



are to be supported by the Church of England as part of a drive to
ed today.

Sports Factory, Norwich

Football, netball and fitness groups are to be funded by the Church of England in Norfolk alongside holiday sports schemes and sports clubs aimed at children and young people.

The scheme is among projects across the country aimed at spreading the Christian faith, supported by more than £12 million of Strategic Development Funding, a key part of the Church of England's programme of Renewal and Reform.

The projects range from an expansion of Spanish-speaking congregations in south London to work with young people and students in Bradford, Exeter and London and a network of new churches meeting in venues such as community centres, cafés and a former pub in Cornwall.

The grants continue the Church of England's commitment to invest in communities with significant levels of deprivation with projects in St Austell, Liskeard and Camborne in Cornwall receiving funding. Other areas to receive support include Deptford and Erith in south east London, Gillingham in Medway, Kent, and Bradford in West Yorkshire.

Social action projects to receive support include a food bank and other services based at a church in Truro, work to help homeless people in Exeter and plans to support lunch clubs and toddler groups in Keighley.

An 'Eco-church' congregation is to be created in south London with a special interest in the 'fifth mark of mission' - the Anglican Church's commitment to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation – and social justice.

A church-run boxing club in Anerley, south east London, working to prevent young people from turning to knife crime, is one of the parish projects in south east London set to receive support.

In the Diocese of Leicester, a £1.5 million grant has been awarded to encourage greater participation and leadership in Church of England churches by black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) heritage Christians. The project will focus on developing intercultural church communities where people of different cultural and ethnic heritage seek to learn from one another to deepen their understanding and experience of God and of each other.

The sports ministry project in the Diocese of Norwich takes its inspiration from work already underway at St Thomas's Church in the city where 'sports ministers' work alongside children and adults.

The project is the first sports ministry work to be funded by Strategic Development Funding. It could act as a blueprint for dioceses across the country interested in promoting the Christian faith through sports.

Tim Henery, who leads sports ministry at St Thomas's, said: "A lot of young people see the church as just pews and hymns - not something that relates to them. Through playing sports they realise that there are people who come to church and are like them.

“Sports ministry is helping us to reach people who may never have heard the message of the Gospel, helping us to transform their view of the church. We are building relationships and changing lives.”

Ruth Anderson, who founded the sports ministry work at St Thomas’s, said: “Interest in sports and fitness is at an all-time high with huge audiences for the Cricket World Cup and England’s women’s football team in recent weeks. Our work presents an opportunity, through a shared love of sports, to talk about faith and the wider questions of life that we might not otherwise have had.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: “From congregations in cafes and community centres to sports ministry and social action, these projects are moving the heart of our mission to where it should be, recognising Jesus beyond the borders of the institutional church. The Good News of Jesus Christ cannot be contained within existing worshipping communities. We want everyone to know how much they are loved by God.”

Debbie Clinton, who heads the Church of England’s programme of Renewal and Reform, said: “These inspirational and creative projects are further proof of the Church of England’s drive and commitment to bringing the Good News of the Gospel to all communities and areas of the country.”

Here is the list of projects to receive awards from the Strategic Development Fund:

Diocese of Exeter

A new worshipping community in Exeter with a particular focus on mission to students living in the city, based at St Matthew’s church, close to Exeter University’s St Luke’s campus. The bid includes working with organisations such as St Petroc’s homelessness charity and Christians Against Poverty and providing support for ex-offenders. The plans include two further churches to be planted in outlying Exeter estates throughout the project.

Grant of £1.33 million

Diocese of Leeds

Funding for five churches in Bradford and Keighley to support mission in the area. The churches will share expertise and resources and send people to help plant more churches. Three groups of ‘Mission Apprentices’, two-year part time roles, will be recruited with participants supporting social action projects and taking part in training and development. The project includes plans to plant new worshipping communities in Keighley on the town’s outer estates and to develop a coffee shop with a basement prayer space. The grant will also be used to help create a new congregation for young adults supported by St John’s Church in East Bowling, Bradford.

Grant of £1.03 million

Diocese of Leicester

A grant to help the Diocese of Leicester better serve its diverse communities. Plans include six new intercultural worshipping communities (IWCs) with some existing churches, as well as church plants, attracting more black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) heritage worshippers who learn and grow together to build diverse communities which are transformed and moulded from each other's experiences. The project aims to encourage more participation in a range of areas in Anglican parish and diocesan life, including lay leadership and ordained ministry. The hope is to welcome up to 900 people of BAME heritage to be active worshippers who are encouraged to explore leadership and ministry opportunities in their local Church of England church by 2024.

Grant of £1.54 million.

Diocese of Norwich

Funding to create a new church training hub in partnership with St Thomas's Church in Norwich, to develop future leaders and equip new teams who will be appointed to plant and revitalise churches across the diocese. The programme includes a specific focus on young people and families and will embrace and replicate sports ministry St Thomas's Church in ten new locations. The funding will pay for new sports ministers, trainee sports ministers, youth ministers and undergraduate students to work with churches in the diocese.

Grant of £1.98 million

Diocese of Rochester

Funding for four parish projects in South London and Medway as part of the 'Called to Grow' programme with the aim of creating at least 12 new worshipping communities. Includes plans for a new all-age church in local estates, expansion of the Freedom Forum, based at Christ Church, Anerley, including the King's Car Wash and Kings Boxing groups, and planting a gospel congregation in Gillingham.

Grant of £1.39 million

Diocese of Southwark

Funding for six projects in Deptford Deanery, East Greenwich, Elephant and Castle, Lambeth, Summerstown and Horley. Includes expansion of Hispanic bilingual church of St Matthew's at the Elephant and Castle, a new worshipping community as an 'Eco-church' as well as lay workers focussing on students & young adults and greater engagement with children and families.

Grant of £3.1 million

Diocese of Truro

Funding for church growth in St Austell, Camborne, Liskeard and Truro including establishing new worshipping communities meeting in venues such as cafes, community centres and a former pub. The project includes plans to develop a Christians Against Poverty centre in Liskeard and

support for the continued development of social action projects including the food bank and support services at All Saints Highertown in Truro.

Grant of £1.7 million

Mothers' Union

Metamorphosis – an approach to support churches in building relationships and networks within their communities and to help congregations share their faith with others. The funding will help develop new resources and continue to build the skills and confidence of those in the two existing pilots in Ely and Oxford dioceses and would expand the pilots to Canterbury, Portsmouth and Southwark dioceses.

Grant of £190,692

Estates Evangelism Task Group

Capacity funding of £115,037 has been awarded to support the Task Group in taking forward its strategy to support and develop mission to



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