

A fund aimed at helping parishes explore new ways of sharing the Christian message alongside tried and tested approaches has been launched.



Dioceses are being encouraged to apply for a share of the £4.8 million Innovation Funding for projects lasting up to three years that could act as blueprints for future mission and growth across the country.

Successful bids will support the [Church of England's Vision and Strategy](#), in particular, the priority of becoming a Church which is younger and more diverse.

The projects could focus on younger people and children, people living in low income communities and urban areas and people from UK Minority Ethnic groups.

An early Innovation Funding award has been made to the Diocese of Ely to fund sports ministry work over three years with children and young people at Christ the Redeemer church in Barnwell, Cambridge.

The church is on an outer urban estate and nearly one in five people in the parish are aged between five and 18 years old. The project will test how effectively the recruitment of Sports Ministers - trained at Ridley Hall theological education institution - within an urban parish leads to greater engagement with young people.

Decisions on applications for Innovation Funding, which has been provided by the Church Commissioners, will be made by the Strategic Investment Board on behalf of the Archbishops' Council.

John Spence, Chair of the Strategic Investment Board, said: "The challenges facing the Church today require new and innovative solutions, alongside tried and tested approaches, in order to advance mission among people across the whole of the country.

"The Strategic Investment Board hopes that the launch of this funding will encourage and nurture further innovation that supports the mission and growth that is at the centre of the vision for the church in the 2020s as new ideas are tested and further answers are found."



More information:

- Picture above shows sports ministers training at Ridley Hall in Cambridge.
- The Board is inviting applications from dioceses for projects which fit within the funding criteria, as detailed in [the Guidance note](#).
- The full letter from [John Spence is available on the Church of England's website](#).
- Dioceses and non-diocesan organisations (such as mission agencies) are eligible to apply.
- To ensure projects come under the appropriate episcopal authority, a parish receiving funds must do so through a diocese's application, and finances will be transferred to the diocese rather than a parish directly.
- The first round of applications will be considered when the Board meets on the 20th December 2021, with the deadline for applications being the 12th November 2021. Further applications will be considered in 2022, as detailed in the Guidance note
- Ridley Hall's sports ministry training programme is run in partnership with the Church of England's [National Sport and Wellbeing Project](#)

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