for future years. Additionally, a new Carer's Policy and a Volunteer Policy were prepared and approved during the year.

Strategic support was provided for the ongoing reorganisation of churches in Plymouth and materials were developed to support the Clergy Recruitment process which will be rolled out in the coming year. These initiatives will continue to enhance our support for clergy and employees with further improvements planned for 2025.

Engaging People

Individual clergy and EDBF employees have received support for their Occupational Health needs, with guidance throughout the process to ensure the best possible outcomes and working experience. A salary benchmarking exercise was conducted for certain roles within the EDBF and a range of flexible working patterns were approved, positively impacting work-life balance for employees.

Staff demographic data was prepared and analysed for the INEQE Safeguarding Audit in September, further demonstrating our commitment to safeguarding and enhancing our workplace. We continue to raise awareness of and signpost additional support where necessary.

Looking ahead, we will continue to build on these initiatives, exploring further opportunities to enhance support for ministers and employees and maintain a positive working environment. Our commitment to providing an exceptional working experience for all ministers and employees remains unwavering.

Culture

The People Team has continued to uphold its commitment to the agreed diocesan Growth values in every interaction with clergy and employees. The People Services Team has provided comprehensive support to clergy and parishes throughout the year on a variety of employment and policy matters, addressing issues such as the provision of contracts, support for employees during ill health, guidance on safer recruitment and right to work checks and the positive resolution of conflicts within teams. They have also maintained an increased level of support and advice for the Archdeacons and Bishops, addressing a diverse range of issues across the diocese. Feedback has been positive, with support provided promptly at the point of need and skills and processes shared at the parish level to empower local churches to flourish.



PEOPLE

Continued

Wellbeing

In 2024, we reaffirmed our commitment to employee wellbeing by renewing our Mindful Employer Charter with the NHS. We also reviewed and renewed our Employee and Clergy Health Plan, ensuring continued support and signposting for all clergy and employees. A series of events, aligned with key dates on our new Wellbeing Calendar, provided employees with opportunities to reflect on their own wellbeing, as well as that of their colleagues and access support as needed.

Men's Health Week, National Walking Month and World Mental Health Week were highlighted as part of our efforts to promote a healthy and positive work environment, with many employees participating in our weekly walks, engaging positively with resources and providing feedback on how helpful they had been for themselves, their colleagues or their families.

Looking ahead, we plan to build on these initiatives with the launch of an electronic version of the wellbeing calendar and associated events, informed by feedback from our employee Pulse Survey. Furthermore, insights from the Survey will shape out broader efforts to develop a culture of wellbeing across the diocese, based around the adoption of our new Employee Wellbeing Strategy in 2024.



**Enthronement Day
Morning Pilgrimage
St Peter and Mary
Magdalene Church,
Barnstaple**

PROPERTY

Graham Davies, Director of Property

The property team principally has oversight of vicarages, church schools and diocesan glebe land. There are in excess of 300 clergy houses across the diocese which require a significant amount of general repair, servicing and maintenance to ensure that the houses are kept in sound condition. Like churches, the houses have quinquennial inspections from which a scheme of planned work follows and in excess of 50 projects were completed in 2024. In addition, an improvement scheme is undertaken at a vicarage prior to a priest taking occupation and there have been 33 such projects this year. Since 2010, we have achieved a 22% reduction in the annual energy use across all of the vicarages and this year reductions were achieved through the replacement of a further five old oil-fired boilers with air source heat pumps along with PV panels, as well as the further upgrading of insulation.

There continues to be some budget for 2025 to continue move clergy housing closer towards the net carbon zero target, but significant further funding will need to be allocated in due course to fully achieve this aim. We continue to encourage use of gas and electricity being supplied via an approved green tariff, as this remains the simplest way to making the greatest impact. Seven houses were sold to assist towards offsetting the budget deficit.

We continue to rent out clergy homes where not required by clergy, and in so doing achieve a rental income of £1.2M per annum.



Bittadon Church,
North Devon

PROPERTY

Continued

Glebe land is managed by a glebe agent but with strategic and development opportunities being overseen in tandem with the agent. A small number of glebe parcels have been sold where the return on the glebe was lower than other asset classes, and a higher return through development was not an option. Maximising the receipts from the glebe is a high priority and with recent changes in planning policies there are further opportunities arising which are being explored. In 2024, Promotion Agreements for development were entered into on two glebe holdings so promoters are now taking forward these which have the potential to significantly contribute to diocesan funds.

There were 26 building projects undertaken at our church schools, to maintain and improve the school estate. The education surveyor, through the trading subsidiary EDPS, charges fees for the professional services provided and the income in 2024 was c£82,000. We also provide general building related support to church schools and oversee the land related matters when maintained church schools transfer to academy status. This year there have been 5 academy conversions. We have also been working with the Department for Education in relation to the rebuilding of two church schools in the diocese for which funding was obtained in 2023.



SAFEGUARDING

Costa Nassaris, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser

This year we were audited by an external independent organisation called Ineqe, who are renowned for their safeguarding expertise. The review found many examples of good safeguarding practice but also highlighted areas where the diocese could improve. Whilst we have made significant progress in safeguarding over the last few years there is no room for complacency. The audit was concerned about the capacity of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and I am pleased to say that Bishop Mike, and the senior leaders, have agreed to an additional caseworker being recruited. The other recommendations will be included in an Action Plan that will guide changes to our local arrangements.

There has been much public interest in Church safeguarding following the Makin report and resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. This has also led to an increase in concerns being reported to our team. We currently receive around 70 new concerns each month. Many of these relate to non-recent incidents, and many of the more current concerns relate to concerns about the community and do not involve Church Officers. The most common concerns relate to Sexual Abuse and Domestic Abuse.

We are now using the new National Safeguarding Case Management System. All of our open cases are on the new system and we plan to migrate data about closed cases from our old database to the new one in the New Year.

The New Year also saw publication of the new Learning and Development Framework, which should enable us to deliver more training in person, to complement the Leadership Pathway training delivered online. The draft guidance on Managing Allegations was approved by General Synod in February. The General Synod debated the response to the Jay Report and decided on a future model for safeguarding in the Church, which places greater emphasis on independence whilst keeping diocesan safeguarding teams internal to the organisation.



VOCATIONS

Rev'd John Fisher, Diocesan Director of Ordinands

The Vocations Development Officer and the Diocesan Director of Ordinands (DDO), with their teams, work to foster and encourage those sensing a call to serve God in the authorised lay and ordained ministries.

Two vocations enquiry events were held on Zoom, offering an opportunity for those in the early stages of exploring vocation to hear from those in ministry and consider their own next steps. There was also a vocations event held in the Great Hall with drinks and nibbles which proved very popular. A number of candidates have subsequently connected with the vocations team to explore further from different church traditions and backgrounds.

Rev'd Hannah Mears, Vocations Development Officer has taken up an additional role as Director of Lay Ministry Training at SWMTC. She spoke with this year's FiCM cohort about calling and vocational opportunities and taught about vocations and young people on the spiritual direction course. She also represented the diocese at a South West vocations day held at Trinity College, Bristol which was led the national vocations lead.

The Diocese is co-ordinating the planning and delivery of a vocations event in Sept 2025 called "Step Forward South West" This event will focus on encouraging vocations in young people aged 18-30 and sees 5 dioceses working together with support from the National Vocations Team, mirroring a similar event in the North East.



Ordination of Priests
St Matt's Church, Exeter



Ordination of Deacons
2024



Ordination of Priests,
Ashburton

VOCATIONS

Continued

11 candidates were recommended for ordination training by Bishops Advisory Panels in the 2023–2024 academic year, having completed the two-stage discernment process. A further 3 candidates attended a Stage 1 carousel day with a view to doing Stage 2 in the next academic year. Numbers offering for ordination continue to be low, a picture repeated across other dioceses in the UK. We currently have 22 ordinands in training at theological college with 10 of these due to be ordained deacon in June 2025.

During the year the DDO office said goodbye in February to Lizzie Pridmore who had faithfully served the team administratively for 4 years and left to pursue other career options. Revd Susan Watson commenced in post as Vocations and Initial Formation Officer, a new full time post supporting both the DDO office and the curate training administration. Revd Sue Rose (retired DDO of Bath & Wells Diocese) joined the ADDO team in December.

The ordination of deacons took place at Petertide with 11 new deacons ordained at Exeter Cathedral on Saturday 29th June By the Bishop of Crediton, Rt Revd Jackie Searle. A further deacon was ordained by the Bishop of Oswestry at St Michael's, Heavitree on Sunday 30 June. The pre-ordination retreat was held at The Society of Mary and Marth, Sheldon, led by the Reverend Michael Lloyd, Principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.

The priests ordinations were held at various locations in the diocese over the weekend of 22/23 June and 13 were ordained, the ordination retreat at Sheldon being led by the Rt Revd Tricia Hillas (now Bishop of Sodor and Man). A further candidate was ordained in December making the total 14.

VOCATIONS

Tabulated Statistics for 2024

Deacons Ordained in 2024

	Male	Female	Total
Distinctive Deacons	-	1	1
Self-Supporting	1	2	3
Stipendiary	4	4	8
Total	5	10	12

Priests ordained in 2024

	Male	Female	Total
Self-Supporting	-	4	4
Stipendiary	6	3	10
Total	6	7	14

Ordinands starting training in 2024:

Age	Male	Female	Total
31 and under	-	1	1
32-39	-	-	-
40-54	1	4	5
55 and over	1	4	5
Total	2	9	11



LICENSED LAY MINISTRY

Hannah Cross, Licensed Lay Ministers Officer

There are almost 200 Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs) across the diocese; community theologians ministering in churches but also in schools, residential and care homes, further and higher education, hospitals and in the police force. Between them each year, thousands of sermons are preached and services led but there is so much more that they contribute to the lives of our churches; from Bible studies to pastoral care, chaplaincy to the tech rota, Open the Book to Diocesan and General Synods, there is an LLM there!

This year, the Venerable Andrew Beane stepped down as LLM Warden. Over the last five years he had tirelessly championed licensed lay ministry in this diocese and we are grateful for his wisdom and guidance. Assistant Warden, Carol Price, has generously taken on much of the role while we discern the way forward.

In February, the LLM conference was a joyful mixture of mission and community with talks from Dr Tim Gibson from the University of the West of England and Paul Friend, Director of South West Youth Ministries alongside walks and wild swimming.



LICENSED LAY MINISTRY

Continued

In July we celebrated the LLMs of the Totnes Archdeaconry with a service of relicensing and renewal in Ipplepen. In October LLMs gathered for ministry development with the Revd David Runcorn followed by the annual service of Admission and Licensing in the Cathedral where we welcomed eight new LLMs. These, with the addition of the enthronement of Bishop Mike in November, have been wonderful opportunities for fellowship and learning.

Amazingly, across the year we marked milestones for five LLMs who, between them, have amassed over 250 years of ministry. For all the sermons prepared, sermons led, and prayers offered, we give thanks.



Foundations course,
Barnstaple cohort

LAY DISCIPLESHIP

Dr Jon Curtis, Lay Discipleship Project Manager

This year has been one of significant changes in the Lay Learning of the Diocese. The Foundations in Christian Ministry course has come in-house, and has been rewritten and rearranged to change how it is delivered to the people of Devon.

Previously, the course was run over 7 Saturdays in Exeter. We invited tutors to volunteer in their region, so that we could offer courses in Exeter, Barnstaple and Plymouth. By the summer, over 90 people will have completed the course thanks to this team of 30 volunteers. Particular thanks goes to them, and St Judes Plymouth and Holy Trinity Barnstaple.

The course itself (now renamed Foundations) involves both online study and inperson tutorials. Thus, the inperson requirements are less. Along with the varied locations, we're seeing a younger and more diverse group of learners in each place.

We are delighted with how this work is going so far, and hope that the potential LLMs, Ordinands and disciples who attend find it valuable, and useful for their further study.



RURAL MINISTRY

The Archdeacon of Barnstaple, the Venerable Verena Breed

Another exciting year for Rural Mission & Ministry (RMM). We have appointed the Rev'd Preb Rosie Austin as our Rural Church Officer (RCO). Rosie brings a lot of experience as Rector of the Shirwell Mission Community in North Devon; she is also a member of General Synod and sits on the Rural Interest Group on General Synod (RIGGS).

The appointment of a third-year curate enables Rosie to give two days a week to this important role, which in turn allows us to directly support rural ministers by offering them the chance to attend either the initial "Rural Ministry Course" or "Germinate Leadership", depending on their experience with course fees being paid for from the rural budget.

Projects currently being led by the new RCO include:

- Targeted help/support for our rural MCs
- Building up of a peer support network
- Building up of a Rural Steering Group

In our rural MCs we have seen some excellent appointments across the diocese, clergy with a deep understanding of and heart for RMM who are making a real difference.

Our rural churches continue to be at the very heart of our Mission & Ministry. There is no doubt, that the pattern of ministry in rural areas will need to change, and we are working with our rural MCs towards sustainable forms of ministry. The Auxiliary Ordination Pathway (AOP) will greatly contribute to RMM.

Our RMM comes under the umbrella of the 'Growing the Rural Church' brand which is well established and recognised. The excellent online resources will be kept up-to-date and accessible.

We shall continue to prayerfully discern God's vision for the RMM, to grow and serve our rural communities with joy.



ANNA CHAPLAINCY

Annie Jefferies, Anna Chaplaincy Co-Ordinator

This continues to be an ecumenical ministry which is responding well to the needs of an ever-increasing number of elderly people across Devon. As people are living longer, many folk are developing degrees of dementia which requires more involvement from Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends, as sustaining the spiritual needs of these elderly people requires more time and engagement with carers and family members.

Fortunately in 2024 there have been a further 45 Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends commissioned by the Diocese, but most of the volunteers are retired and it is really important to keep discerning suitable people in local communities, who have a heart for working with the elderly, have well developed listening skills and are team players who will participate in the work of local ministry teams. People are supported wherever they live, in sheltered accommodation, their own home and in local care homes. More care homes are requesting regular spiritual support for their range of residents and Anna Chaplains are becoming a valuable resource, being able to offer often more time than local clergy incumbents, to walk alongside residents as earthly journeys moves gradually to their end.

Anyone who feels drawn to this supportive work, should talk to their local incumbent or email Annie Jefferies, who will explain more about the role: annie.jefferies@btinternet.com



DEVON CHURCH WEDDINGS

Grace Stanhope, Communications and Engagement Officer: Website, Marketing and Publications

In February and October 2024, we attended the Wedding Extravaganza fair at Westpoint, Exeter. These were wonderful opportunities to meet with couples and their families who are planning their special day. Through attending these fairs, we have realised that a friendly conversation at can be the start of a lasting church relationship with an engaged couple and their wider family. The conversations can often lead to discussions about baptism, funerals and everything in between. We are thankful for our volunteers who attend the fairs, and champion all things Devon Church Weddings.

We regularly loaned our Devon Church Weddings 'kit' to churches which are attending or hosting local wedding fairs. The kit includes leaflets and booklets for couples to find out about getting married in their local Anglican church, Devon Church Weddings t-shirts, pull-up banners, and goody bags to for couples planning their special day. It has been really encouraging to see so many churches borrowing the kit for various wedding fairs and events, helping to spread the word across Devon about the beauty of church weddings with couples and their families. If you would like to borrow the kit, please email: devonchurchweddings@exeter.anglican.org

In 2024 we also created a Devon Church Weddings newsletter. This newsletter has been designed for couples who are considering or planning on getting married in a Devon Church, and includes helpful advice, guidance, and resources. We also focused on sharing stories from real church weddings in Devon, posting them onto our Devon Church Weddings website and in our newsletter. We hope that this will show couples how special a church wedding can be, through images, videos and interviews from brides and grooms. We would welcome ideas and contributions to the project, please email: devonchurchweddingsexeter.anglican.org



Transforming
Plymouth Together
team

TRANSFORMING PLYMOUTH TOGETHER

Beth Pavelle, Transforming Plymouth Together Project Support

King's Award for Voluntary Service

Transforming Plymouth Together were thrilled to receive the King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS) in 2024. This prestigious recognition, equivalent to an MBE, is a testament to the hard work of our volunteers and supporters. Together, we are making a real difference in addressing poverty and inequality in Plymouth!

Feast of Fun

In collaboration with Meals and More, Transforming Plymouth Together funded over a dozen churches and organizations to provide more than 2,000 meals to families in Plymouth. These meals aimed to support children within their communities who are vulnerable to holiday hunger. The initiative included a 'Big Day Out' to Pennywell and a 'Big Christmas Party.'

The funding not only provided nutritious meals but also offered fun activities such as bouncy castles and craft events.

Christmas Hampers

This year, we distributed 120 Christmas Hampers in partnership with Argyle Community Trust. These hampers were provided to families who might otherwise struggle to afford a festive meal during the holiday season.



TRANSFORMING PLYMOUTH TOGETHER

Continued

Re:Sourced

TPT hosted a series of termly events for church leaders and their teams, aimed at equipping churches and communities to better understand and support individuals facing deprivation and poverty. Topics covered this year included Disability Access and Inclusion, Growing Good, and becoming Trauma-Informed Communities.

Hygiene Hub

This year, we have been focusing on how best to address hygiene poverty, which is affecting many households in Plymouth.

The Plymouth Hygiene Hub was established to offer a range of hygiene products in exchange for a small membership contribution. Initially, the Hub has prioritized oral hygiene advice and products, in response to the urgent need highlighted in the 'Plymouth Report 2023.' The report revealed a worrying trend of poor dental health among children, with 350 children admitted to hospital in 2022 for tooth extractions under general anaesthesia due to severe tooth decay.

We are deeply grateful to Peninsula Dental Social Enterprise for their support and partnership in this initiative. Their Dental Outreach Team trained our Hygiene Hub volunteers to provide accurate advice to service users.

Collaboration has been the cornerstone of this project, which came to fruition through the collective efforts of four city-centre churches: All Nations, St Andrews, St Peter's, and Vineyard.



Transforming Plymouth
Together Dementia-
Friendly Carol Service

TRANSFORMING PLYMOUTH TOGETHER

Continued

Dementia-Friendly Carol Service

Our Dementia-Friendly Carol Service was a joyful and connecting event, bringing the community together in celebration. The service was tailored for those with dementia or sensory needs, offering a relaxed format with consideration given to the needs of attendees.

We were honoured to have Ian Sheriff from the Plymouth Dementia Action Alliance and David Fitzgerald share readings. Special thanks to Salisbury Road Co-Op for generously providing a wide selection of delicious refreshments. We also wish to express our heartfelt gratitude to Debbie Bending of Memory Matters for her generous donation of 'fiddle-muffs.'

The service featured a talk by The Rt. Revd. James Grier, Bishop of Plymouth and Chair of Trustees, and a beautiful performance of two Christmas carols by the Salisbury Road Primary School Choir.

Leadership Change

In 2024, we said goodbye with deep gratitude to Scott Shackleton. We are excited to announce that Laura Fraser Crews was appointed as our new Lead Officer, beginning in the last week of 2024. Laura has worked for charities in Plymouth since 2002 and brings extensive experience in addressing inequalities and poverty in the city.



EXETER CATHEDRAL

The Very Reverend Jonathan Greener, Dean of Exeter Cathedral

2024, although a challenging year for both Church and nation, has given us plenty to celebrate at Exeter Cathedral.

We were delighted in November to enthrone our new bishop, and look forward to working with Bishop Mike, and supporting his ministry and mission, in the coming years.

Our building is being gradually transformed and renewed: with underfloor heating and a beautiful new Devon marble floor laid in the quire in time for Easter, and our new Friends' Cloister Gallery opened on the day of the Enthronement: bigger and better and more functional than any of us had dared to hope. And it gives access to the indoor cloister loos (a huge improvement on the tired WCs off the cloister garden), the new Chapter House Refectory, and our lovely new Cathedral Shop. The works continue into 2025, but seeing what has been achieved to date bolsters our enthusiasm to carry on.

Exeter Cathedral's junior church, the Cloister Club, has continued to grow this year, with more children and families week by week; and, inspired by a visit from a group of young professionals from our Bayeux-Lisieux link, we have also started a group for Young Adults.

We finished 2024 with our biggest ever Christmas Market – challenging at times with the Green covered in temporary buildings and storms Bert and Darragh descending with gusto – but as popular as ever with both traders and visitors. And we were delighted to see our Christmas congregation numbers return to pre-Covid levels.

So, there is much to be hopeful for as we travel through 2025.



**Thank you for reading our 2024
Annual Report and for all you do
as part of God's mission in Devon.**

**Here's to growing in prayer,
making new disciples and serving
the people of Devon with joy
throughout 2025!**

**DIOCESE
OF EXETER**
THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
IN DEVON

