

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



**‘Oxfordshire’  
Pastoral Area**

**Response to  
Diocesan 10-Year Plan:  
‘You will be my witnesses’**

# Let us pray ...

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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.

# Introductions

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Chris Bevan



Our Lady & St Edmund,  
Abingdon

Phil Harrison



St John Vianney,  
Wantage

Chris Harrison



St Mary's  
East Hendred

Paul Armstrong



Holy Rood,  
Hinksey



# Diocesan Vision

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***Christ-centred missionary communities** founded on a strong partnership between our parishes, schools, small groups, families, and individuals all working together to grow in faith and authentically witness the love of God. Communities which reach out, welcome, and inspire so that our Diocese may truly **bring people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church.***

# Diocesan Mission



1

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

Evangelisation & Formation

1

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

3

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

Outreach

2

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

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

Sustainability



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This is a worthy aspiration and fundamentally,  
it is about GROWTH and SUSTAINABILITY.  
But we need to have a plan for our Pastoral Area,  
and the Diocese agrees!

The Pastoral Area clergy called together a group of parishioners with expertise in Transformation & Change to advise and support them in this challenge.

This is the **Design Group**, who have proposed an approach to respond to Diocesan plan

# Who are we?

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## **Chris Bevan**

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**

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**

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.



# Principles

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- **Transparency** – nothing should be hidden or left unsaid
- **Accountability** – the Pastoral Area clergy are accountable for this endeavour; the Design Group is responsible for designing the response but remains advisory
- **No rush** – it's a 10 year plan; it will require stages/phases
- **Assess – Plan - Act** - we should assess before planning and taking action, the outcomes are not yet known
- **Collaborative** – we are all in this together; the Design Group is facilitating, not imposing an outcome; everyone is invited to play a part
- **DIY** – use ‘in-house’ lay skills in change management finance and communication
- **Holy Spirit led** – we are not a secular corporation, we must always be led by the Holy Spirit and seek to do God's work

# Observations about the Diocesan Plan

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## **You might think ...**

- The vision is good
- The challenge is real
- We have to re-structure into one 'super parish'
- The Diocese has given us a clear plan to adopt
- There is a well-trodden path for us to follow

## **... Actually**

- It is!
- It is, but we don't know yet the scale of the challenge in our area
- We don't. We can work out our own approach to addressing the challenge we face
- It hasn't; we need to create our own plan that applies to us
- There isn't; we will largely need to find our own way

# 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 Farringdon

St John Vianney, Wantage

The Sacred Heart, Lambourn

St Patrick's East Ilsley

\*St Thomas More Church Boars Hill



# Our PA Context

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- **Geographic** – a large rural and semi-urban area, not a city which we perceive as more suited to amalgamation
- **Change is scary** – our lay people are expressing concerns about uncertainty & losing their parish and their priest
- **Challenge is real** – the challenges articulated in YWBMW are real: buildings, money and priests ...
- **Our PA** – ... but we don't know the extent of the specific challenges across our PA; how sustainable are we?
- **Patchy Formation** – our lay adults vary widely in their state of formation
- **Patchy Evangelisation** – our parishes vary widely in their approach to evangelisation
- **Clergy Activity & Support** – Lay parishioners need to “step up”

# Approach

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- **Seek to understand & address our challenges without amalgamation**
  - **Focus on three areas in parallel** – Sustainability, Evangelisation and Formation
    - **Sustainability** – first establish and share the scale of the challenge
    - **Formation** – (re)equip the whole PA for evangelisation
    - **Evangelisation** – give evangelisation a chance to achieve sustainability; only then consider (if required), the need for re-shaping

**Our approach has been endorsed by the Diocese**



# Where do we start?

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- **Assess** – for each focus area, start by assessing where we are
  - **Sustainability** – assess by parish and roll-up to PA:
    - Current state of buildings, from Quinquennial Inspection reports & forecast trends
    - Current state of finances, income sources, dependencies and vulnerabilities
    - Current & future priestly resource
  - **Formation** – assess each parish:
    - Adult formation status – pew survey?
    - Catechesis – programmes, numbers, self-assess quality
  - **Evangelisation** – assess each parish:
    - Consult with parishes
    - Identify best practice
    - Explore external sources of guidance and best practice

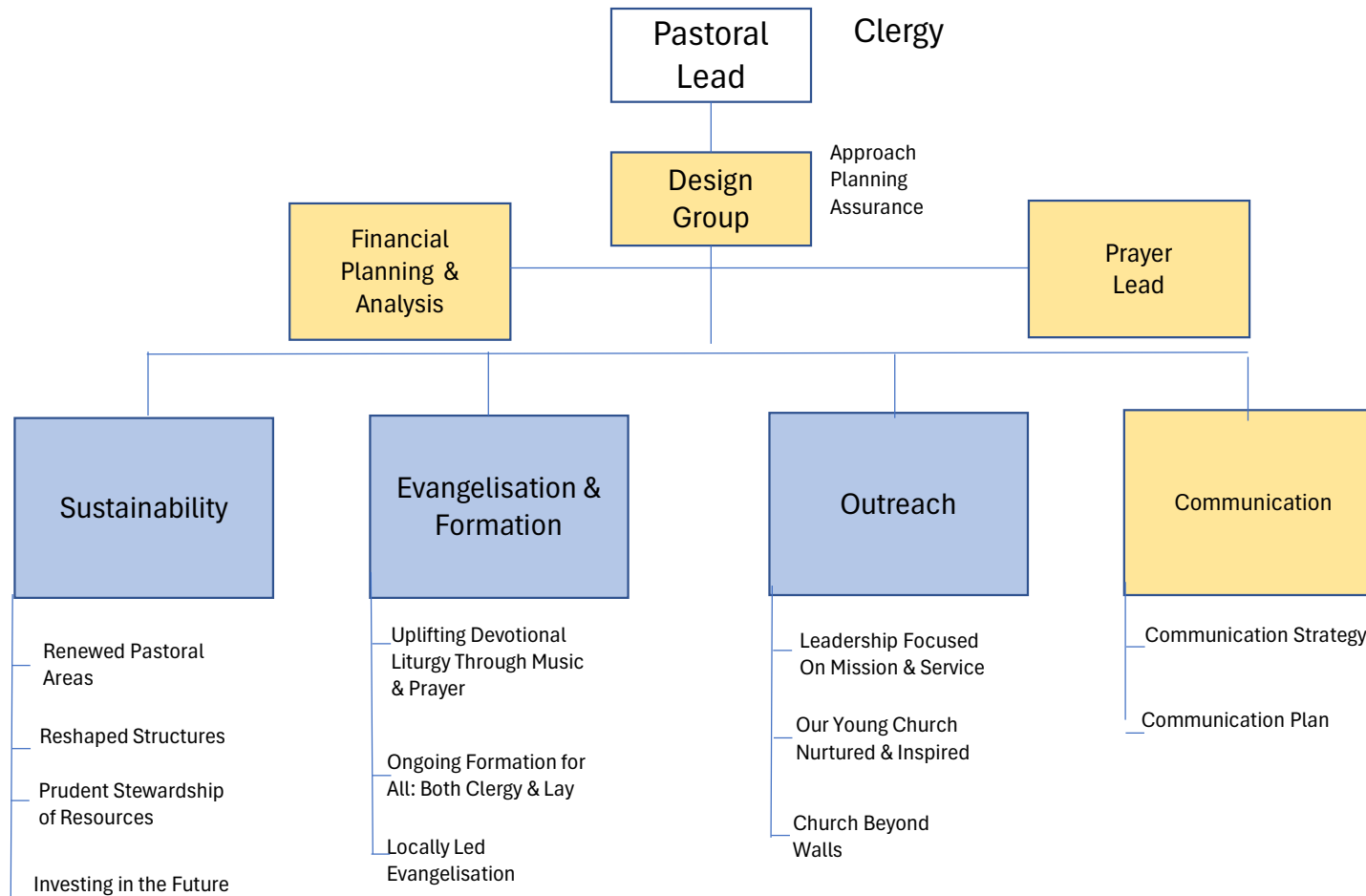
# Communication

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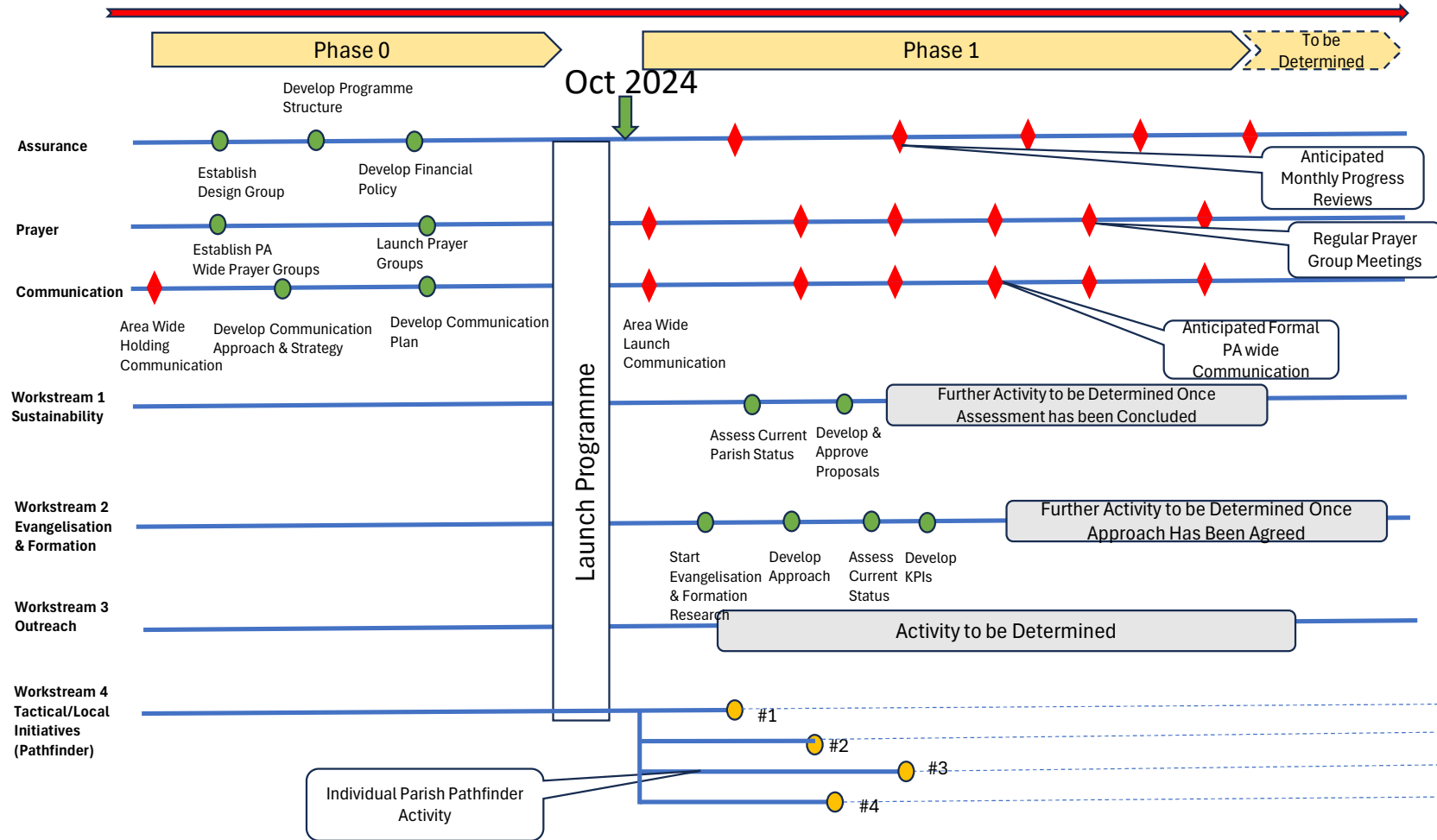
- **Stakeholders** – Clergy, Parishioners, Diocese, Schools, Staff
- **Two-way** – we need to both listen and inform
  - Outbound: eg briefing sessions, website, emails, printed materials, briefings for clergy
  - Inbound: eg briefing sessions, website, surveys, clergy
- **Expertise** – we need a lay lead to do this professionally

# Programme Scope & Framework





# Indicative Roadmap



# So What's Next?

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- **Preparation** – We need a Communication professional to join the Design Group
- **Sustainability** - Assess the level of sustainability of each individual parish and identify actions required to achieve the required level sustainability and identify a feasible time frame
- **Evangelisation** – Review current practice in each parish, research approaches and options, develop an approach that fits with each parish's personality & test.
- **Formation** – Review current practice in each parish, research approaches and options, develop an approach that fits with each parish's personality & test.
- **Pathfinders** – Review local activities currently underway or planned to identify how they can contribute to the overall Vision and Mission
- **“Connectedness”** – explore ways in which our parishes can become more connected
- **Plan** – develop our Plan for Phase 1 (Assess)



# Call to Action!

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## **We need you to.....**

- Set up /Maintain Prayer Groups & Activities
- Identify Finance Contact
- Identify Buildings Contact
- Identify Evangelisation contact
- Help us find a Communications expert

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