as a Self-Supporting Minister in Thamesmead, London, in the Diocese

Henry was born in Nigeria, coming to the UK to study mathematics and computer network engineering. His journey to ordination started in 2008, but it was only in 2015 that he finally started the official discernment process with Southwark Diocese.

In the years that preceded this, he was involved in his church – in the choir, in prayer ministry groups and as Church Warden for eight years but felt a 'calling' to do more.

"You know, when God is calling, you just won't be at peace with yourself until you give in," he explained.

"It took me so many years.

"I asked myself is this God or is it me making things up?

"I was fighting it!" he laughed.

"I held it to myself for so long, then I began to speak to the people around me – my family, my vicar.

"I also knew a priest who had trained in my church. He was a government lawyer and a priest. He encouraged me, you don't have to drop your job, he told me.

"That was when I got the confirmation that I could continue doing what I was doing."

Henry has continued working in Data Science and reading the latest in artificial intelligence.

"I don't plan to give up my job, I plan to be self-supporting all my life," he said.

Looking ahead, Henry added: "My long-term goal is to be a part of the people God will use to transform unjust structures of our society.

"My immediate concern for the future as Deacon, is to see the needs of my community and attend to that. What do they need?

"Where can I step in?"

Henry reflected: "We can make plans all we like but it's all in God's hands."

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.