

Havant Pastoral Area Report

Structure G

Phase 1 - Establishment and Discernment



July 2023

1. Introduction

After the very successful Synodal meeting within our Havant pastoral area in the Spring of 2022, we, as a pastoral area, decided to adopt a similar approach when examining the draft 10 Year Plan shared with us by Bishop Philip.

The parishes within the Havant Pastoral Area already work together closely. Our hospital and schools' ministry are shared, as are some of our sacramental preparations. The clergy meet together regularly, enjoy social gatherings and have all joined the Jesus Caritas group which meets monthly for prayer and support. We have found our friendliness and working together has impacted positively on our laity who are now looking beyond their parish boundaries and fostering a collaborative approach and a new strategic way of thinking.

We started our journey in November 2022 by issuing a pastoral wide invitation to everyone interested in learning more about the Diocese's 10 Year Plan, this provided an opportunity for laity to ask questions and for us to listen to their views and concerns. We publicised the meeting extensively and were delighted when 144 people attended. We had representation from all our churches including the Syro-malabar and Polish communities, our lay missionaries from the Neocatechchumenal way in Paulsgrove and members of our schools and hospital. **See Annex B.**

We have placed prayer and guidance from the Holy Spirit at the heart of our 10 Year Plan discussions. In the morning session all 144 present were able to share how they felt about the new plans. Similar to our clergy day where we explored the 10 Year Plan together, the laity shared their mixed feelings and emotions about the changes set out in the plan. Interestingly, the most positive group was the 10 young people who were keen to do more with other young people from different churches and feel a sense of belonging to a larger group.

A fish and chip lunch was served, giving people the opportunity to mingle and socialise. We found the afternoon session to be very unifying in looking forward because we had given time in the morning for people to honestly share their thoughts and feelings. The overall summing up provided Fr Jeremy with a mandate to create a pastoral council composed of lay and clergy, to communicate progress regularly and to get on with it!

The first step Fr Jeremy took was to create a small advisory team of Toni Mpario and Fr James Lewis, recognising that both had skills that would supplement his. We sought advice from the diocese on our phase 1 terms of reference and decision making to provide clarity and avoid tensions or misunderstanding in the future.

A pastoral council was intentionally formed consisting of lay and clergy. Council members were approached by clergy and invited to join based on their experience and known skill sets. We felt it was

vital to have a strong youth representation on the council and invited a school chaplain, teacher and students to join us. From the beginning we were keen to create a shared vision and a strategy for our pastoral area focusing on mission and evangelisation which included all our church communities, schools and hospitals.

In our first pastoral council meeting, we invested most of our time getting to know one another in fun ways allowing us to laugh and break the ice. We learnt that each person brought something different to the council and was a valued and respected member of the team. Understanding these gifts and talents were particularly helpful when creating our four subgroups which were tasked with exploring the four main areas of phase 1 preparatory phase, these were:

1. Consolidation and Rationalisation
2. Discernment
3. Evangelisation strategy
4. Finance & Estate review

To support each group in the early stages, we directed them to the key chapters in the 10 Year Plan relevant to their subject matter. We suggested each subgroup had its own chair, secretary and between them agreed when and where they'd meet. We offered clear instruction on actions required and where to find information across our area and key contacts in the diocese. Deadlines for research and feedback to the council were set and agreed during our monthly meetings. We shared a six month roadmap with milestones that demonstrated where we wanted to be in June 2023 and how we planned to get there. Requirements were high, some thought unrealistic, but we are happy to report that our team exceeded all our expectations.

Council meetings were agreed, booked ahead and hosted on a rotational basis by the different churches within our pastoral area. This gave council members the chance to visit all our churches and communities and see what our new parish would comprise. These 2 hour meetings would normally be after a 10am Mass, followed by refreshments.

Chapter 2 of our report shares in more detail the aims, approaches, data and research undertaken by our four teams and is followed by a set of recommendations.

2. Our Phase 1 Aims

2.1 Consolidation & Rationalisation team

With a variety of different Catholic Churches, schools and one large hospital in our Pastoral area, it was

important for us to identify what, at present, was being offered in each of our respective communities, particularly in terms of Mass provision. As we are becoming more missionary minded, exploring creative ways to extend our provision of Masses to a wider audience was also important for us to explore. With fewer priests, and some now more mature in age, it was also important to ensure that their workload was sustainable by being more strategic and proactive in terms of succession planning.

2.2 Discernment team

Our aim in the Discernment team was to consult and communicate our Diocese 10 Year Plan across our pastoral area. We also hoped to explore organisational models which could be effective in enabling us to move from 6 parishes across our pastoral area to one Parish made from several Church and other Catholic Communities.

2.3 Evangelisation team

With Evangelisation being central to the Church's mission and our Diocesan 10 Year Plan, we were really keen to think 'outside the box' moving forward. We wanted to create an exciting and cohesive evangelisation strategy which incorporated all our Churches, our four Catholic schools as well as the large Queen Alexandra hospital where we provide spiritual and pastoral support. To make this a reality we want to share and develop a large and effective team of evangelists who have a great love of the Lord and a burning desire to go out to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others.

2.4 Finance & Estate team

Central to our finance and estate review was the exploring and assessing of each Parishes team's structures and accounts. We also invested time in our working relationship with our Diocese Finance Team and began the process of drawing together our accounts and started planning for an audit of our estates. During phase 1 we have set about identifying all the current Finance Committee volunteers and searched out laity with particular expertise and skills whom we might invite to join our central Finance Committee when we move into phase 2. We were very aware of the confidential nature of the information we required. All information received was treated with the utmost confidentiality by council members.

3. Our Approach

3.1 Consolidation & Rationalisation team

A small subteam was assigned to review all our Mass provisions and report back to the pastoral council. The team comprised of a broad demographic in age, clergy and laity from across our worshipping communities. We organised a coordinated and well publicised consultation with all our parishioners. We also arranged conversations and input from our three local schools. Opportunities to respond to a broad set of questions enabled everyone to share their thoughts and ideas about how best to mobilise our clergy into one large Parish.

3.2 Discernment team

We created a team which represented a breadth of diversity from across our pastoral area. We were aware of other Parishes within the Diocese who already had evangelisation and mission central to their visions and were on a journey to transform their structures to readily support these priorities. We decided to reach out to them and talk to them about their experience. This helped us to identify key roles and start some early thinking about what organisational designs could underpin the changes we wanted to make.

3.3 Evangelisation team

In creating our strategy team for evangelisation, we were very keen to have a strong representation of youth and those connected with our schools. Recognising there are many experienced evangelists in our diocese and further afield, we sought them out for advice to help us on our journey forward. We also listened to as many different people in our pastoral area to hear their ideas and what they felt was important at this time. These included, headteachers, school chaplains, RE teachers, parishioners, hospital chaplains and our ecumenical brothers and sisters from our local churches. In our monthly meetings our team prayed and reflected on all of the above, encouraging a creative and organic process to take place.

3.4 Finance & Estate team

Creating a dynamic and well-functioning team was a priority for our group to provide us with the necessary foundations to start reflecting on our phase 2 activities. The gathering of relevant data was recognised as key in these early stages as was the necessary links with members of parish finance teams and diocesan personnel.

4. Our Phase 1 Research

4.1 Consolidation & Rationalisation team

Factual research was carried out identifying the number of mass attendees at each of our churches, the availability of seating, car parking and the distance between them. Geographically, we are a smaller pastoral area relative to others in our diocese. Consequently we were able to identify greater flexibility in terms of mass provision, particularly in the week. Most people now have access to cars and we found it is quite common for some parishioners to rotate around a variety of churches to participate in weekday masses.

Looking at a reduction of priests, a number of different rotational options were considered. The numbers of masses presently provided in each church were also examined. We wanted to see if there were some masses which had a very low attendance that could be removed or merged?

From our churches' consultation, the desire for a connection with one particular priest, or priests, came back very strongly. Listening and responding to this, the team provided the pastoral council with one option where the rotating of clergy maintained a primary priest or priests serving those communities. This ensured both pastoral and liturgical care. ***See recommendation C1.***

The maintenance of each existing community was also very strong. Whilst some feedback highlighted this shouldn't be paramount as we all are the Body of Christ, the majority were keen to maintain their present place of worship.

In terms of weekday provision, at present, it seemed there were ample opportunities for the retired to attend mass whereas those who worked were unable to attend weekday masses easily. Presently, there are some masses in schools for students and at Oaklands School for staff, but no weekday masses in the hospital, which in previous years, had been offered for staff and patients. Taking on board this information, we explored ways of offering one daytime mass and one early morning or evening mass in two of our churches. This would be a significant change, allowing us to offer more accessible mass times, especially as some churches currently have no weekday masses at all. Paradoxically this reduction of weekday masses in churches would provide greater opportunities for more people to attend mass in the week, taking into account funerals, schools or hospital provision and also ensures each priest has one day off a week. ***See recommendation C2.***

Within this process, we have recognised the importance of the continuity of present clergy who are working well together and share the same vision. Maintaining these is therefore vital to delivering these significant changes. ***See recommendation C3.***

Two further areas highlighted in the consultation -

i) The need to identify and ordain more deacons with the specific intention to support the priestly clergy in serving the laity. In the Havant pastoral area, there is a large ageing population resulting in a growing number of funerals taking place each month. Whilst these used to be more commonly Requiem Masses, they are now more often funeral services. These can be led by a deacon. This is also the case for baptisms which often take place outside of Sunday masses. Having a team of deacons able to support the priestly clergy in administering these sacraments would enable priests to be more effective spiritual leaders and fulfil their missionary roles. **See recommendation C4.**

ii) We recognised that the clergy in the Havant area were already engaged in a productive and collaborative working relationship and valued the wisdom brought by our more experienced clergy. This realisation has led us to believe that our parish could provide both an excellent placement for a seminarian for their extended pastoral placement as well as a newly ordained priest. **See recommendation C5.** This model of working together as clergy, leaning into each of the different God given strengths could provide exciting opportunities and success in the early years of priesthood which are so crucial. **See recommendation C6.**

4.2 Discernment team

Our ongoing research led us to have conversations with the Catholic parish in Winchester. This provided us with a 'straw man' template which allowed us to adapt to a structure specific to our parish and needs. **See recommendation D1.** We shared our thinking with the council and parish priests and gratefully took on board their ideas. We also connected with 'Divine Renovation' a Catholic support team whose primary aim is to enable parishes to transform their parish cultures and become parishes which are more focussed on mission instead of maintenance. These seminars enabled us to hear others' experiences and learn from their expertise in restructuring parishes providing opportunities for growth rather than decline.

See Annex A and recommendation D2 for our early proposals for Organisation structures.

4.3 Evangelisation Strategy team

In our conversations with experts, the team developed a parish vision that would grow our community and create missionary disciples. We shared the vision with our council, school heads and parishioners. We were delighted to receive affirming and encouraging feedback that is allowing us to shape and mould the vision statement as we progress into phase 2.

Taking inspiration from other parishes involved in evangelisation, we also selected a Gospel which we felt would help us in shaping our parish's understanding of how someone becomes a disciple. Our team prayed and deliberated on this and felt Jesus's encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:4-42) best identified with our desire to Evangelise. Again, this was well received by those we consulted. At the recent Alpha Leadership Conference, Nicky Gumbel, a leading light in evangelisation also chose this Gospel as a model for evangelisation which affirmed our choice. We also learnt how it is best to focus on **what we want for** people rather than **what we want from** people.

We also came to appreciate the importance of experiencing a real sense of belonging in our communities, for those who have been there for years as well as those arriving for the first time. It was from this experience that a person can then begin to be open to believe and grow in their faith and then be transformed by God. This shift in culture is something we hope to embed in our new parish.

We learnt an integral part of a successful evangelisation strategy is to be united in approach and choose an effective evangelisation tool that enables people to meet Christ, grow in their personal relationship with him and then go out to share this good news with others. As such we have decided to use Alpha as our primary tool for evangelisation and plan to embed Alpha across all of our communities. We also learnt how alpha can provide a valuable pathway for growing leaders and volunteers within our parish.

One key aspect of our research was the recognition that our schools and hospitals are the ideal places for evangelisation. Running Alpha for staff and parents in schools seems to be a new concept and we are very excited to see if this can be fruitful. **See recommendation E2.** Early indications are heads, staff and parents welcome our new approach and we hope to create effective pathways from our schools into our church communities. **See recommendation E4.**

Another significant factor from our consultative research came from the young people at Oaklands Catholic School, when asked what would entice them to attend mass more regularly, over 70% spoke of their desire for an improved quality of music.

We are acutely aware of the financial restraints in the diocese and our pastoral area, however, we strongly feel a more intentional evangelisation workforce is essential to lead us through phase 2. We are recommending the appointment of an Evangelisation lead and assistant. **See recommendation E1 & E2.** We have seen that those Catholic and Christian churches who have invested in putting the right foundation and structures in place are benefiting from growing congregations. Recently we attended the Alpha leadership conference at the Royal Albert Hall where we saw firsthand how growing a professional workforce within the church supported growth, while empowering and growing those already present in their respective church communities. **See recommendation E3.**

Whilst we are hoping that each Parish will support the increase in income needed for posts in

evangelisation, we would also highlight that the reduction in priests and the income normally connected with maintaining them should also create a further source of funding that can be injected into evangelisation. Initial plans have been discussed in our pastoral council meetings and we have agreed for the evangelisation team to approach all six finance teams to discuss our recruitment requirements. We have discussed the matter with Karena Fulford and hope the first new post for an Evangelisation Assistant will be agreed shortly.

4.4 Finance & Estate Review

The gathering of data was paramount to this team. These came from a variety of different sources, some already accessible to us:

1. The latest available quinquennial estate reviews
2. The existing parishes’ annual financial returns for income and expenditure and,
3. The existing parishes’ input to the Dioceses’s Parish Life Document

The latter of these was at different stages of completion in Parishes and having employed the diocesan representatives (Ellen McCarthy and Karena Fulford) on our Council, this information became more readily available to us for which we are grateful.

We were also keen to observe meetings of our existing parish finance committees as well as conversations with Clive Field, director of the Finance team for the diocese who was able to bring light and clarity to existing realities within the diocese that none of our team had been aware of.

As we progress into phase 2 and work through the implementation of these changes our intention is to present a finance and estate plan for the single unified parish. We will seek to identify whether there is any revenue earning potential resulting from the consolidation of the 6 parishes.

5. Recommendations

Code	Recommendation
C1	Four priests who are pastorally and liturgically connected to specific worshipping communities
C2	Introduce new Mass timetable and priestly rotas

C3	Continuity of present clergy to lead, maintain and shape phase 2
C4	Clergy teams to include deacons and identify new ones
C5	Introduce extended pastoral placements for Seminarians within our Parish
C6	Develop an integrated and holistic programme for newly ordained priests within the Parish
D1	Agree and implement new Parish structure and organisational design
D2	Clarify job specifications for Evangelisation posts and Operations Manager
E1	Recruit Evangelisation Assistant
E2	Recruit an Evangelisation Lead
E2	Deliver bi-annual alpha in every church, school and hospital.
E3	Fostering a culture that will identify and grow our leaders to support their ministries and lean into their gifts and talents.
E4	Develop pathways from our schools into our church communities
F1	Pairing Churches in line with pastoral and liturgical responsibilities of clergy
F2	Introduce a two tier Finance Committee (parish and community based)
F3	Parish and Community Finance team membership to be agreed and include Diocese representation
F4	Recruit an Operation Manager

F5	Terms of Reference for Finance Committee to be agreed with Diocese
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6. Next Steps

Subject to diocese approval to our phase 1 recommendations we propose the pastoral council be reconvened in September 2023 to begin planning the delivery of the following key activities for phase 2.

<p>Consolidation and Rationalisation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clergy teams to include deacons and identify new ones 2. Introduce new Mass timetable and priestly rotas 3. Introduce extended pastoral placements for Seminarians 4. Develop an integrated and holistic programme for newly ordained priests
<p>Discernment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Clarify job specifications for Evangelisation Lead and Operations Manager 6. Agree and implement new Parish structure and organisational design
<p>Evangelisation</p>

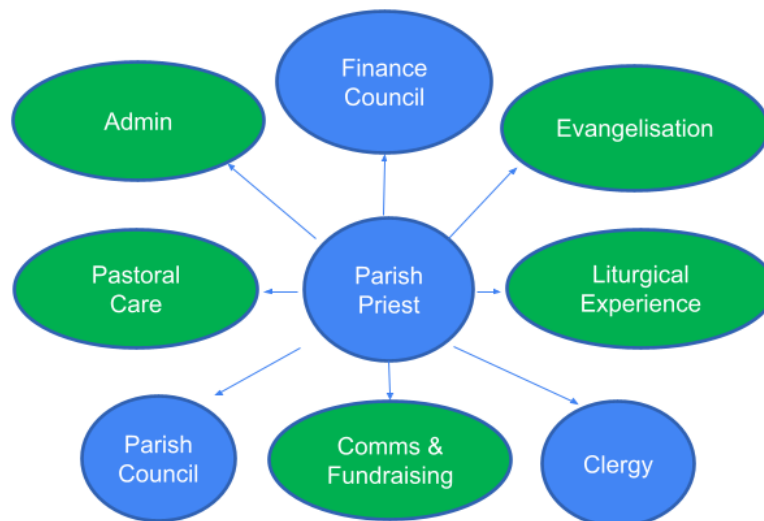
7. Recruit Evangelisation Assistant
8. Fostering a culture that will identify and grow our leaders to support their ministries and lean into the gifts and talents
9. Develop pathways from our schools into our church communities
10. Recruit Evangelisation Lead

Finance and Estates

11. Pairing Churches in line with pastoral and liturgical responsibilities of clergy
12. Terms of Reference for Finance Committee to be agreed with Diocese
13. Introduce a two tier Finance Committee (parish and community based)
14. Recruit Operations Manager

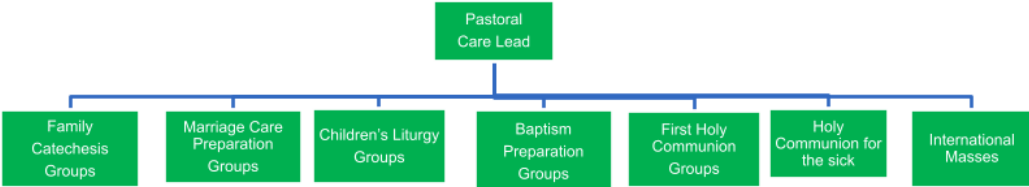
Annex A - Parish Organisational Charts

One Parish Organisation Chart - version 1

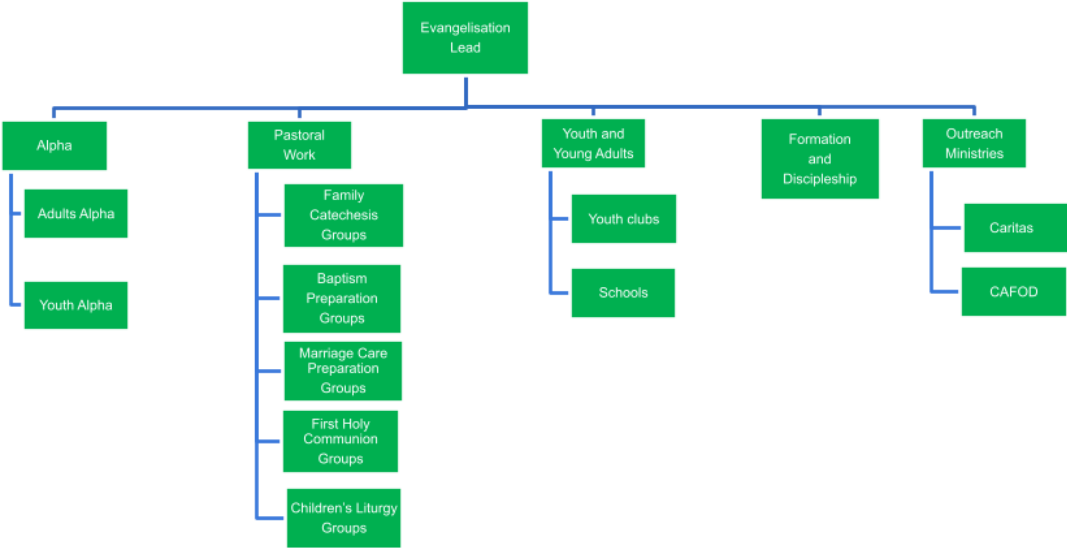


Areas in blue are not in the scope of the Discernment team and it is acknowledged that there will be some cross over with Evangelisation

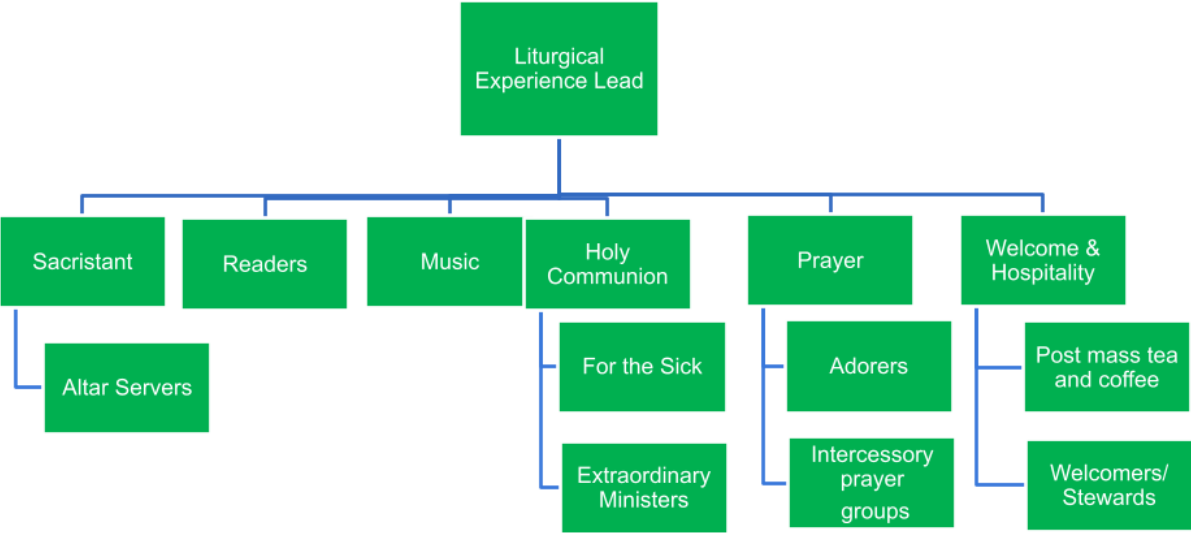
Pastoral Care



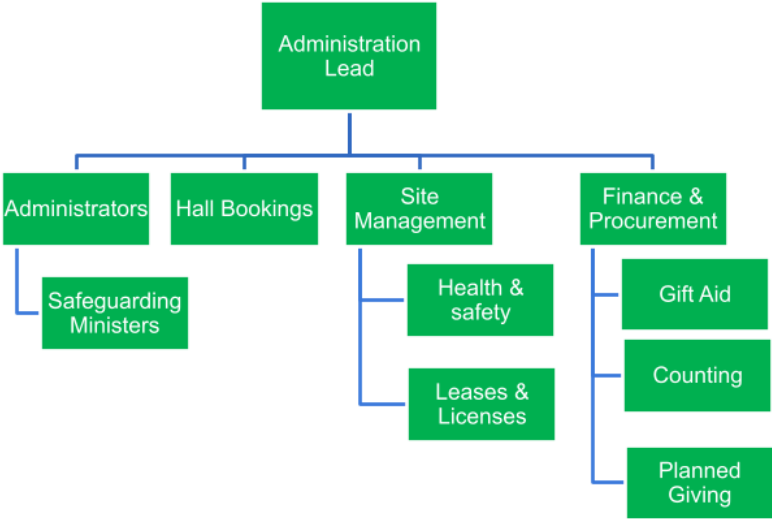
Evangelisation



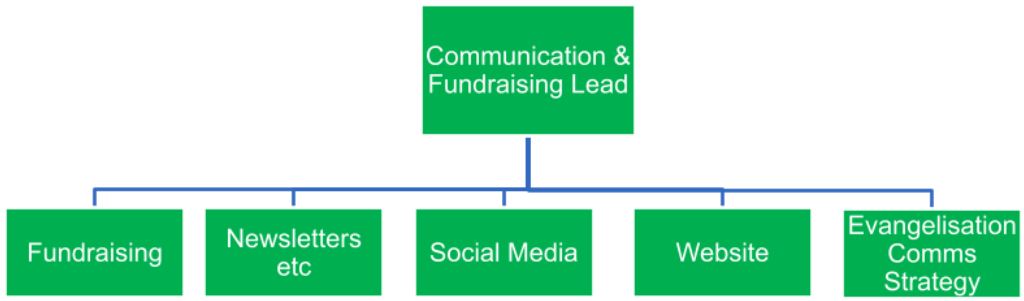
Liturgical Experience



Administration



Communication and Fundraising



Annex B - One Parish Consultation responses

Q1: What would you like to see present in each community?

Implementation of real subsidiarity – each worshipping community to have a known, part elected and part appointed group* of lay persons, who in partnership with the parish priest take on responsibility for:

- Visiting group: Communion taken to sick and housebound
- Baptism and First Holy Communion learning and sharing
- Bereavement visiting
- Liturgy including children's liturgy and music
- Prayer group
- Organise a rota to transport those who otherwise would be unable to get to mass
- Arrange for a responsible person to open buildings
- Organise the cleaning and maintenance of premises
- Set up a forum for discussion of spiritual and material needs of the catholic community and the community outside.
- CARITAS/CAFOD profile in community planned into parish life
- Laudato Si – encouragement and work on sustaining a healthy creation
- 'Touch your base' mass, one year on, for recently baptised, confirmed and bereaved.
- A warm welcome at the door
- A year ahead overview plan for the community
- Know what priests do each week besides saying mass. Evidence of professional appraisal of parish priest (details to remain confidential)
- Diarised opportunity to meet with those in Super Parish. A get together to celebrate successes and failures. A chance to learn from each other
- New parishioner welcome morning every 6 months
- A list held somewhere of community members and contact details with indication of what be disclosed to whom, for use by local church or parish

- Knowledge of costs and income of maintaining our community. A plan to enable community to cover these costs
- Open communication of roles and responsibilities within the community

Q2. Communication and wide engagement: How to enable as much participation as possible in the community?

- Local church to be open to running community help where premises and volunteers can be found
- Look to make links to local Catholic schools to show a living faith and welcome to join us
- Clergy is open to experiments and is encouraging. Learn to monitor and advise in a way which shows they are aware of the different strands of parish life.
- Share examples across parish directly or indirectly of success in spiritual, social development
- Post holders all to understand that they need to communicate to the community what they are doing and what their needs are in order to be successful
- One parish newsletter and One parish website
- Parish priest to be more committed to giving parishioners all the information they can about financial and personnel matters
- Groups have named leads for each important area of the worshipping community's life. No one can be in post more than 3 years without some sort of reappointment process/election or ideally giving the role to someone else.
- Succession planning to the crucial local 'worshipping community group' built into their operation