



THE DIOCESE OF
SHEFFIELD

Archdeacons' Visitation News

Dear Churchwardens

On behalf of Archdeacon Javaid and I, I am pleased to be writing to you to express my gratitude for your service as Churchwarden. The Churchwarden is at the heart of the mission and ministry of the church – a bold statement, and yet I am convinced it is true.

Let's take just one area for which you are responsible – buildings. Our buildings are not simply large bits of (admittedly sometimes problematic) fabric. They communicate to the outside world who and what the church is. As Churchwarden you have the task of viewing the church with the eye of the outsider. Are the notice boards aimed at the established church member, or do they tell a story to those who pass by? Does your building say, 'we don't really care if people come or not', or does it say, 'this is a place of welcome, hope and life'? I'm not naive, I know that many of our buildings can be hard to heat, maintain and finance. Some of our buildings won't survive and we must face that reality. However, they can also be evangelistic resources and visible signs of God's presence in communities. They are also one example of how the commitment of Churchwardens – your time, energy and passion – is at the very heart of the local church's mission. You, my dear Churchwarden, are at the heart of the local church and the local church is the hope of the world!



As such, we are here to serve and support you. As I write this, in late January, I am still relatively new to the Diocese and I have been hugely encouraged by the Diocesan Strategy and our commitment to be Renewed, Released and Rejuvenated. This strategy is about supporting you in your mission and ministry. In these pages you will read about the implementation of this strategy, as well as a small sample of how the Diocese can support you in your context.

I am looking forward to meeting new Churchwardens at the New Churchwarden's training in June and seeing you all at the Churchwarden's Conference in November. These are events designed specially to support you in your ministries and to thank you for your service, so please do make every effort to attend.

Finally, you can be assured of the prayers, blessings and gratitude of both myself and Archdeacon Javaid for all you do.

The Venerable David Gerrard

Archdeacon of Sheffield and Rotherham



Javaid Iqbal

Archdeacon of Doncaster



David Gerrard

Archdeacon of Sheffield
and Rotherham

The Safeguarding Team – Keeping Everyone Safe

Safeguarding is at the heart of our Christian faith, and we are committed to offering a safer environment for all.

This involves promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, working to make our churches safer spaces in order to prevent abuse occurring, seeking to protect those who are at risk of being abused, responding well to those who have been abused and taking care to identify those who present a risk to others offering support to take steps to mitigate that risk.

The Safeguarding Team are here to support you with all your safeguarding needs. We are here to respond to specific concerns regarding individuals and more general questions about safe practice. We can help you ensure all your volunteers are appropriately and safely recruited to their roles, supporting with DBS checks and training needs. The Diocese has purchased the parish dashboard and the parish hub to support safeguarding in parishes across the Diocese and we can support you to use those resources more effectively.

Each PCC is required to appoint a Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to support the parish in the implementation of good safeguarding practice. The Safeguarding Team seeks to support all PSOs in their roles. We run an annual networking day and are beginning to establish regular drop-in sessions. These are all opportunities for PSOs across the Diocese to come together with Diocesan staff to support each other and celebrate the work they do. Please encourage your PSO to get involved.

If you want to know more, or have questions contact:

 safeguarding@sheffield.anglican.org

Sian Checkley

Head of Safeguarding



Revitalisation Strategy Update

It was great to see many of you in your deaneries in 2025 when I had the opportunity to share with you our refreshed strategy and what the National Church award means for each deanery; as well as the role we all have to play in the revitalisation of the diocese.

During 2026 we will have a strong focus on impact and evaluation. We've got a key independent evaluation of our progress this year and I hope that will help us to further refine our current and planned work. Once we've received all the Statistics for Mission returns from parishes, we will share a report with key findings on progress on the Renewed Released Rejuvenated strategy for 2018-2025.

As you'd expect following a successful funding application in 2025, the focus for 2026 is to deliver what we said we would! So far, we have been laying the foundations with project set-up and recruiting into roles. We have recruited to 19 roles so far, primarily in parish or parish facing. We have completed some changes to role descriptions of colleagues in the Central Support Team to ensure their roles are aligned with our next steps as a diocese, and two new church grafts to help revitalise parishes have started.

Do keep an eye out for our termly strategy update mailing for all the latest news on progress and things to pray for. There is much to celebrate and look forward to.

Alex Shilkoff

Strategic Programme Director



Removing Barriers – The Disability Project



As part of the Church of England's commitment to remove barriers for disabled people to fully belong and participate in the life, ministry and mission of the church, the Disability Project was set up to help churches become more accessible and welcoming. Initiatives have included:

- A national scheme for disability signage, found here <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/barrier-free-belonging/accessibility-icons>
- Working with Renew Wellbeing to establish pilot wellbeing spaces in seven dioceses
- A grants scheme for parishes to apply for funding to provide facilities and/or resources to support Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent inclusion and belonging
- A leadership development programme for Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent clergy and lay ministers

A number of churches and individuals in Sheffield Diocese have already benefitted from the project, and the project will receive a further £5 million over the next three years.

As the Bishop's Adviser for Disability, I represent the Diocese on the Diocesan Disability Advisers National Network, and the main areas of my role are:

- A link in the diocese for clergy and laity, signposting and providing links to resources.
- To work with others to support, enable and promote full inclusion and participation for people with disabilities.
- To highlight the contribution that people with disabilities make to the life of the Church and to encourage active theological and spiritual reflection on disability.

Plans are in place this year to provide more resources to equip churches to take practical action toward greater accessibility.

For more information and contact details visit

🌐 <https://www.sheffield.anglican.org/support/for-churches/welcome-belonging/disability-friendly-church>

Revd Christine Herbert
Diocesan Disability Adviser



Our Grafting story



Over the last few years, the Diocese of Sheffield has been in the process of a Rejuvenation of its parishes. This has involved starting New Congregations, sending revitalising grafts and planting new churches from scratch. A revitalising graft is when one church community sends some folk to join another church to bring support, help and new life.

Grafting is becoming a usual thing in our Diocese and is gaining momentum. There were five grafts between 2011 and 2018, eight grafts between 2018 and the end of 2025, and hopefully there will be a further nine up to June 2031. We know that this process of grafting works. Statistics suggest that between 2011 and 2024, approximately 550 people have joined the churches which have received a graft, with a 55% adults / 45% under 18s split.

Three of our recent grafts have been funded by the National Church through SMMIB and in each case a sending church sent a curate with a team; St Thomas Crookes to St John's Park, St Thomas Philadelphia to St James and St Christopher's Shiregreen, and All Saints Ecclesall to St Peter's and St Oswald's Abbeydale and Millhouses. Wadsley are currently in the process of grafting to St Nicholas Bradfield, again funded by SMMIB.

The grafting story in our Diocese has evolved over the last twenty years or so. While at the beginning, the impetus came largely from the parishes themselves, Bishop Pete has been directly encouraging grafting. Now as a whole diocese, we are seeking churches who wish to receive a graft and working closely with those who want to send a graft.

If you want to know more contact

✉ john.marsh@sheffield.anglican.org

Revd Dr John Marsh

Mission Development Adviser – Rejuvenated



Mission Area Support (MAS) Team Phase 2

We are excited to be able to continue to support the parishes in the Diocese of Sheffield. Our support will continue focus on equipping PCCs and Clergy and offering support in the three main areas of Buildings, Finance and Governance.



Thankfully due to the generosity of the Church Commissioners through our SMMIB award, we have been able to change some roles in the team to help with the things that parishes have told us are important to them. We have recruited a Grants Officer who will work with parishes to identify large grants to support

their mission and ministry; a Common Fund Project Lead to run the Common Fund process more smoothly and have more time to talk through Common Fund with parishes; and Treasurer Support Officers are now Financial Sustainability Officers.

Financial Sustainability Officers will continue to be available to support parishes to improve financial compliance, budgets and cash flow, also now offering support and skills in sustainability planning, income generation, and identifying small grant pots. These changes will help us to build on the work already accomplished and continue to support our parishes to have good practical foundations for mission in place. The roles are currently funded to the end of 2028, hopefully with an extension to 2031. So, this resource won't be available indefinitely. Please do get in touch with us for support and see the range of time-saving resources here

🌐 <https://www.sheffield.anglican.org/support/for-churches/generosity-finance/mission-area-support/>

We are excited to continue to work with you all!

Libby Culmer

Mission Area Support Team Leader

Saint Vincent's, Doncaster – Planting Roots & New Shoots

After many months of prayer, discernment, and preparation (getting the building ready, finding a team, meeting people etc) we felt totally blessed to finally open the doors of Saint Vincent's Mission Doncaster last September.

To start, we really couldn't anticipate who, if anyone, would be there but through God's grace people started to come and we have been humbled to see a small community start to grow in both numbers and faith. The building is on Priory Walk in Doncaster and has a chapel (which is open for all to pray in), a shop (with gifts and books), and a meeting space.

It's been exciting to see a mixed-ecology pattern of weekday worship and evangelism develop, with something both in the mornings and afternoons alongside a time in the middle of the day to just be together and build community. Within the rhythm of worship there are currently two Holy Communion services (one traditional and one contemporary) as well as other prayer services.



There is also a Bible study and a catechism course called Faith Foundations. In addition to the regular patterns, we have also been massively blessed to have done things such as: a baptism service for three adults, start a CAP Job Club, have Christian Doncaster Rovers players give testimonies, a praise night, and evangelistic giveaways for Halloween and Christmas.

The next few years will hold a number of challenges as we seek to share the Good News of Jesus, grow a worshipping community, develop leaders, and become financially self-sustaining. This is an exciting journey though and we know that God can do all things. Please pray for us!

Revd Canon Adam Priestley

Mission Priest, Saint Vincent's Mission Doncaster



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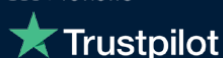
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