



More than three decades later, on Saturday 26 June, Heath, 45, as he fulfils his lifelong ambition.

Heath grew up in a coal-mining community near Durham and aspiring to be a vicar did not quite fit in with people's expectations.

"When I was 13 and being confirmed into the Church, I felt a calling to ministry," said Heath, but "initially I ran in the opposite direction" he recalls, before re-discovering his faith in his early 20s.

Heath's career path has ultimately revolved around helping the Church to engage more with those who do not necessarily have faith.

His new role will be as a 'pioneer minister', creating new worshipping communities in the Isle of Wight, designed for those seeking less-traditional styles of church.

The first time he applied to be ordained as a clergyman, around 10 years ago, he was told to wait.

But before finally fulfilling his calling to ordination, Heath has been pioneering mission social action projects and new worshipping communities, offering opportunities for people to explore the Christian faith.

This had included starting up a café church, a church in people's houses called Dwell and founding 'Aspire Ryde' – which involved transforming a large redundant church building into a thriving community hub – visited by thousands of people each week.

Aspire Ryde has been especially busy during the pandemic, with the team offering food hampers and parcels to those in need, collecting prescriptions and offering phone support for those isolating.

"I feel equipped and ready for what God is going to do next" says Heath, as he looks ahead to the future.

More information:

- The Church of England's [Vision and Strategy for the 2020s](#) is helping us to be a Church which proclaims and lives out the Good News of Jesus Christ afresh in every generation.

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