



Help spread the Christian message in urban and deprived areas

Photo Credit Keith Blundy

Awards have been made by the Archbishops' Council to fund mission and evangelism in towns and cities alongside social action projects, from support for new parents to community cafes and food banks.

In the North East, £4 million has been awarded for mission and evangelism in South Tyneside, Sunderland, Hartlepool, Easington and Stockton-on-Tees areas with plans to lease empty high street shops in some towns.

The shops will host 'Communities of Hope', centres where people can explore the Christian faith. The centres will include social projects from food banks to community cafes, budget cookery classes and help with job hunting including CV writing and literacy and numeracy support.

In Manchester and Rochdale £5 million has been awarded for projects to develop new church communities, including a revamp of the Ascension Church in Hulme to include a venue for music and arts activities such as gospel choirs.

The Rochdale and Manchester projects are located in some of the most deprived communities in the country and will provide a range of social action including support for parents and children, and volunteer programmes working in areas such as dependency on drugs and alcohol, and street outreach for homeless people.

In Birmingham, a grant is to be shared for mission and evangelism work by St Mary's Church Pype Hayes in the Aston and Sutton Coldfield areas and a planned new church in Shirley. Services such as a food bank and a youth drop-in would be provided at St Mary's and a community café and support for first time parents in Shirley.

In Liverpool Diocese, £4.61 million has been awarded to develop mission to 11-29 year olds in Liverpool and Wigan.

In Newham, east London, £3 million has been awarded to expand mission work in West Ham and other areas of the borough for new congregations and centres of evangelism. The funding would include work on projects to tackle issues such as homelessness, hunger and drug abuse.

A £1.37 million grant will be used to help support the development of more than 140 lay people to act as community evangelists in Middlesbrough, Hull, Scarborough, Redcar & Cleveland and Bridlington.

There will also be funding to invest in mission and evangelism in Milton Keynes, High Wycombe, Reading, Slough, Southampton and Bournemouth.

The Strategic Development Funding (SDF) grants have been awarded as part of the Church of England's programme of Renewal and Reform, aimed at ensuring that the Church of England once more becomes a growing church for all people in all areas of the country.

The awards have been announced as many areas of the country - particularly the most deprived communities – cope with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Debbie Clinton, Director of Renewal and Reform for the Church of England, said: “The range of work outlined in these projects is a measure of the Church of England’s commitment to all areas of the country – including some of the most deprived urban communities. Our churches are sharing the love of Jesus Christ and bringing the good news of the gospel through spiritual and pastoral support to people as well as practical action.”

Diocese of Birmingham - £963,000

To fund work at St Mary’s Pype Hayes to evangelise in the Aston and Sutton Coldfield areas and a new church in Shirley in Birmingham. These two separate projects will explore social provision, such a food bank and a community café at St Mary’s Pype Hayes and support for first time parents and a youth drop in café in Shirley. Both churches will be supported by St Luke’s Gas Street in Birmingham. This is the final element of an SDF project which was initially awarded Strategic Development Funding of £1.38m earlier this year.

Diocese of Chelmsford - £3 million

To renew mission in Newham, by investing in All Saints West Ham and in three other projects, including work on projects to address issues such as homelessness, hunger and drug abuse and an advisory service for those suffering financially.

Diocese of Durham - £4.02 million

To create 14 ‘Communities of Hope’ in South Tyneside, Sunderland, Hartlepool, Easington (East Durham former coalfields); provide investment to Stockton All Saints to plant a new church in Wynyard and Stockton St Paul’s; Investment in Cleadon Park with St Peter’s Harton in South Shields to revitalise churches in Jarrow deanery and also to help plant at least six new churches in the diocese over the next five years.

Diocese of Liverpool – £4.61 million

The project will develop mission to 11-29 year olds in Liverpool and Wigan by creating a ‘Liverpool Next Generation’ network; investing in hubs at St James in the City and St Barnabas Penny Lane in Liverpool; creating a third hub in the northern end of Liverpool City Centre; and investing in a School of Discipleship to form young leaders.

Diocese of Manchester - £5.035 million

Project to revamp The Ascension Church in Hulme to work with other churches in the area to evangelise and attract new congregations. The

scheme will have support from the HeartEdge Network and St Martin-in-the Fields Church in London to promote music and the arts as well as small scale commercial enterprises such as space for co-working. Five new churches are planned for Rochdale. St Werburgh's Church in Chorlton, Manchester, will become a centre for outreach. All three projects will include a strong emphasis on social engagement in areas such as support for new mothers, and volunteer programmes working in areas such as youth offender mentoring and street outreach for homeless people.

Diocese of Oxford - £2 million

Project to invest in mission in Milton Keynes, High Wycombe, Reading and Slough. Five urban churches, including St Mary's Bletchley, St Andrew's High Wycombe, Greyfriars in Reading and St Paul's in Slough will become centres for building new congregations and supporting existing worshipping communities. The funding is part of a wider plan to create as many as 750 new congregations in rural, urban and market towns in response to rapid social and environmental changes across the Diocese of Oxford.

Diocese of Winchester - £3.19 million

To invest in mission at St Winfrid's Totton, St Michael's Bournemouth and in Southampton City Centre, including revamping churches, evangelism to younger generations and creating new congregations. The three projects will emphasise social engagement in areas such as support for children and young families, early intervention to counter homelessness, addiction, social isolation and mental health problems, and cultural renewal through arts and music.

Diocese of York - £1.37 million

Across Middlesbrough, Hull, Scarborough, Redcar & Cleveland and Bridlington the project will invest in a programme to develop more than 140 local people to become effective in mission and evangelism. Each person will support growth in their own parish church, and some will go on to pioneer new worshipping communities.

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