



backing to a drive for a church to be set up on every significant social  
rm.

Members of the Church of England's national assembly voted in favour of a motion urging all the dioceses to include evangelism on social housing estates in their strategies and clergy deployment plans.

The Bishop of Burnley, Philip North, who heads the Church of England's Estates Evangelism Task Group, told the General Synod of the 'transformative' effect for both Church and nation of setting up Christian communities on social housing estates.

In the past, he told the General Synod, the Church had closed churches and withdrawn clergy from social housing estates in spite of growing hardship experienced by estate residents.

He told the General Synod debate: "So here's the vision. It's a very simple one. To have a loving, serving, worshipping Christian community on every significant social housing estate in the nation. To plant back in the estates we have abandoned, to better support our presence in the places where we're struggling.

"If we can do that, the impact on church and nation will be transformative."

Earlier the General Synod heard a series of contributions from members about the work of estates churches.

Izzy McDonald-Booth, from the Diocese of Newcastle, spoke about the growth of a church on the Byker Wall Estate supported by an energetic and passionate priest and lay team.

She said: "People here are passionate about their estate, but they need hope, and we can give them that. These are the places where the Church needs to be present in, there are manifold issues but if we are serious about our faith then these are exactly the places that we need a presence in."

Rev Rosemarie Mallett, who works in a parish in Angell Town, in Brixton, south London, warned that estate churches needed to work in partnership with other groups.

"In the estate, the work that I have been able to do with young people has been because of the work in partnership with our school, the school is at the heart of the community," she said.

"If we think we must do this by ourselves, we will struggle, we need to find partners in the gospel, and partners in social action."

# Notes to editors

The Church of England has announced more than £8 million from its Strategic Development Fund (SDF) since 2017 for mission and ministry on deprived urban estates. The fund is part of the Church's Renewal and Reform programme which aims to create a growing church for all people and for all places. SDF grants have funded a range of ministry and activities including cafe churches, churches meeting in community centres and 'pioneer' ministers to work on estates.

The work of the estates churches can include social action projects such as debt 'coaches' and job clubs housed on church premises. Many churches and pioneer ministers working on estates already support social action projects such as school uniform banks and low-cost food provision.

A fifth of the Church of England's 12,500 parishes are estimated to be 'estates parishes' meaning that they include at least 500 social housing units.

Here is the full text of the motion on estates evangelism:

*That this Synod, committed to the Church of England's vocation to be a Christian presence in every community, and noting the historic marginalisation of social housing estates in the policies of both church and nation:*

- *(a) commend the vision of the Estates Evangelism Task Group to see a serving, loving and worshipping Christian community on every significant social housing estate in the country;*
- *(b) urge every diocese to build ministry and mission on estates into its mission strategies, clergy deployment plans and SDF funding bids; and*
- *(c) give thanks for the Christian leadership offered by people from estate communities and calls upon the Archbishops' Council, the Church Commissioners and the NCIs, through their work under the Renewal and Reform programme, to enable the voices of people from estates and other marginalised communities to be heard and heeded in the life of the Church of England.*

# Notes to editors

The Church of England has announced more than £8 million from its Strategic Development Fund (SDF) since 2017 for mission and ministry on deprived urban estates. The fund is part of the Church's Renewal and Reform programme which aims to create a growing church for all people and for all places. SDF grants have funded a range of ministry and activities including cafe churches, churches meeting in community centres and 'pioneer' ministers to work on estates.

The work of the estates churches can include social action projects such as debt 'coaches' and job clubs housed on church premises. Many churches and pioneer ministers working on estates already support social action projects such as school uniform banks and low-cost food provision.

A fifth of the Church of England's 12,500 parishes are estimated to be 'estates parishes' meaning that they include at least 500 social housing units.

Here is the full text of the motion on estates evangelism:

*That this Synod, committed to the Church of England's vocation to be a Christian presence in every community, and noting the historic marginalisation of social housing estates in the policies of both church and nation:*

- *commend the vision of the Estates Evangelism Task Group to see a serving, loving and worshipping Christian community on every significant social housing estate in the country;*
- *urge every diocese to build ministry and mission on estates into its mission strategies, clergy deployment plans and SDF funding bids; and*
- *give thanks for the Christian leadership offered by people from estate communities and calls upon the Archbishops' Council, the Church Commissioners and the NCIs, through their work under the Renewal and Reform programme, to enable the voices of people from estates and other marginalised communities to be heard and heeded in the life of the Church of England.*

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/general-synod-backs-drive-create-new-churches-estates>