

**English Martyrs,
Vale of White
Horse
Pastoral Area**



**‘Oxfordshire’
Pastoral
Area**

You Will Be My Witnesses
Pastoral Area Response
Progress Update
12th June 2025

Agenda



- Opening Prayer
- Introductions
 - The Design Team
 - The Pastoral Area
- How We Got Here
- Progress Updates
 - Sustainability
 - Evangelisation & Formation
 - Communication
- Summary

Let us pray ...

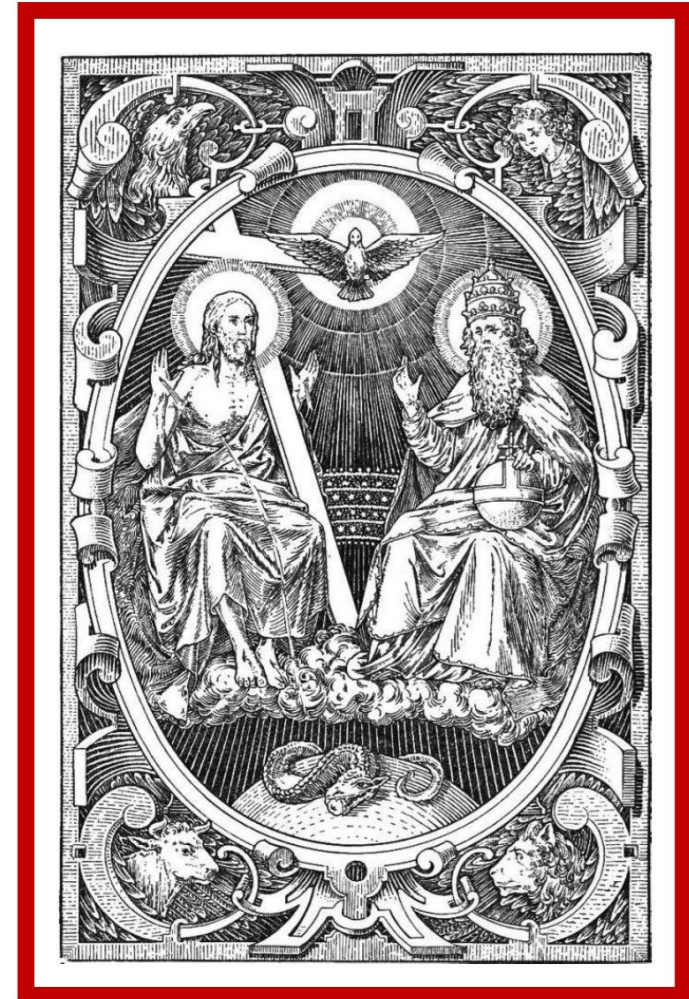


O LORD, graciously look down upon us
your servants and upon our work to build
Your Holy Church here in this place.

Enlighten our minds and lead us into all
truth as we seek to do Your will.

Abundantly bless our labours that Your
Holy Church may serve You ever more
faithfully to the glory of Your Holy name.

Through Christ our Lord, Amen.



Introduction



Chris Bevan

Our Lady & St Edmund,
Abingdon

A leader & designer of global corporate transformation and change for over 30 years.

Established three consulting companies focusing on transformation & change

Senior Executive of UK and International corporations.

Recently retired, continuing as NED/Chair of training & consulting company & Corporate Leadership Mentor for USA Corporation



Phil Harrison

St John Vianney, Wantage

Professional services leader in both advisory and operational management roles across the corporate and public sectors.

Change management leadership in business and in education including mergers and consolidation programmes.

Non-executive Director of a leading Multi-Academy Trust which covers a similar footprint to our Pastoral Area.



Chris Harrison

St Mary's East Hendred

Many years in business, latterly in sales management securing large deals with blue chip customers requiring effective strategy, planning and execution across multi-disciplinary teams.

Leadership roles in scouting, one with a focus on growth, development and governance.



Paul Armstrong

Professional economist advising companies through M&A regulatory clearance and broader regulatory matters. Experience in complex stakeholder management, leading multi-disciplinary teams, financial analysis and forecasting, and advising clients in a range of sectors. Non-executive director of a Catholic Multi-Academy Company in the Archdiocese of Birmingham, and Trustee/Treasurer of an Oxford-based homelessness charity.

Diocesan Mission – PA Approach



Evangelisation & Formation

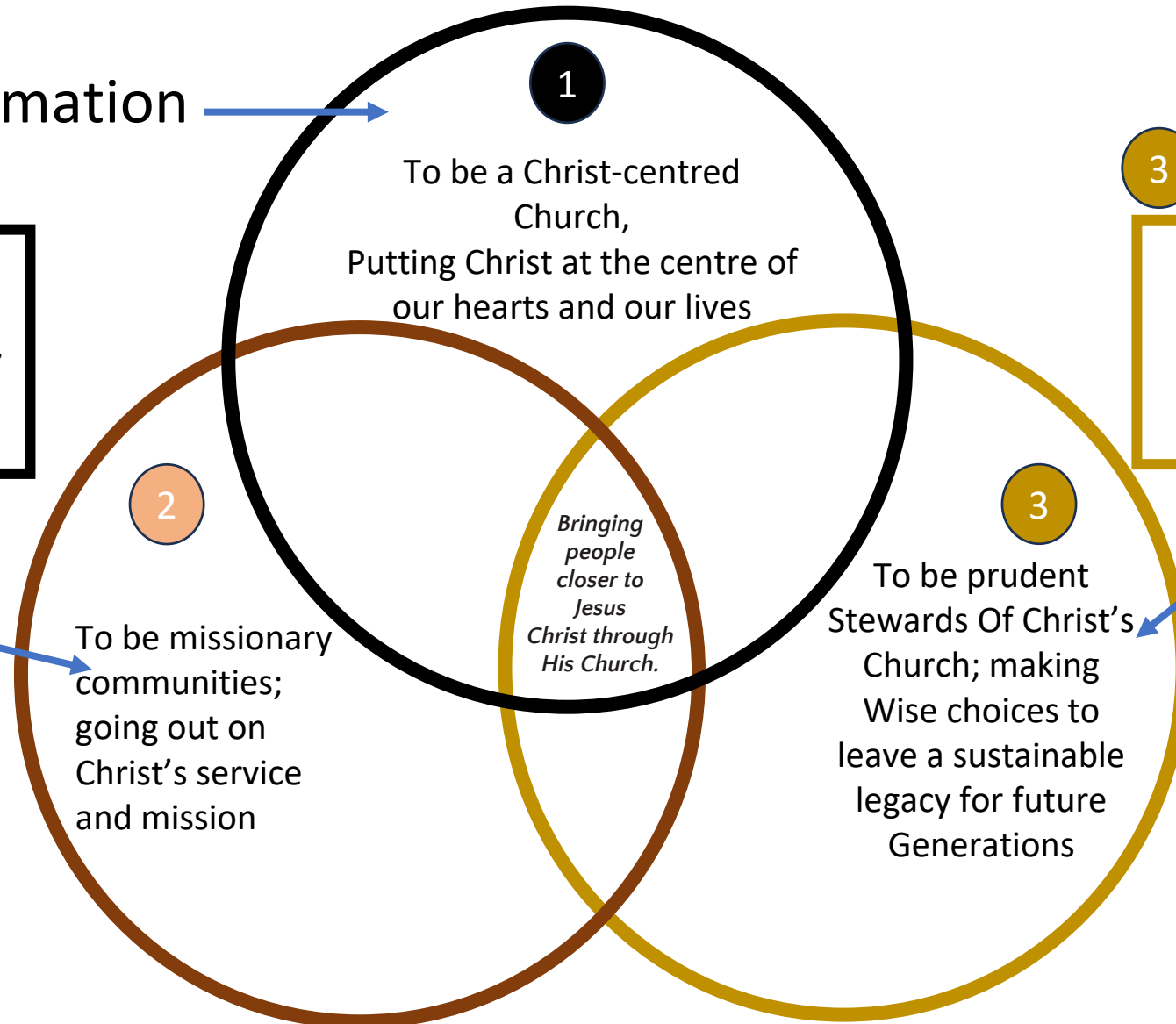
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1. Uplifting and devotional liturgy through music and prayer
2. Ongoing formation in faith for all, both clergy and lay
3. Locally led evangelisation

Outreach

2

1. Leadership focused on mission & service
2. Our young Church nurtured & inspired
3. Church beyond walls



1
To be a Christ-centred Church,
Putting Christ at the centre of
our hearts and our lives

2
To be missionary communities;
going out on
Christ's service
and mission

*Bringing people
closer to
Jesus
Christ through
His Church.*

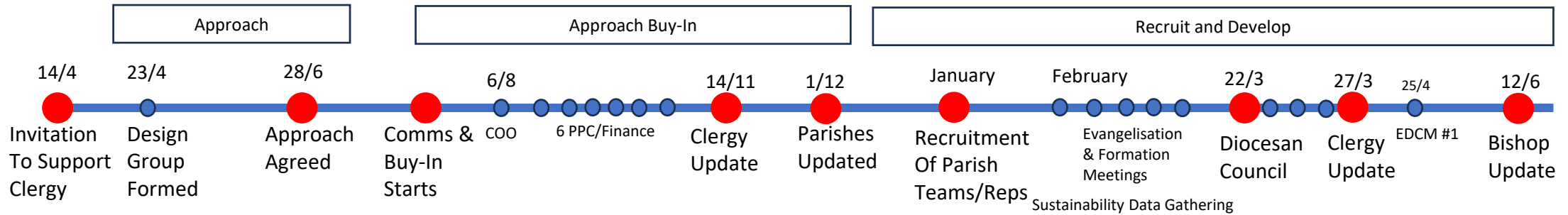
3
To be prudent
Stewards Of Christ's
Church; making
Wise choices to
leave a sustainable
legacy for future
Generations

3

1. Reshaped structures
2. Prudent stewardship of our resources
3. Investing for the future

Sustainability

How We Got Here?



- 10 Year Plan – need to break it down
 - **Phase 0** – Design appropriate approach, research resources, gather data
 - **Phase 1** – Set the foundation (recruit/build tools)
 - **Phase 2** – Implement tools – (Set sustainability targets, Commence E,F&S actions)
 - **Phase 3** – Make self sustaining

Introduction - Our PA Context



Our Lady & St Edmund, Abingdon

English Martyrs, Didcot

St Mary's, East Hendred

Holy Rood, Hinksey

Our Lady of the Rosary, Hinksey


St John the Evangelist, Wallingford

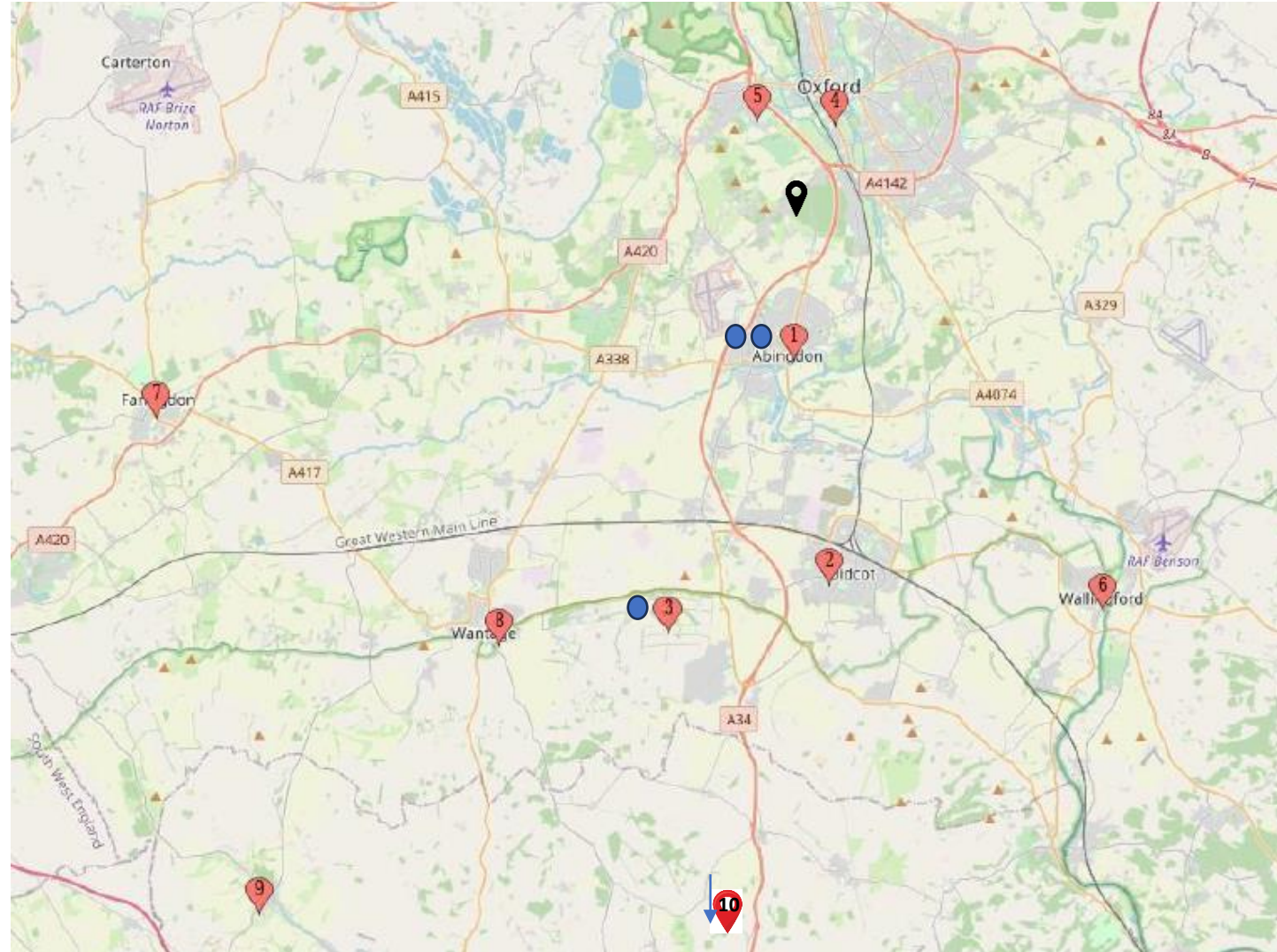
Blessed Hugh Farrington

St John Vianney, Wantage

The Sacred Heart, Lambourn

St Patrick's East Ilsley

*St Thomas More Church Boars Hill 





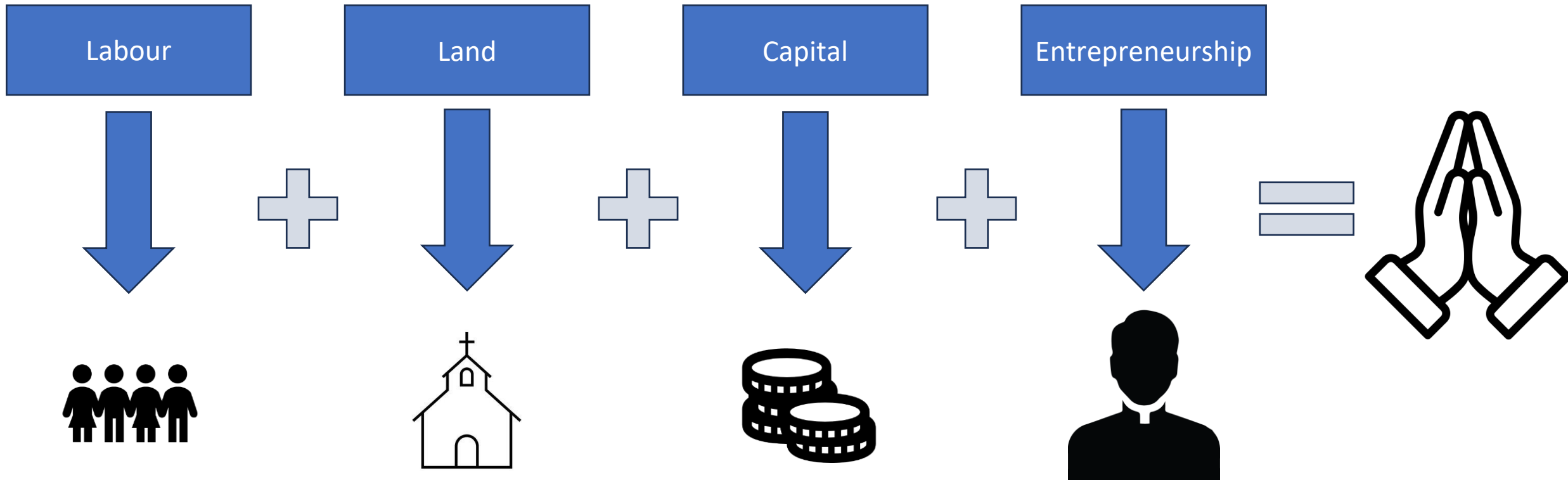
Sustainability

Sustainability - Overview



"God created everything for man, but man in turn was created to serve and love God and to offer all creation back to him"

- CCC 358

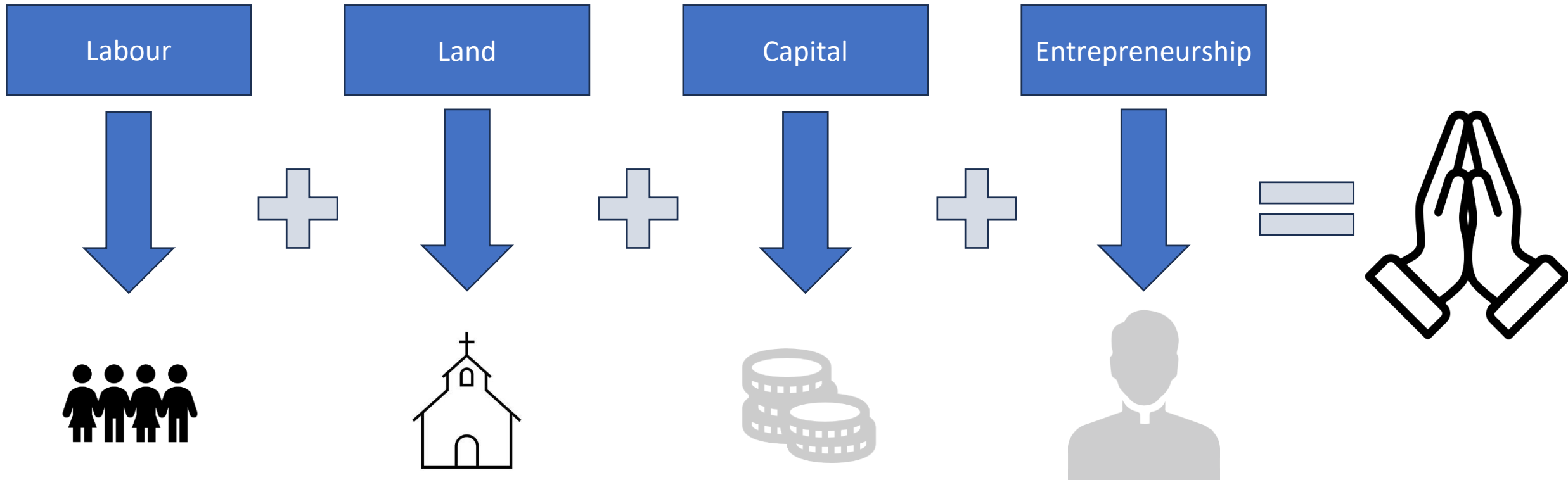


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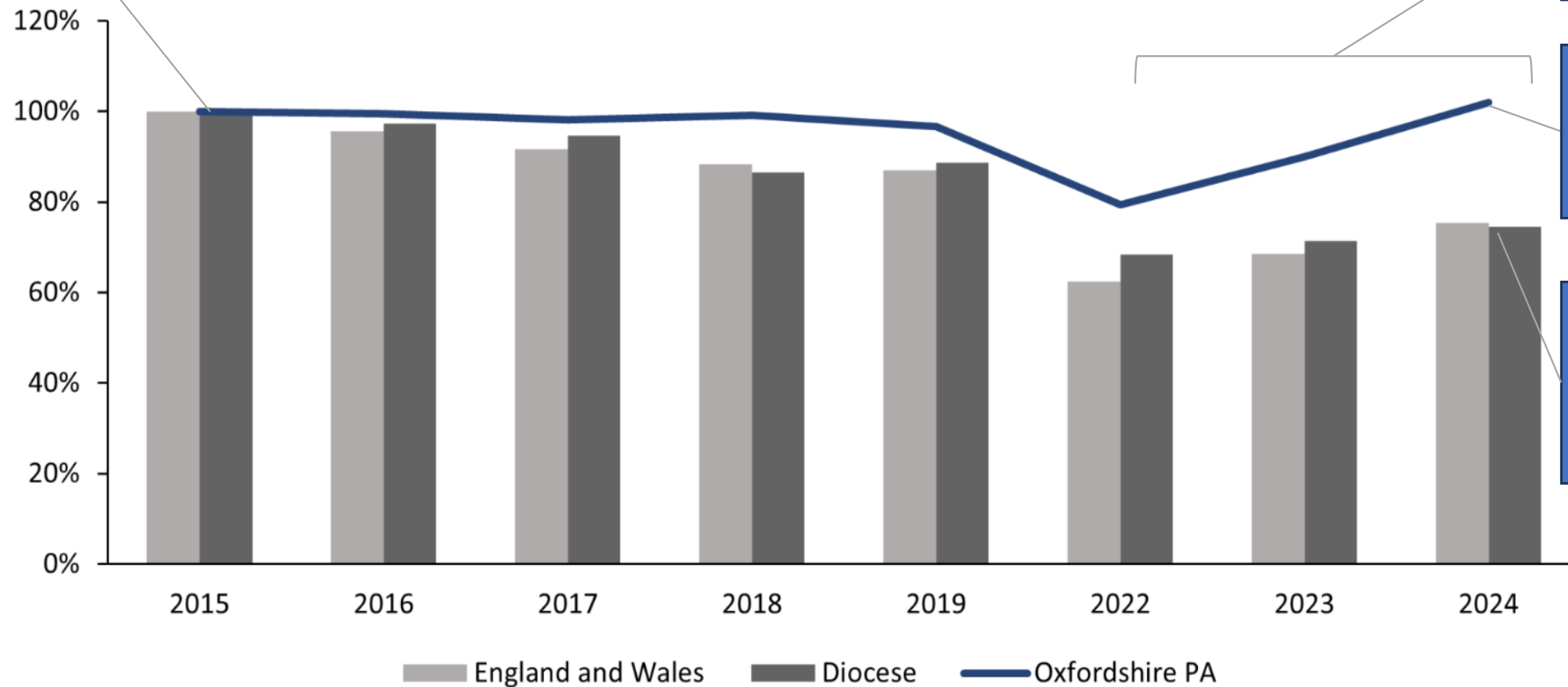


Sustainability - People



PA mass count as a proportion of Diocesan mass count has increased *from 4.5% in 2015 to 6.1% in 2024*

Mass count as % of 2015



Mass count growth since 2022:
- PA: 29%
- Diocese: 9%

2024 PA mass count of 1,694 – *above 2015 mass count*

2024 mass count for Diocese and across England and Wales was c. 75% of 2015 mass count



Sustainability - People

South Oxfordshire is Changing!

“Our Districts have strong economies and are home to some regionally and globally important employment areas including Culham Campus for fusion energy, robotics and autonomous systems; Milton Park/Didcot Garden Town for life sciences & creative industries; and Harwell Campus for space, health and energy, (including world leading science and research facilities at Rutherford Appleton Laboratory and the European Space Agency.”

“The broad area where significant employment parks are located is known as “Science Vale.” It spans the Wantage /Grove area of VoWH, across Harwell Campus and Milton Park through to Culham, Didcot in South Oxfordshire. Some of our employment sites are located within 2 Enterprise Zones (i) Science Vale Oxford and (ii) Didcot Growth Accelerator.”

Population 2021
Census 287,998

Population 2041
forecast c387, 000

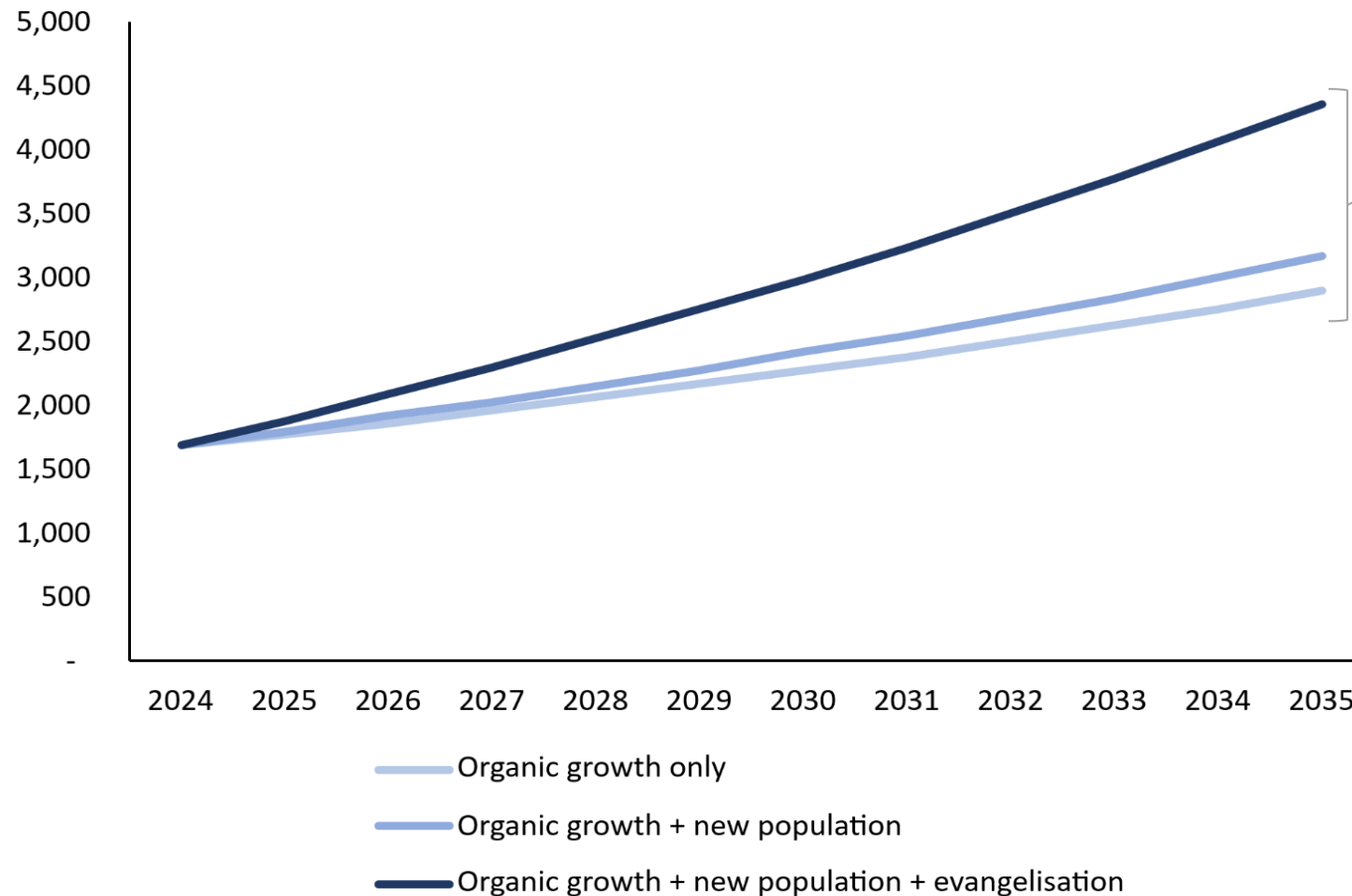
Population
growth driven by
30,500 new
homes by 2041

VoWHDC/SODC Joint Local Plan 2041

Sustainability - People



Illustrative mass count forecasts



Illustrative mass count in 2035 between:

- 2,900 (70% growth from 2024)
- 4,400 (260% growth from 2024).

Detailed population modelling work commissioned to understand future opportunities more accurately.



Sustainability - Property

Is our Property serving God?

- For Worship! As Workplaces and Homes for our clergy! Community Assets!
- Not for profit, our buildings should be beacons of our faith.
- Respecting what we have been given, making the most of it - not just maintain it.
- Business-like stewardship - to be a good seneschal of lands to our Lord.



Sustainability - Property

Good Stewardship of Church Property - Positive Management

An Estate Management Plan can:

- Create a **safe** environment as workplaces/homes for clergy; for public worship; and for rental.
- Meet **future** worship and capacity needs with less disruption.
- **Optimise** estate income and cost management.
- Plan and target spending/extra funding - **informed decisions**.
- **Preventive** not reactive maintenance.
- **Compliant** with building rules and regulations.
- Support **environmental** / carbon goals.



Sustainability - Property

Initial Action Plan

- Gathering accurate data and information is key to understanding the estate.
- Scheduling visits to all sites to understand local issues from finance contacts and to triangulate the data with what is seen and heard.
- Establish relationships and sharing of plans.
- Develop an estate terrier for **positive management**.



Evangelisation & Formation

Evangelisation & Formation Framework



Sacraments

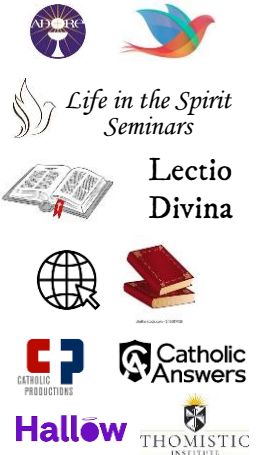
Supporting



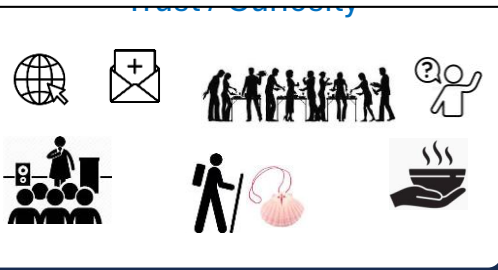
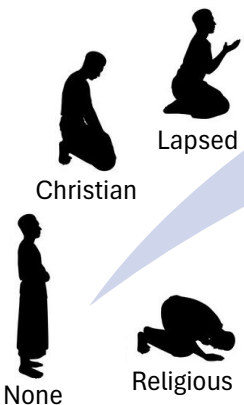
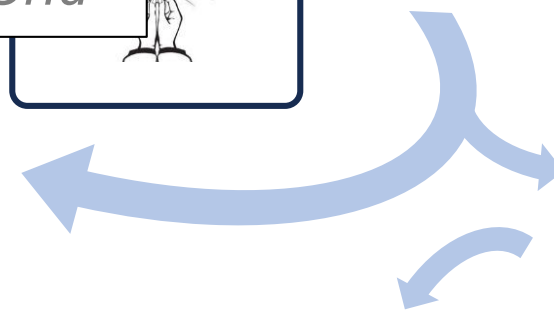
- Framework enumerates choices available to support each threshold of the faith journey
- Parishes are free to use resources for different thresholds or use any other resources
- Parishes are 'strongly encouraged' to focus on Must-Haves
- Each parish's choices need to be captured in a plan ... the Grid



Faith Development



Expectations





Must haves



Parish Evangelisation Grid



Recurring support / programmes, not events	Trust / Curiosity	Openness	Seeking	Discipleship	Faith Development
 Christian	Pgm: Landings When: half-yearly, Feb & Oct Who: Jim @ Hendred Parish Notes: we can send max 5 MTG: invite to one of our PECS ce		Programme: When: Who is leading: Notes: Mind-The-Gap:		
	When: yearly, Apr Who: Mary Notes: run with formation team MTG: small group creates a new PECS cell				RCIA
 None Religious	Parish offering in Year 3	Parish offering in Year 2	Parish offering in Year 2		

Parish Evangelisation Grid



- Simple, structured, bottom-up planning tool – 3-year rolling plan
- Easy to adapt as the Parish responds to the Holy Spirit's lead
- Encourages support of all thresholds on the faith journey, over time
- On-line, 1 side of A4 when printed, easy to share & absorb
- Supports communication: formation team, catechists, Priest, other parishes
- Enables shared delivery across PA
- Reveals commonality and gaps to Design Group – targeted support





Let's look at a real PEG ...

Parish Evangelisation Grid







Abingdon Parish Evangelisation Grid (Current, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3)

Last Updated: 09-Jun-2025

	Trust / Curiosity	Openness	Seeking	Discipleship	Faith Development
Lapsed 	Per: Landings Freq: Weekly, 8wks Who: Sandar/Carole Notes: Taster course 9-Jun MTG: Group could form a PECS cell	Per: Sycamore (in the style of Alpha) Freq: Weekly, Oct-Dec Who: Sandar/Carole Notes: MTG: follow-up small group using 'Journey Together in Faith', Barbara	Per: Sycamore (in the style of Alpha) Freq: Weekly, Oct-Dec Who: Sandar/Carole Notes: MTG: follow-up small group using 'Journey Together in Faith', Barbara		Per: Ascension Press Freq: Bi-weekly, 10wks, June Who: Jimena / Eileen Notes: For FHC parents MTG: Follow up with PECS
Christian 			Per: Sycamore (in the style of Alpha) Freq: Weekly, Oct-Dec Who: Sandar/Carole Notes: MTG: follow-up small group using 'Journey Together in Faith', Barbara	Per: RCIA Freq: Annually, Oct Who: Fr Jamie Notes: MTG:	Per: Called and Gifted Freq: Feb '26 Who: Carole Notes: MTG: Follow up with small groups and discussions - roles in church Per: Alpha Who: TBD Notes: For Young Adults MTG: Follow up with monthly Young Adult Club meetings and outings
Religious 		Per: Alpha Freq: Weekly October-December Who: Sandar/Carole Notes: Holy Spirit Day with Christchurch MTG: follow-up small group using 'Journey Together in Faith', Barbara	Per: Sycamore (in the style of Alpha) Freq: Weekly, Oct-Dec Who: Sandar/Carole Notes: MTG: follow-up small group using 'Journey Together in Faith', Barbara		
None 					

Must-Haves (Current, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3)

Welcome 	Intercessory Prayer 	Small Groups 	Ananias Training 
Per: Welcoming at Mass When: every Mass Who: Welcome Team Notes:	Mothers Prayers Charismatic Prayer Monthly Prayer mtgs Morning Rosary	Per: PECS When: Weekly (start TBD) Who: Sandar Notes: Focused on lapsed initially	Per: Keys to Accompaniment When: June / July Who: Evangelisation Team first, then whole parish in phases Notes:

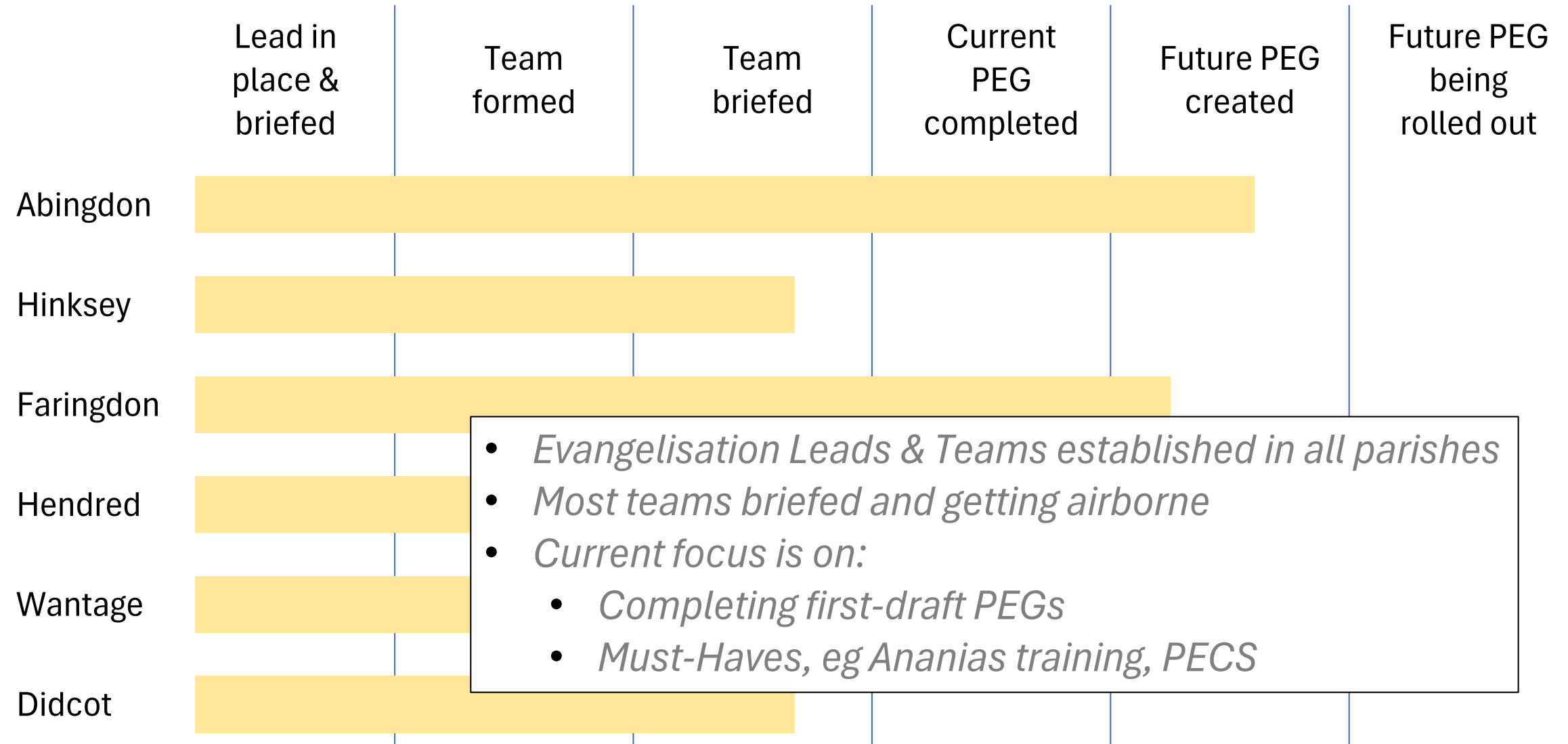
Parish Evangelisation Grid - Benefits



Of the 6 parishes, Abingdon is the furthest ahead and so their PEG is the best illustration of the planning tool

- It's real, it is the Abingdon parish's emerging plan for evangelisation
- It is a shared document (Google) so the whole evangelisation team can see and edit the plan and it can be easily shared with others in the parish & the PA
- The first draft was reviewed with Chris H and that revealed some refinements which the tool highlighted:
 - It prompted the recognition that more was going on currently than first thought
 - The plan was a bit too ambitious and so it was spread out a little over time
 - It highlighted the gap in 'trust and curiosity' threshold for other Christians which can now be a focus for future planning

Initial Parish Phase Status



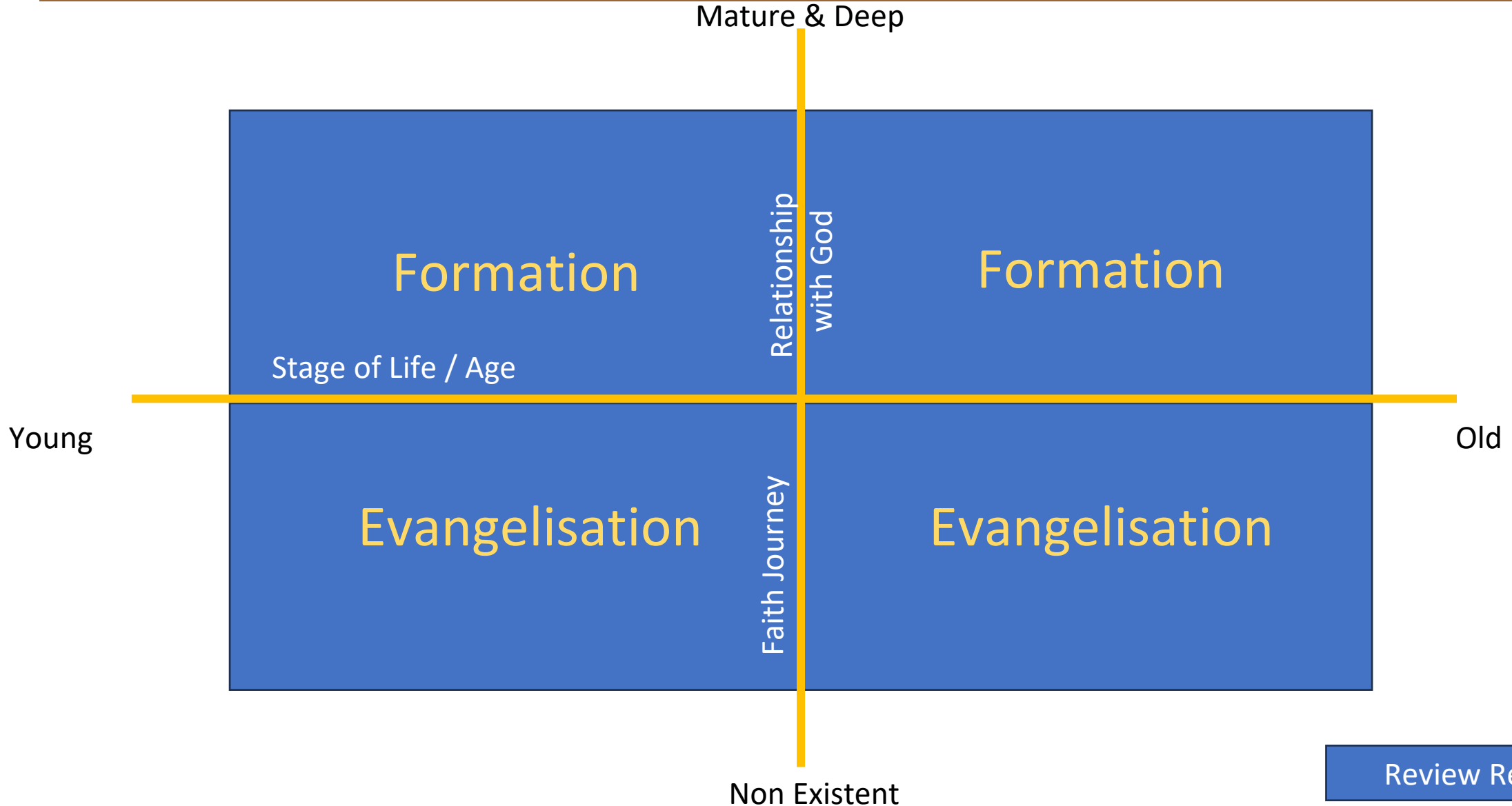


Formation

Formation – Initial Model



Mature & Deep



[Review Resources](#)

Formation - Summary



- Resource repository – “Collaborate Don’t Duplicate”
- **Access** to structured programmes, events & “self study”
- Determine PA delivered v Parish Delivered
- Key Principle - Training for future catechists
- Schools -
 - Primary Schools Needs
 - Teacher Formation
 - Secondary School
 - Feasibility & Business Case



Marketing & Communication

“Church Beyond Walls”

Phase 1 - Outreach

Marketing & Communication



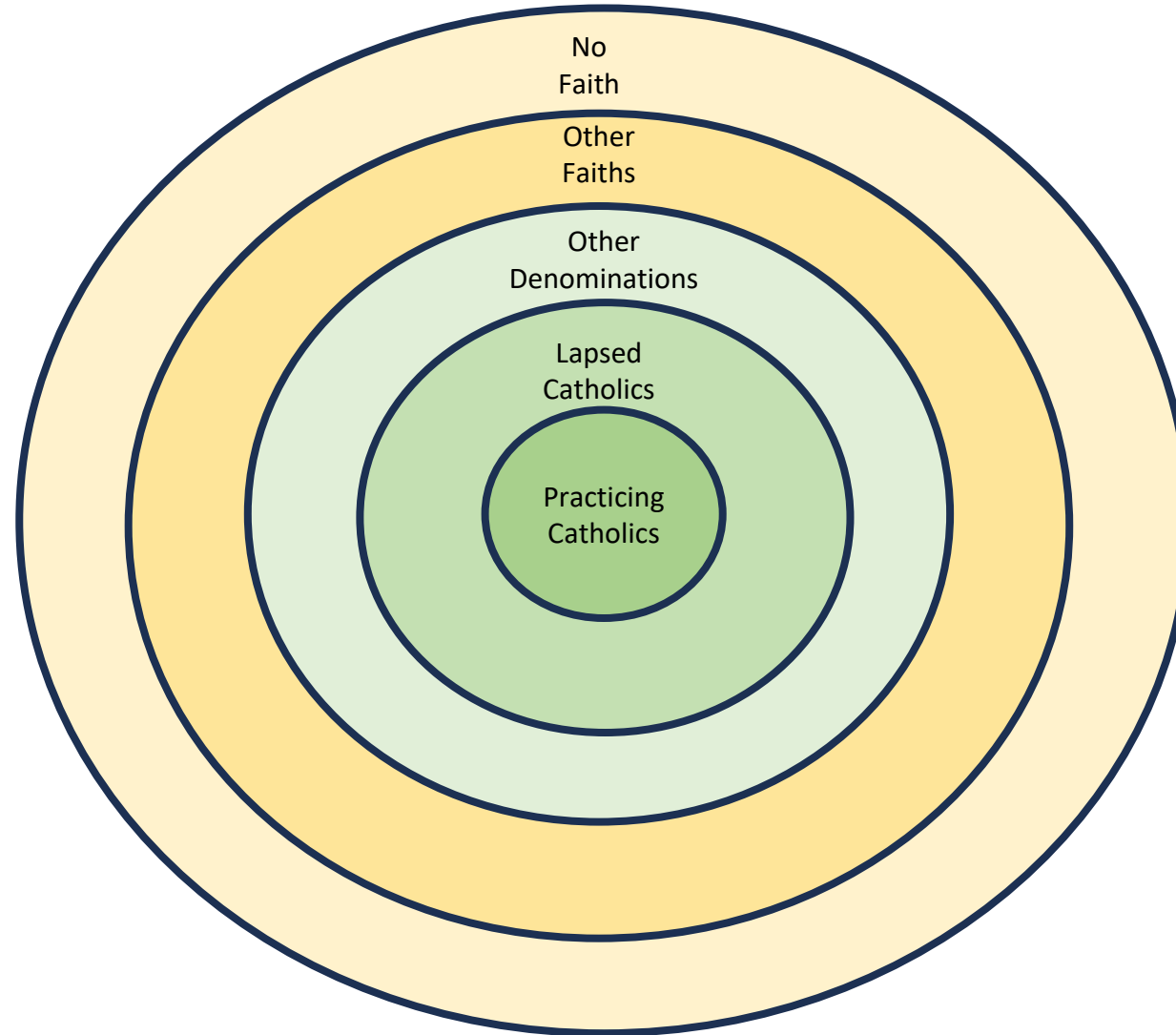
Context

PA Population

Current - 287,998¹

Forecast 2031 – 339,400²

Forecast 2041 - 387,000



1. Source <https://data.oxfordshire.gov.uk/population/current-population/>

2. [JSNA Bitesize on future population growth](#) (August 2024)

Communication & Marketing



The extraordinary resurgence of the Catholic faith in Britain



As younger generations look for more clarity in their lives, many are turning to faith to find answers

[‘A revival is happening’: Church hails resurgence among young in UK](#)



‘A revival is happening’: Church hails resurgence among young in UK

Father John Armitage is an incredibly busy man. His church, St Margaret’s Parish, welcomed a staggering 5,000 people across 20 masses in Holy Week. Church attendance across all Christian denominations has been in decline across England and Wales, with the latest figures from the Office for National Statistics describing both as “minority Christian countries”. But that national

www.msn.com

According to BBC Radio 4 (2025) - 'research shows the web is where we are spending our time', and (whether we like it or not!) 'young people are spending more time on social media each day than in school lessons'

Communication & Marketing Methods



**YWBMW recognises the need for *'new ways of engaging with people',
'new ways of working' and the need to 'refresh the internal culture
within our diocese'*.**



Digital Communication & Marketing



Gives us what we have now PLUS:

- £££ economies of scale
- Valuable Resource Repository
- Captures Important Parishioner Data
- The Hub for Social Media Communities
- Enables Email and SMS Marketing
- Establishes relationships
- Enables Parishioner Surveys
- Maintain Parish Flexibility
- SEO – increasing people finding us on searches
- Conform to GDPR law
- Conform to Safeguarding processes

Every Day Christian Marketing
A Catholic Web Design & Marketing Service
And Flocknote



Communication & Marketing Strategy

Our strategy is focusing on the following:

A refreshed and updated PA website

*ensuring that our central communication tool is attractive and effective for **all** users, providing relevant, consistent and easy to access information*

Focused social marketing

Facebook, Instagram etc will give greater visibility and reach

Targeted email and SMS

will ensure effective, bespoke and timely communications for the various groups

Sharing promotional videos

a great way to leverage visual information of interest and promote accessibility to the Good News

An effective marketing and communications strategy which reflects research findings/insights into clearly identified target groups and communications channels and ensure we incorporate valuable information into our plan and formulate the most effective ways of engaging with the various groups within their area.

Next Steps



- Sustainability
 - Population Modelling
 - Financial Modelling
 - Data gathering continues
 - Scheduling site visits to understand local issues
 - Establishing relationships & sharing of plans
 - Establishing an estates terrier
- Evangelisation & Formation
 - Completing first draft PEGS
 - Confirming and developing “Must Haves”
 - Refining the Formation Resources
 - Assessing “Access” options
- Marketing & Comms
 - Specifying Digital Capability
 - Engaging appropriate provider
 - Parish newsletter update

Summary



- Our approach takes account of our PA Context
- We are developing for our future as well as current community
- “Magnet not Mandate” philosophy
- We are learning as we go & trying to be adaptable
- We have achieved a lot in 14 months, but are still “building”

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