

**QUESTION TIME**

**1. Mr Ian Peake (Shrewsbury) has asked:**

We've all heard of churches where the church mice outnumber the congregation and PCC members wonder out loud if ten churches might just a bit too much for one member of the clergy. However, I have never heard anyone say what is the procedure for closing a church. Who needs to be consulted? How long it takes? Does the building need to be de-commissioned and the graves moved before the estate agents move in? Does there need to be a special resolution signed by the King?

Could I take advantage of this opportunity to satisfy my curiosity and formally ask; what is the procedure for closing a church?

***The Diocesan Pastoral Officer has replied:***

Details about the church closure process can be found in the [Buildings for Mission: a Strategic Toolkit](#) section on the diocesan website, in particular [module 3](#). From this page you will be able to download the following useful resources which help to guide you through the different stages of the church closure process.

- a) <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/buildings-for-mission/closing-consecrated-church-buildings.php>
- b) [www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/what\\_happens\\_when\\_a\\_church\\_building\\_closes-pamphlet\\_2019\\_version.pdf](http://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/what_happens_when_a_church_building_closes-pamphlet_2019_version.pdf)

For more detailed info please contact your Archdeacon or [Mrs Clare Beavon](#) (Diocesan Pastoral Officer).

**2. Mr Phil Dooley (Wolverhampton) has asked:**

As a member of Diocesan Synod, I am occasionally asked that well known comedy line question:

“What have the Romans ever done for us”? loosely translated as what does the diocese do for the parish other than take money off us? As a loyal member I point out what the diocese does for parishes. Recently my real trump card has been the payment of bookkeeping / account handling fees. Sadly, this card has been lost as the parish is now charged for the service as I suspect is the case for other parishes.

Given the current complexity of the parish treasurer role fewer people feel qualified to fill such posts and not many accountants live in U.P.A parishes! Can the decision to charge parishes be reviewed please?

***The Director of Finance has replied:***

I fully appreciate there are increasing demands on our wonderful volunteers across the Diocese, none more than the demands and complexities of the ever-changing accounting requirements. Centrally we continue to offer significant support to all treasurers and other officers in all different areas and not all financial – it can range from charity

registration to Money Laundering issues with banks to fundraising and grants. We remain proud of the record of putting Parishes first and believe we still do that. Whilst we can still provide several additional services, for example centralised Gift Aid that brings in over £1.25M per annum to the Diocese and the associated Giving Direct at no additional costs.

We have been able to negotiate a deal with the software house where we provide free licences for the accounting software to well over half the parishes in the Diocese, this has helped many volunteers with yearend procedures, regular financial reports, production of accounts and returns of parish finance.

Simply due to the increased demands on bookkeeping (inputting), and with the reduction in central resources we have simply had to apply an extra cost to cover the additional resources incurred due to outsourcing. Whilst the number is increasing and significant as it is over 70 parishes that use the service, with the current resources there is simply not enough economies of scale to absorb the work within the current staffing and therefore had to apply a small charge. Whilst in your case there has been an increase all the services remain subsidised and in the case in hand by around 60%. With all those who are charged, it is reiterated the more that can be done locally the less we need to charge.

If the number increases and we can integrate it into the remaining staff, then as with Gift Aid we will be able to review the additional service costs, but at present we simply cannot do this, without it impacting on other services we provide. We also apply a small charge for the payroll service, which is again heavily subsidised, as with the Gift Aid software through Data Development.

Finally, I do not believe it is solely an issue for urban parishes, we do have some rural parishes who use the service and believe the larger issue is the recruitment of volunteers proving to be more difficult and should try to encourage all three strands of generosity, Time, Talents, and Tithing where possible.

### **3.     *The Revd Paul Kingman (Stone) has asked:***

The following civic churches in the Diocese are either currently vacant or are about to be: Bilston, Stoke, Wednesbury, West Bromwich, and Wolverhampton. How will the appointments to these churches be addressed by the Diocesan Strategy?

### ***The Bishop of Lichfield has replied:***

When a vacancy occurs in any benefice, it has been our practice since the pandemic to commission an informal Vacancy Assessment to be discussed by Bishop's Staff Meeting as part of undertaking any discernment process. We do not have an agreed category of 'civic churches', and it might be difficult to construct a definition of such parishes. However, community profile, historic significance and wider visibility are all factors fed into the Vacancy Assessment – alongside indices like financial sustainability, missional potential and social deprivation. The parishes mentioned are at various points in the journey of assessment and discernment.

**4.     *The Revd Tim Vasby-Burnie (Shrewsbury and Wrekin) has asked:***

What is the size of the Diocesan hardship fund and how much money was distributed from it in 2023 and to how many people?

***The Diocesan Secretary has replied:***

We did not have a specific hardship fund designated in the annual budget 2023.

When the energy crisis hit in 2022, we made a one-off provision of £16,500 to be made available to clergy who particularly needed help. This was allocated on the basis of Archdeacons' recommendations. 33 individuals benefitted from the initial tranche.

Immediately after we had done this the national church also responded by providing a lump sum to every diocese. Our share was £729,000. From this we set aside a further £100,000 for individuals. 127 received grants, making 160 individual grants in all. The remaining £629,000 was allocated to parishes using a simple formula. Nearly every parish in the Diocese benefitted from this. A detailed paper went to the Finance and Asset Management Committee (FAM) and Bishop's Council outlining our criteria and distribution. The national church did not make any further funding available in 2023.

**5.     *The Revd Neil Robbie (West Bromwich) has asked:***

What steps (or plans, if no steps have yet been taken) has the Diocesan Board of Education taken to encourage C of E schools to review, or prepare to review, their policies (and where applicable their adoption of *Valuing All God's Children*) in light of the Department of Education's draft guidance on gender-questioning children?

***The Diocesan Director of Education has replied:***

*Valuing All God's Children* was written in 2014 and updated in 2019, funded by the Department for Education. Therefore, use of *Valuing All God's Children* is routine in its use from the Education Team – a document we highlight to schools on a regular basis and encourage schools to have reference to.

The Department for Education's draft guidance on *Gender Questioning Children* was released in December 2023 and was open for consultation until 12/03/24. The Church of England Education Office is completing a formal response to the consultation.

During the consultation period, press releases and advice received highlighted that schools are likely to lose legal challenges made to implementation of the guidance. This has created uncertainty over what the final guidance will contain.

Following the final guidance document, there will be an update to *Valuing All God's Children* and the Diocesan Board of Education will then use this document and consider what steps we advise Church of England Schools to take.

Our current advice is to await the new guidance and to operate within the Equality Act 2010.

**6.     *The Revd Neil Robbie (West Bromwich) has asked:***

Can you provide a list of tendered services to which the diocese subscribes, the annual cost of each service and the last date they were reviewed and retendered?

*The Diocesan Secretary has replied:*

<b>Service</b>	<b>Annual Cost</b>	<b>Date of Appointment</b>
Auditors Hays McIntyre	£32,000	2023 for a second term
Chancellor	£18,939	Annual by statute
Registrar FBC Manby Bowdler	£125,900 + £31,200 for faculties	2008 but reviewed annually
IT provision Rydal	£111,324	2023
HR services Birmingham DBF	£16,560	2023
Parish support software programme. Data Developments	£16,800	2023
Glebe Agents Balfours	Commission rate on rental income	2022

**7.     *The Revd Preb Brian Leathers (Utttoxeter) has asked:***

Please can you provide totals for 2022 and 2023 of the numbers of clergy leaving the Diocese for other posts, the numbers arriving from other Dioceses, the number of new curates, and the number of clergy retiring.

*The Diocesan Data Manager has replied:*

2022

Leaving Diocese for other posts	4
Arriving from other dioceses	5
New curates	15
Retiring	12

2023

Leaving Diocese for other posts	14
Arriving from other dioceses	12
New curates	11
Retiring	25

The above figures include SSMs but don't include those where there was no new post but they didn't retire.

**8.     *The Revd Preb Brian Leathers (Utttoxeter) has asked:***

What proportions of Diocesan Clergy posts are currently full time, part time, non-stipendiary (and how many of those are house for duty).

***The Director of Finance has replied:***

Actual figures are always a moving feast - Using the data from the from the National People system at the end of February, the figures are as below:-

Full time	58% (165)
Curates	10% (29)
Total Full time	68%
Part time	6% (17)
NSM	26% (76 - 10 are HfD, 15 NSM curates and 51 NSM)

**9. *The Revd Preb Brian Leathers (Uttoxeter) has asked:***

Do our Bishops have a Ministry Development Review system? How often do these happen and who are the reviewers?

***The Bishop of Lichfield has replied:***

Area and suffragan bishops have been undergoing an MDR with me as diocesan bishop, on a roughly 3-year cycle. As diocesan bishop, my MDR is an ongoing process involving meetings with an external reviewer, mutual learning with a small group of other diocesan bishops, and an interview with the Archbishop of Canterbury on an overall 3-year cycle.

**10. *Mrs Amanda Robbie (General Synod) has asked:***

Please share a list of the twelve churches or BMOs with the largest attendance of children and young people in the Diocese by Usual Sunday Attendance and Worshipping Community with the most recent statistics available.

***The Mission Co-ordinator has replied:***

The most recent stats available are from 2022, as given below. 13 Churches are given by each measure as in each case the 12th largest total is tied.

<b>By Usual Sunday Attendance (Under 16s)+A4:E35</b>		
<b>Church</b>	<b>Deanery</b>	<b>U16 USA</b>
Oswestry Holy Trinity	Oswestry	43
Meole Brace Trinity Churches	Shrewsbury and Wrekin	36
Chase Terrace St John	Lichfield	28
Wolverhampton St Matthew	Wolverhampton	28
Telford Minster Church	Telford	25
Wolverhampton St Peter	Wolverhampton	22
Aldridge Parish Church	Walsall	21
Heath Town Holy Trinity	Wolverhampton	21
Abbey Hulton St John	Stoke on Trent	20
Castle Church	Stafford	20
Wellington All Saints	Telford	20
Newcastle St George	Newcastle	19
Walsall St Matthew	Walsall	19

<b>By Worshipping Community (Under 18s)</b>				
<b>Church</b>	<b>Deanery</b>	<b>WC 0-10</b>	<b>WC 11- 17</b>	<b>WC 0- 17</b>
Chase Terrace St John	<i>Lichfield</i>	195	25	220
Aldridge Parish Church	<i>Walsall</i>	101	69	170
Shifnal St Andrew	<i>Edgmond and Shifnal</i>	126	20	146
Trent Vale St John	<i>Stoke on Trent</i>	140	0	140
Telford Minster	<i>Telford</i>	78	44	122
Meole Brace Holy Trinity	<i>Shrewsbury and Wrekin</i>	80	35	115
Trentham Parish Church	<i>Stoke on Trent</i>	85	28	113
Alrewas All Saints	<i>Lichfield</i>	93	10	103
Oswestry Holy Trinity	<i>Oswestry</i>	52	44	96
Wolverhampton St Peter	<i>Wolverhampton</i>	46	50	96
Chell Heath Church of The Saviour	<i>Stoke on Trent</i>	90	0	90

**11. Mrs Amanda Robbie (General Synod) has asked:**

Please can you provide the statistical breakdown by Deanery of those aged 0-17, 18-69, and over 70, for the years 2019 and 2022 (and 2023 if available).

**The Mission Co-ordinator has replied:**

Again, figures for 2023 are not yet available. These breakdowns are based on Worshipping Community for 2019 and 2022 are as below.

<b>Episcopal Area</b>	<b>Archdeaconry</b>	<b>Deanery</b>	<b>2019 Aged 0-17</b>	<b>2019 Aged 18-69</b>	<b>2019 Aged 70+</b>	<b>2019 TOTAL</b>	<b>2022 Aged 0-17</b>	<b>2022 Aged 18-69</b>	<b>2022 Aged 70+</b>	<b>2022 TOTAL</b>
Shrewsbury	Salop	Edgmond and Shifnal	196	628	534	<b>1358</b>	247	640	599	<b>1486</b>
Shrewsbury	Salop	Ellesmere	148	292	245	<b>685</b>	91	300	258	<b>649</b>
Shrewsbury	Salop	Hodnet	139	329	360	<b>828</b>	142	255	387	<b>784</b>
Shrewsbury	Salop	Oswestry	256	624	565	<b>1445</b>	252	638	578	<b>1468</b>
Shrewsbury	Salop	Shrewsbury and Wrekin	424	1231	912	<b>2567</b>	357	997	864	<b>2218</b>
Shrewsbury	Salop	Telford	269	657	423	<b>1349</b>	315	691	377	<b>1383</b>
Shrewsbury	Salop	Wem and Whitchurch	120	362	535	<b>1017</b>	42	198	367	<b>607</b>
Stafford	Stoke	Alstonfield	41	160	150	<b>351</b>	30	107	118	<b>255</b>
Stafford	Stoke	Cheadle	171	399	368	<b>938</b>	65	200	270	<b>535</b>
Stafford	Stoke	Eccleshall	120	432	443	<b>995</b>	87	332	434	<b>853</b>
Stafford	Stoke	Leek	172	682	554	<b>1408</b>	140	474	561	<b>1175</b>
Stafford	Stoke	Newcastle	352	1045	764	<b>2161</b>	272	859	619	<b>1750</b>
Stafford	Stoke	Stafford	284	784	707	<b>1775</b>	234	574	698	<b>1506</b>
Stafford	Stoke	Stoke-on-Trent	816	1354	952	<b>3122</b>	570	908	801	<b>2279</b>
Stafford	Stoke	Stone	58	259	297	<b>614</b>	42	262	271	<b>575</b>
Stafford	Stoke	Tutbury	170	486	451	<b>1107</b>	140	400	472	<b>1012</b>
Stafford	Stoke	Uttoxeter	107	347	462	<b>916</b>	87	308	392	<b>787</b>
Wolverhampton	Lichfield	Lichfield	880	1575	1001	<b>3456</b>	613	1153	989	<b>2755</b>
Wolverhampton	Lichfield	Penkridge	193	638	556	<b>1387</b>	154	403	587	<b>1144</b>
Wolverhampton	Lichfield	Rugeley	174	507	431	<b>1112</b>	75	303	599	<b>977</b>
Wolverhampton	Lichfield	Tamworth	194	492	382	<b>1068</b>	131	382	369	<b>882</b>
Wolverhampton	Walsall	Trysull	464	1331	860	<b>2655</b>	307	816	721	<b>1844</b>
Wolverhampton	Walsall	Walsall	820	1701	998	<b>3519</b>	725	1611	881	<b>3217</b>
Wolverhampton	Walsall	Wednesbury	197	443	214	<b>854</b>	139	305	171	<b>615</b>
Wolverhampton	Walsall	West Bromwich	162	368	246	<b>776</b>	126	288	254	<b>668</b>
Wolverhampton	Walsall	Wolverhampton	541	1062	379	<b>1982</b>	452	889	362	<b>1703</b>
Wolverhampton	Walsall	Wulfrun	192	461	392	<b>1045</b>	124	314	242	<b>680</b>
			<b>7660</b>	<b>18649</b>	<b>14181</b>	<b>40490</b>	<b>5959</b>	<b>14607</b>	<b>13241</b>	<b>33807</b>

**12. Mrs Amanda Robbie (General Synod) has asked:**

Please give the total number of churches in our Diocese and the number of churches which had no children in their Usual Sunday Attendance return in 2019, in 2022 and in 2023.

**The Mission Co-ordinator has replied:**

Episcopal Area	Archdeaconry	Deanery	2019 Churches	2022 Churches
Shrewsbury	Salop	Edgmond and Shifnal	Badger, Beckbury, Bolas Magna, Boningale, Chetwynd, Forton, Kemberton, Preston Wealdmoors, Rytton, Stockton, Sutton Maddock, Tibberton, Waters Upton	Badger, Beckbury, Bolas Magna, Chetwynd, Kemberton, Preston Wealdmoors, Rytton, Stockton, Sutton Maddock, Tibberton, Waters Upton
Shrewsbury	Salop	Ellesmere	Great Ness	Dudleston, Welsh Frankton
Shrewsbury	Salop	Hodnet	Aston Chapel, Hales, Ightfield, Peplow	Adderley, Ash, Aston Chapel, Calverhall, Childs Ercall, Hodnet, Ightfield, Moreton Say, Peplow, Woore
Shrewsbury	Salop	Oswestry	Haughton, Knockin, Maesbrook, Maesbury, Morton, Rhydydroesau	Haughton, Kinnerley, Maesbrook, Melverley, Morton, Rhydydroesau, Trefonen, West Felton
Shrewsbury	Salop	Shrewsbury and Wrekin	Albrighton, Bomere Heath, Buildwas, Crudgington, Eaton Constantine, Leighton, Shrawardine, Shrewsbury All Saints, Uffington, Uppington, Withington	Albrighton, Bicton, Bomere Heath, Buildwas, Eaton Constantine, Fitz, Leaton, Longdon upon-Tern, Montford, Shrawardine, Shrewsbury All Saints, Uffington, Uppington, Upton Magna, Withington
Shrewsbury	Salop	Telford	Eyton, Malinslee, St Georges, Starchley Community Ministry, Telford Minster	Eyton, Ketley
Shrewsbury	Salop	Wem and Whitchurch	Astley, Broughton, Clive, Edstaston, Grinshill, Prees, Stanton, Tilstock, Weston under Redcastle, Whixall	Ashley, Broughton, Edstaston, Fauls, Grinshill, Moreton Corbet, Newtown, Prees, Stanton, Tilstock, Weston under Redcastle, Whixall
Stafford	Stoke	Alstonfield	Berkhamsyctch, Blore Ray, Butterton, Calton, Caudon, Grindon, Longnor, Newtown, Reapsmoor, Sheen, Warslow, Waterfall, Wetton	Alstonfield, Berkhamsyctch, Blore Ray, Butterton, Calton, Caudon, Grindon, Ipstones, Longnor, Newtown, Onecote, Reapsmoor, Sheen, Waterfall
Stafford	Stoke	Cheadle	Cotton, Foxt, Oakamoor	Cheadle, Cotton, Draycott le Moors, Foxt, Freehay, Oakamoor, Whiston
Stafford	Stoke	Eccleshall	Adbaston, Croxton, Ellenhall, Moreton, Norbury, Norton Bridge, Ranton	Adbaston, Chebsey, Croxton, Ellenhall, High Offley, Knightley, Moreton, Norbury, Norton Bridge, Ranton, Seighford
Stafford	Stoke	Leek	Norton-le-Moors, Rushton Spencer	Cheddleton, Connect2, Norton-le-Moors
Stafford	Stoke	Newcastle	Talke	Alsagers Bank, Keele, Talke
Stafford	Stoke	Stafford	Bradeley, Burston, Gayton, Hopton, Ingestre, Salt, Whitgreave	Bradeley, Burston, Church Eaton, Derrington, Gayton, Haughton, Holmcroft, Hopton, Milwich, Stowe by Chartley, Walton on the Hill, Whitgreave
Stafford	Stoke	Stoke-on-Trent	Birches Head, Mount Pleasant, Shelton	Birches Head, Burslem St Werburgh, Chell Heath, Joiners Square, Meir, Mount Pleasant, Normacot, Shelton, Wellington St Luke
Stafford	Stoke	Stone	Cotes Heath, Moddershall, Oulton	Fulford, Hilderstone, Moddershall, Oulton
Stafford	Stoke	Tutbury	Burton St Modwen, Burton St Paul, Draycott in the Clay, Newborough, Rangemore, Shobnall, Tatenhill	Burton St Chad, Burton St Modwen, Draycott in the Clay, Newborough, Rangemore, Rolleston, Shobnall, Tatenhill
Stafford	Stoke	Uttoxeter	Bramshall, Ellastone, Hollington, Kingstone, Leigh, Stramshall, Uttoxeter Heath	Alton, Croxden, Denstone, Ellastone, Hollington, Kingstone, Leigh, Marchington, Marchington Woodlands, Stramshall, Uttoxeter Heath
Wolverhampton	Lichfield	Lichfield	Elmhurst, Hamstall Ridware, Hints, St John's Hospital, Wall, Weeford	Clayhanger, Elmhurst, Hammerwich, Hamstall Ridware, Hints, St John's Hospital, Wall, Weeford, Whittington
Wolverhampton	Lichfield	Penkridge	Bednall, Codsall Wood, Lapley, Pillaton, Stretton	Acton Trussell, Bednall, Bishopswood, Pillaton, Stretton
Wolverhampton	Lichfield	Rugeley	Abbots Bromley, Blithfield, Chads Moor St Chad, Rugeley Good Shepherd, Slitting Mill	Blithfield, Hatherton, Heath Hayes, Rugeley Good Shepherd, Rugeley St Augustine, Slitting Mill
Wolverhampton	Lichfield	Tamworth	Mile Oak, Wigginton St James	Hopwas, Kettlebrook, Mile Oak, Wigginton St James
Wolverhampton	Walsall	Trysull	Bobbington, Enville, Penn Fields St Aidan, Wombourne The Venerable Bede	Bobbington, Enville, Himley, Wombourne The Venerable Bede
Wolverhampton	Walsall	Walsall	Pheasey, Yew Tree	Chuckery, Rushall Christ the King, Yew Tree
Wolverhampton	Walsall	Wednesbury	Wood Green	Wood Green
Wolverhampton	Walsall	West Bromwich	-	Good Shepherd, St Andrew, St Paul, St Philip
Wolverhampton	Walsall	Wolverhampton	Pond Lane	Pond Lane
Wolverhampton	Walsall	Wulfrun	Willenhall St Anne	Short Heath, Willenhall St Anne

This year I have a total of 537 churches on my list for which I am seeking Mission Statistics. Slightly different totals are available depending on where some churches are at in a closure process or depending on the definition of a church. Figures for 2023 are not yet available, but should be shortly after Easter this year.

The churches above reported 0 Under 16s on USA for the given year (or in a small number of cases, did not give USA figures for that year, but gave 0 on the most recent preceding year USA was given).

**13. Mr Chris Gill (General Synod) has asked:**

I understand Lichfield is one of the Dioceses involved in setting up the new West Midlands racial justice team. What are the Governance arrangements for the various Diocese working together in this initiative, what are the terms of reference for this unit, what is the cost, where is it being funded from and who from our diocese is involved in

ensuring it is accountable, making the appointments and ensuring that the project provides outcomes that will benefit parishes in our diocese?

*The Bishop's Chaplain has replied:*

Since 2021 and the launch of From Lament to Action, conversations have developed and networks have grown across the West Midlands region about how, together, we might better tackle racism and see it eliminated from our culture, structures and behaviours. These conversations led to a joint West Midlands Region bid (Birmingham, Coventry, Gloucester, Hereford, Lichfield, Worcester) which was submitted to the Archbishop's Council Racial Justice Unit under its Scheme to provide grants to support dioceses in increasing awareness and responsiveness to issues of racial justice, racial justice strategies, plans and actions and to ensure greater representation of Global Majority Heritage and UK Minority Ethnic people at all levels of the church. The Archbishop's Council has now awarded a grant of £2.4m to recruit a dynamic team of 11 people to work for 3 years to enable the regional team to fan into flame a movement of changes that continues to be effective and transformative long beyond the funding. The first of these posts are now being advertised and the Regional Racial Justice Director has just been appointed.

The West-Midlands Dioceses have entered into a joint venture agreement which sets out the obligations of each of the Dioceses. In addition to this the new team will be accountable to a Regional Racial Justice Board made up of one clergy and one Lay person from each of the six Dioceses, governed by Terms of Reference. Bishop Michael has nominated Rev Treena Larkin and Andy Wynter as the two people from Lichfield Diocese to sit on this Regional Racial Justice Board. As they both also sit on the Lichfield Diocese RJITG, they are ideally placed to ensure that any projects and outcomes will benefit the Diocese.

**14. Mr Chris Gill (General Synod) has asked:**

A recent advertisement for team members of the West Midlands racial justice team includes amongst its activities the phrase "deconstructing whiteness" – could someone please explain what that means in this context?

*The Bishop's Chaplain has replied:*

The phrase 'deconstructing whiteness' appears as one dimension of the role description for one member of the Regional Racial Justice Team, for which recruitment is currently taking place under the auspices of the newly convened Regional Racial Justice Board. Ahead of making any appointment, the use of this particular phrase is currently under review.

An academic understanding of what is meant by 'Deconstructing whiteness' could be expressed as follows:

When we are talking about 'Whiteness' we are referencing the construction of race. The construction of race dates back much further than slavery. Whiteness is manifested by the ways in which racialized Whiteness becomes transformed into social, political, economic, and cultural behaviour. Cultural norms, and values in all these areas become



normative natural. They become the standard against which all other cultures, groups, and individuals are measured and usually found to be inferior.

Deconstructing whiteness is therefore about how we work together to address racism by taking a hard look at how we have been socialized and shaped by whiteness, and how we perpetuate these through personal behaviours and organizational systems including looking at what liturgy we use. It is about fostering a long-term commitment to anti-racist thought and action and be accountable for our ideas and behaviours. It is about us taking responsibility for our actions that perpetuate oppression and importantly, how we follow the lead on initiatives and recommendations to promote anti-racist actions.

**15. *The Revd Iain Baker (Newcastle) has asked:***

What proportion of diocesan clergy will be attending the forthcoming Diocesan Clergy Conference and how does this compare to previous conferences?

***The Director of Ministry has replied:***

Figures as at 13.3.2024

	2024	2018
Clergy Invites	350	441
Clergy booked	216 (62%)	301 (68%)
Apologies	39	Info not available
No response as yet	87	Info not available

No details are accessible for years prior to 2018.

We intend to close the bookings at the end of March in order to inform Swanwick of final numbers.

**16. *The Revd Paul Darlington (Oswestry) has asked:***

How many candidates are in the discernment process in our Diocese as of the end of February 2024 (both for ordination and Licensed Lay Minister training)? Please can you give the number of ordinands and Licensed Lay Ministers in training from our Diocese at the moment, listed by year of study, gender and age groups Under 30, 30-49, 50+.

***The Lay Ministerial Learning & Development Officer and the Bishop's Director of Ordinands have replied:***

There are 15 people exploring vocation generally on the Pathways programme.

There are 26 people exploring various forms of ministry (Lay and Ordained) with a Vocations Advisor. (1 is on Pathways and 5 are on the Chad programmes and are included in those figures.)

There are 19 people in the discernment process for Ordained ministry working with the BDO/ ADDO.

There are 15 Ordinands in training.

There are 30 Lay Ministers (including Readers) in training.

Age and Gender breakdown of Ordinands in training							
	Male			Female			
Age Group	Under 30	30-49	50+	Under 30	30-49	50+	Totals
Year 1	0	3	1	0	2	0	6
Year 2	0	0	1	1	3	1	6
Year 3	0	0	1	0	2	0	3

Age and Gender \* breakdown of Readers in training (Year 1 - fallow year).

Chad Foundations (Year 0)

	Male						Female						
Age Group	Under 30	30-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71+	Under 30	30-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71+	Totals
Current	0	3	0	2	3	0	0	4	2	7	2	1	24

Reader Training (Year 2)

	Male						Female						
Age Group	Under 30	30-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71+	Under 30	30-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71+	Totals
Current	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	6

\*N.B. We do not require people to give their gender. This category has not been self-identified by the participants and so may not accurately reflect participants' gender identity.

**17. The Revd Paul Darlington (Oswestry) has asked:**

How many clergy in the Diocese have completed or are currently undertaking the Senior Leadership Development Programme? How many are anticipated to take it in the future?

**The Bishop of Lichfield has replied:**

By my computation, a total of five clergy from the Diocese of Lichfield have been accepted on the Senior Leadership Training Programme – under its various different appellations – during my time as diocesan bishop. We are normally offered one or two places on each cohort.

**18. The Revd Kate Watson (Wolverhampton) has asked:**

Can you give us a timeline for the appointments of the next Dean of the Cathedral, the next Bishop of Wolverhampton and the next Archdeacon of Walsall?

## ***The Bishop of Lichfield has replied:***

### Dean of Lichfield

I wrote in the 'Diocesan News and Information' on 19th February 2024, setting out the process, and asking for people's prayers, as follows:

*Bishop Michael asks clergy and people across the Diocese and the Cathedral to pray for those involved in the appointment of a new Dean of Lichfield in succession to The Very Revd Adrian Dorber.*

*The process is being overseen by an appointment panel chaired by Lay Canon Debbie Parkes, who was invited to take on this responsibility by the Archbishop of Canterbury after consultation with the Bishop of Lichfield. Other members of the panel are Mr Mark Hope-Urwin (Cathedral Council); Mr Malcolm Maclean (Bishop's Council); Lay Canon Julie Jones (College of Canons); The Very Revd Andrew Tremlett (Dean of St Paul's); and Bishop Michael. The group is supported in its work by Mrs Helen Dimmock MBE (Crown Ecclesiastical Secretary in the Cabinet Office); Mr David Wicksteed (Appointments & Vocations Advisor in the National Church Institutions); and The Revd Treena Larkin (Chaplain to the Bishop of Lichfield).*

*The panel's initial work has been to draw up a statement identifying the Cathedral's priorities in seeking a new Dean; it is planned that the post should be advertised later this month, with interviews held soon after Easter. Please pray for the wisdom, imagination and guidance of the Holy Spirit, both for members of the panel and for candidates, as together we seek discernment of the next Dean of Lichfield.*

*The date of the interviews for the post of Dean of Lichfield has now been confirmed as Wednesday 10th April.*

### Bishop of Wolverhampton and Archdeacon of Walsall

I wrote on Monday 11th March to clergy, ministers and parishes in the Walsall archdeaconry setting out plans for pastoral arrangements in the Wolverhampton Episcopal Area and in Walsall Archdeaconry. That message has also been posted on the diocesan website, [Ad Clerum – Pastoral arrangements in the Wolverhampton Episcopal Area – Diocese of Lichfield \(anglican.org\)](https://www.anglican.org.uk/ad-clerum-pastoral-arrangements-wolverhampton-episcopal-area).

In my message, I wrote, again asking for prayers:

*As you will know, Julian will be retiring from stipendiary ministry, and from his role as Archdeacon of Walsall, on Wednesday 8th May this year. There will be an opportunity to say farewell to him, and to give thanks for all that he has brought to the archdeaconry, episcopal area and diocese, at 3pm on Sunday 28th April at The Church of the Good Shepherd, West Bromwich. More details will follow after Easter, but please do mark this date in your diary. I know that you will be keeping Julian and Jane in your prayers as they prepare for this next stage in their life.*

*Bishop Jonathan will also be stepping back from his role as Acting Bishop of Wolverhampton on Easter Day, Sunday March 31st. I very much appreciate the support he has given over the past six months, and I am glad that he will be continuing to serve as an Honorary Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Lichfield. Bishop Jonathan will be preaching at the Chrism Eucharist in our Cathedral on Maundy Thursday, 28th March at 11am; I hope that many of you will be able to hear him then as we join together to mark our entry into the holiest time of the Christian year.*

*I am writing now to explain arrangements for pastoral care in the Wolverhampton Episcopal Area in the coming months.*

*The discernment process for me to nominate a new Bishop of Wolverhampton is in hand, with the support of the Archbishop of Canterbury's office. I will be assisted in this process by an*

*Advisory Group, the members of which I have listed below. They will be meeting with me for the first time on Monday 15th April; we anticipate that candidates will be invited for interview on Tuesday 4th June. Please do pray for me, for members of the Advisory Group, and for all whom we shall meet as part of this process, that through the Spirit's guidance the right person may be found to serve as the Fifth Bishop of Wolverhampton. Until he or she is in post, I will as diocesan bishop be providing episcopal oversight in the Wolverhampton Episcopal Area.*

*As I will wish to involve the next Area Bishop in the appointment of Julian's successor, there will necessarily be a vacancy of some months in the Archdeaconry. In order to provide some continuity in pastoral care and support, I am delighted to say that The Revd Julia Cody and The Revd Jim Trood have both generously accepted my invitation to take on archidiaconal responsibilities, in addition to their parish ministries in Wombourne and Walsall respectively. I will be licensing them on 28th March as Associate Archdeacons, and they will serve as such alongside Archdeacon Julian until Julian's retirement on 8th May, after which they will become Acting Archdeacons. In both these phases, they will of course be working closely with Archdeacon Sue. Please do pray for Julia and Jim as they prepare to take up these further roles (which will probably extend into the new year of 2025), and for Sue as she continues to serve as Archdeacon of Lichfield.*

**Bishop Michael's advisory group for the Bishop of Wolverhampton**

Mr Steve Bavington (Chief Executive, YMCA Black Country Group)

Ms Angela Bernard (Churchwarden, Good Shepherd, West Bromwich)

Canon Julie Jones (Diocesan Secretary and Chief Executive)

The Revd Prebendary Mark McIntyre (Vicar of St Gabriel's, Fulbrook and Rural Dean of Walsall)

The Revd Chris Precious (Rector of Fauls, Tilstock and Whitchurch)

The Revd Kate Watson (Vicar of St Martin's, Bradley)

The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (Third Church Estates Commissioner)  
supported by

The Revd Treena Larkin (Bishop's Chaplain)

Mr David Wicksteed (Archbishops' Adviser for Appointments & Vocations)

I am grateful to The Revd Kate Watson and colleagues for agreeing to join my Advisory Group.

**19. *The Revd Kate Watson (Wolverhampton) has asked:***

Has the contract for the training of licensed lay ministers at Queens been reviewed in the past 12 months? What consideration on the delivery of training has been given to the environmental concerns that were raised in previous meetings of this Synod?

***The Director of Ministry has replied:***

The Lay Ministerial Learning and Development Officer is currently in discussion with Queen's about the shape and delivery of Reader training by Queen's for the Diocese for the academic years 2024-2026. There has been a hiatus at present (i.e. no current first year readers in training) due to the introduction of the Chad programme in the diocese. The Chad programme (delivered in house) will serve as the first year of Reader training for those who are selected for Reader ministry at the end of the year. In devising training programmes the V&T team endeavour to find an appropriate balance between on-line and on-site delivery.