



*written by Dave Gardner, Director of Mission in the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich*

We are developing Pioneer Ministry in the diocese. We now we have:

- An SDF focussed project dedicated to Fresh Expressions (Lightwave)
- Three Pioneer Developers employed via our other SDF project (Inspiring Ipswich)
- A relatively new pathway to license lay pioneers (4 licensed to date)

Some of the issues I have encountered as someone who has been involved in supporting and enabling pioneers for some time is the lack of knowledge of, or the will to engage with pioneer ministry amongst existing clergy and lay ministers (Readers). We now have a licenced route which helps to put this ministry on similar footing to reader ministry alongside other licensed lay ministries (evangelists, children's/families ministers, youth ministers.) As part of the process of establishing licensed pioneers we are challenging the perception that most of the focus of ordained and lay ministry is for the benefit of the existing congregation.

At the more experimental end of the spectrum many of our mission initiatives have not morphed into a fresh expression of church in their own right and are more likely to be a mission activity of the benefice. We have a very high percentage of benefices that are multi parish, serving small communities so the thought of another 'church' is not very appealing to incumbents. It is hoped that 'Lightwave' will address this.

In Ipswich and market towns within the diocese the need for fresh expressions is not very obvious as again most of those who have engaged with Mission Shaped Ministry Course have been developing mission initiatives that are part of parish church outreach. 'Inspiring Ipswich' has an opportunity to develop specific fresh expressions for people groups not represented in our parish churches. They are seeking to create greater awareness of fresh expressions via an introduction course which has just started. You can read more about pioneer ministry in the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich at <https://www.inspiringipswich.org/fresh-expressions>



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