



ergy posts across the country from rural areas to inner cities.

Roles including Team Vicar, Associate Priest and pioneer posts will be paid for from a £5.6 million grant as part of a five-year arrangement to ensure that no suitably qualified curate is left without a post.

The money will fund the equivalent of 36.5 clergy posts working in parishes, housing estates, school chaplaincy, church plants, youth congregations and worshipping communities in deprived areas.

Rt Rev Dr Chris Goldsmith, Director of the national Ministry Development Team said: "I am delighted that this funding has been so well used in dioceses to catalyse existing creativity and growth.

"Many of these roles are supporting new congregations which are bringing refreshment to existing parishes across the country.

"I am also pleased that, having listened to the ministerial needs of the wider church, and having called for more stipendiary ordained ministers, we are able to ensure those vocations can flourish and develop, even against a challenging financial backdrop."

Rev Kat Gregory-Witham, (pictured above) one of those funded, was licensed in October as Associate Priest at St Matthew's Church in Burnley, Lancashire, where she had been Curate for the past three years.

The Cranmer Hall trained priest has overseen the growth of a new congregation at the church, a Monday afternoon church gathering made up mainly of young families.

The gathering now attracts between 40 and 55 people regularly for activities and worship and has inspired a new Wednesday morning Bible study group for people who are hoping to explore their faith further.

"I am very grateful for the opportunity to continue with this work," she said.

"My primary focus is the new congregation on Monday afternoons (called Fun Church), made up of a fabulous bunch of people who have previously had little contact with the Church and the Christian faith.

"Some members of our Fun Church family have taken the decision to be baptised and confirmed, which is fantastic, and we now also have a Wednesday morning Bible study group for people to explore their faith further."



Rev Sophie Cowan (pictured immediately above) who trained at Wycliffe Hall, has been funded as Priest-in-Charge at St Mary’s, Stoke, in Ipswich, through the grants.

Since her arrival she has set up a 6pm informal Sunday service, and a free after-school club at a local primary school with Christian stories, songs and optional prayer for children.

The church, in an area of extensive social housing, now also has a pantry, or ‘Top Up Shop’, providing low cost food to people in the area.

“From out of the 6pm service we have people growing in their faith which is beautiful,” she said.

“We have 30 children turning up at the after school club and a waiting list now. The children have come to the church to join in with the choir, and we have started a tots group, and a youth group, as well as a Bible Study once a week.

“We would not have been able to afford a full time minister without this funding. We are now seeing growth at the church, and that is exciting.”

**More information:**

The Strategic Ministry Board approved awards to dioceses with grants released on confirmation of appointments. All funding has now been allocated and covers a five year period for funded posts.

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