

People Fully Alive: Ely 2025 – a strategy for growth in the Diocese of Ely

By Sarah Williams, Diocesan Communications Manager

The Diocese of Ely is about to formally launch a new strategy, unambiguously aimed at transformation and growth. This strategy has arisen out of Bishop Stephen's call to imagine our future and from the development over the last few years of a diocesan vision and set of imperatives.

'We pray to be generous and visible people of Jesus Christ' is our diocesan vision. It gives us a picture of the kind of church and people of God we hope to be. It gives us something to aim for. The 'we' is the diocese in all its forms – individuals, PCCs, parishes, deaneries and diocesan bodies – all of us are invited on this journey to continue to discern what God is calling us to be: a people fully alive here in Cambridgeshire and West Norfolk.

The strategy in its final format has been shaped by the 2,000 plus people who attended the consultation roadshows across the diocese, and the insightful and prayerful responses of individuals, parishes and groups who contributed to the survey. Overwhelmingly there is a desire and sense of urgency for change. There is an appetite to engage with, and welcome, steps towards transformation and growth. There is a widespread desire to cherish the past but to invest in the future.

So the strategy aims to begin to help us map out the future of the church over the next ten years as we look towards Ely 2025. This is a huge challenge. It means there has to be new ways of working, it will take time to adjust to, and not everything will be able to be done at once. We will need to pace ourselves as we immerse ourselves into the unfolding narrative of becoming people fully alive.

Key signposts in the strategy are the levers of change. These provide a common language and focus for our priorities and actions. The levers set the agenda and overall direction of travel as we begin now to identify the opportunities and challenges ahead.

The levers are:

- Nurture a confident people of God
- Develop healthy churches
- Serve the community
- Re-imagine our buildings
- Target support to key areas.

The strategy will be fully integrated with the outworking of mission and ministry in the diocese. We will, as our imperatives indicate, engage fully and courageously with the needs of our communities, locally and globally; grow God's church by finding disciples and nurturing leaders; and we will deepen our commitment to God through word, worship and prayer.

None of this will work without being deeply rooted in God's grace, help and blessing. No work of ours is of any use at all unless we seek to abide deeply and continuously in the divine life and love. We wish to be rooted in prayer.

Speaking of our strategy, Bishop Stephen says:

'As much as anything else our strategy is a call to prayer. We pray ... that we may be the people God calls us to be, fully alive in Him.'

What next? This autumn our Archdeacons Hugh and Alex, together with Diocesan Secretary, Paul Evans, will lead a series of roadshows around the diocese. These will give you the opportunity to hear more details of how the strategy is being implemented and what the key priorities and actions are.

Dates and venues can be found on the diocesan website here:

<http://www.ely.anglican.org/about/strategy-consultation.html>

Please do come and find out more.