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The Revd Jonathan Jeffery
The Vicarage
Riders Lane
Leigh Park
Havant
PO9 4QT

26th May 2019

Rex Andrew
The Secretary – Pastoral division
The Church Commissioners
Church House
Great Smith Street
LONDON
SW1P 3AZ

Dear Mr Andrew

Mission and Pastoral Measure
Proposed Pastoral Reorganisation - Diocese of Portsmouth
St Clare's, Warren Park, St Francis, Leigh Park & St Alban's, West Leigh

I am the Incumbent of St Clare, Warren Park and St Francis, Leigh Park.

I am aware of formal submissions made by both the PCC of St Clare, Warren Park and the PCC of St Francis, Leigh Park and I fully endorse and support the submissions made.

I oppose the proposed scheme for Pastoral Reorganisation in the Diocese of Portsmouth, with particular reference to St Clare, Warren Park, St Francis, Leigh Park and St Alban, West Leigh. I would welcome the opportunity of addressing the committee if a hearing is held with regard to this reorganisation.

During the informal public consultation phase and the formal consultation phase with "legally interested parties" I formally voiced my objection to the proposed reorganisation and I enclose my Letter and Submission to Mrs Jenny Hollingsworth, the Secretary to the Portsmouth DMPC. My views have not changed since that letter and I respectfully submit a copy of that submission for consideration now by your committee.

I also enclose the front page of the formal letter dated 5th October 2018, signed by Jenny Hollingsworth which accompanied my formal interview at the Diocesan Offices informing me of the proposed pastoral reorganisation, and the likely outcome of my being dispossessed of office – in which my name is incorrectly spelled.

In addition to the points that I raise in the accompanying formal submission, and to those raised by the PCCs of St Clare, Warren Park and St Francis, Leigh Park, I wish to make the following points:-

I have said both to Bishop Christopher Foster and to the Bishop's Council that I consider the diocesan scheme for pastoral reorganisation to be damaging to our Community, damaging to the Church and damaging to me personally.

Damaging to our Community

- * The diocese has shown a lack of understanding of the Community of Leigh Park. Although the church communities have helped bring Leigh Park and Warren Park closer together there is not unity with West Leigh. It is a separate community – separate geographically and emotionally. Although the parishes could work more closely, they are not “one”.
- * Our Community has a history of “being done unto”. Many residents are tenants of Portsmouth City Council but they are disenfranchised with no vote to the membership of that Council. Over the years, in an area that consistently scores highly on all indices of deprivation many schemes have “promised much and delivered little”. The diocese appears to be treating our Community in that same way.
- * There has been the widest possible public consultation, and our Community has courageously found its voice and shared its opinion. Our church families have also engaged fully with the consultation process but the diocese has ignored all that has been learned and risks alienation the Community is purports to serve.
- * The reputational risk to the church is high, with our Community now feeling ignored, unwanted and under-valued.
- * It was clear from the public consultation that the diocese had little idea of ministry on the ground in Leigh Park, basing their thinking chiefly on Sunday attendance. The promised further engagement and consultation to discover what is happening and what is needed in these estates has not materialised.
- * Any scheme which is prepared to sweep existing ministry aside, by dispossessing the serving clergy without designating posts suggests to a Community that it is not valued. I maintain that the diocesan scheme which had the potential of dispossessing ten clergy from office is against the spirit of the legislation contained in the Mission and Pastoral Measure.

Damaging to the Church

- * The diocese and the bishop have used social media throughout the consultation process to talk the language of “failure”. The engagement that the parish churches achieve in Leigh Park and Warren Park is something to celebrate not denigrate. It is that deep-rooted engagement in a Community that the local church knows and loves that will further mission in these areas.
- * Despite there being no unanimity between the three parishes, nor with the diocese, there has been no offer of Mediation as set out in the legislation. This is a failure on behalf of the diocese under the terms of the Mission and Pastoral Measure.
- * As a result, it is hard to see how any new scheme can be made or implemented whilst needing to rely on the goodwill of the parishes and church members to take a process of appointments forward.
- * We have been told that the Bishop decided ahead of meetings by the Bishop’s Council (sitting as the DMPC) that since not all the clergy in the three areas and four schemes could be incorporated into the future plans, there would be no designation of posts. The Bishop felt that this would be “fair” to everyone involved. Even if what the diocese proposes is within the spirit of the legislation, there are four schemes across three areas and I suggest that it is unlawful for Bishop’s Council to fetter its discretion over the designation of posts in this way.
- * By pressing on with its proposed schemes unaltered there is a huge reputational risk to the church. Whilst the local churches, clergy and people are trusted, respected and valued, the diocese is seen locally as high-handed, un-caring and deeply un-trustworthy by having ignored the passionate response of the local community of Leigh Park.

Damaging to me:

* To me personally this process has felt brutal, demoralising, humiliating and at times overwhelming. It is that first thing on my mind when I wake, and the last thing as I go to bed.

* I have set out the time-line linking this process with the Diocesan Clergy Conference in September 2018. Having been summoned to the diocesan offices on three days' notice, the letter I was handed had my name spelled incorrectly! How typical! I have a "broken relationship" with my Archdeacon – Joanne Grenfell and she was not present at the formal meeting to advise me of the potential dispossession of office. There was no senior cleric from the diocese present even though Joanne Grenfell was present that same day at the meeting arranged for Karina Green. In addition our Archdeacon has not attended any of the meetings with our PCCs although I understand that she has met with the PCC of St Alban, West Leigh.

* My "broken relationship" with my Archdeacon has gone unaddressed by Bishop Christopher. My most recent meeting to seek a resolution with him, in November 2018 has been followed up by emails from me – but these remain unanswered by the Bishop.

* Joanne Grenfell chose not to conduct my Ministerial Development Review (MDR) in 2015, and the recommendations from that review have been ignored. I have not been offered an MDR since then

* In this process I have been wrongly accused of "rabble rousing" and had my ministry compared to old skins – unfit for new wine : although on both occasions an apology of sorts has been subsequently offered.

* I have had no notification of formal support through this process which in dealing with the diocese has felt unhelpful, confrontational and antagonistic.

* My understanding is that the Galby Judgment applies to my present situation. However, the diocese and the Bishop's Council have not applied the rationale from that judgment in considering how my ministry should be incorporated into any new scheme for the furtherance of mission. As such I believe that the process is flawed.

* I still feel called by God to serve as priest in Leigh Park and Warren Park, and in opposing the diocesan proposals, I urge the Commissioners to build on all that is currently in place for the furtherance of mission across Leigh Park.

If anything requires clarification then please do not hesitate to be in touch with me.

Please be assured of my prayers for you and the Commissioners in this process.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Jeffery (sd)

The Revd Jonathan Jeffery
Vicar of Leigh Park & Warren Park





Private and confidential
The Revd Jonathan Jeffrey
The Vicarage
Riders Lane
Leigh Park
Havant
PO9 4QT

5th October 2018

RE: Proposed pastoral reorganisation – informal consultation

Dear Jonathan,

Thank you for meeting with me and Rachel Brownbill, HR Consultant, today, 5th October 2018.

At the meeting, we explained to you that the Diocese is embarking on a pastoral reorganisation and we are about to enter into a six-week informal consultation process. This informal consultation period with the deanery will begin on the 17th October 2018.

The pastoral reorganisation being proposed may result in your benefice of St. Francis Church, Leigh Park and St. Clare's Church, Warren Park, Havant Deanery combining with West Leigh.

Should the pastoral reorganisation be agreed, then it is possible that your position as incumbent of St. Francis Church, Leigh Park and St. Clare's Church, Warren Park, Havant Deanery will no longer exist under the new structure. Under the new structure, various positions will become available and you may choose to apply for any of these.

While no decision has been made, I thought it would be helpful for you to know what you would be entitled to, if the pastoral reorganisation were to be approved and if you did not secure a post in the new structure.

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The United Benefice of St Francis,
Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park
"Build up my Church"

Vicar:
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28th March 2019

Mrs Jenny Hollingsworth,
The Secretary,
Portsmouth DMPC,
Peninsular House,
Wharf Road,
Portsmouth.

Dear Jenny

Pastoral Re-organisation St Francis Church, Leigh Park, St Clare's Church, Warren Park, & St Alban's Church, West Leigh

I am Vicar of Leigh Park and Warren Park and so a legally interested party in the plans of the diocese for pastoral re-organisation including the parishes of St Francis, Leigh Park, St Clare, Warren Park and St Alban, West Leigh. I am making this formal response by the deadline of 29th March 2019.

I oppose the current proposal.

I do not consider that the current proposal takes proper account of the wishes of our community nor does it acknowledge the pre-existing vision for mission across the parishes.

I believe that both the proposal and the process present a serious reputational risk to the Church in this place.

I attach a full submission and our counter-proposal in the attached documents, which are for the consideration of Bishop's Council please.

Yours sincerely,

The Revd Jonathan Jeffery
Vicar of Leigh Park & Warren Park

Proposed Pastoral re-organization across

St Francis, Leigh Park, St Clare, Warren Park & St Alban, West Leigh

Formal response and submission to the Bishop's Council sitting as the Portsmouth Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee

The Revd Jonathan Jeffery will say:

1.1 I am the Vicar of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park. I have been Incumbent of these two parishes since February 2001.

1.2 As Incumbent I am a legally interested party to the proposals for pastoral re-organization across the wider Leigh Park Estate.

1.3 I have been involved in the informal consultation process begun in October 2018 and I wrote formally to declare my opposition to the proposal of the diocesan strategic team.

1.4 During the formal consultation phase I have been prayerfully engaged with the matter. I have attended meetings of my two PCCs and have also met with the diocesan strategic team, the incumbent and PCC of St Alban, West Leigh and representatives of Bishop's Council.

1.5 As Incumbent, and a legally interested party I have exercised my right to address the full Bishop's Council, sitting as the Portsmouth Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee, and I have been informed that this will take place on the evening of 3rd April 2019.

1.6 I write formally at this stage to oppose the current proposal.

1.7 I do not consider that the current proposal takes proper account of the wishes of our community nor does it acknowledge the pre-existing vision for mission across the parishes.

1.8 I believe that both the proposal and the process present a serious reputational risk to the Church in this place.

1.9 I offer together with the PCCs of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park a counter-proposal which I believe is for the greater furtherance of Mission across the three parishes currently under consideration.

1.10 I have used the full submission from the PCC of St Francis, Leigh Park as a basis for this submission.

Introduction:

2.1 During the formal consultation period I requested and was granted a meeting with Bishop Christopher. At this meeting I reminded him that together we shared the cure of souls in Leigh Park and Warren Park.

2.2 I said that the current proposal from the diocese and the process that it necessarily follows was damaging to the Community of Leigh Park and Warren Park since it did not take proper account of the responses given by the community during the informal consultation period.

2.3 I said that the current proposal from the diocese and the process that it necessarily follows was damaging to the parishes and church-families of St Francis and St Clare since it did not take proper account of the pre-existing vision for mission of those churches.

2.4 I said that the current proposal from the diocese and the process that it necessarily follows was damaging to me personally and to my effective ministry. I also said that it was damaging to my family

– my wife and my children; that it has a real affect on our well-being and on the schooling of my children.

2.5 Finally, I said that the current proposal from the diocese and the process that it necessarily follows was damaging to the reputation of the Church of England in this place. It treated clergy as just another commodity of the Church and the perception was that to sweep them aside and to pay compensation was a price worth paying.

2.6 As a result the current proposal from the diocese and the process that it necessarily follows was damaging to Mission.

The start of the Pastoral Re-organization process

3.1 The beginning of the Pastoral Re-organization process (2018) needs to be examined and set into the context of an appropriate time-line

Monday 24 th September	The Portsmouth Diocesan Clergy Conference opens with Bishop Christopher thanking clergy for all that they are and all that they do.
Tuesday 25 th September	<p>Bishop James Jones delivers the key-note address on “Speaking Truth unto Justice”.</p> <p>In his address he references the intransigence of the Police Authority in the Hillsborough Inquiry and that of the Gosport War Memorial Primary Care Trust as demonstrating “The Patronizing Disposition of Unaccountable Power”.</p> <p>He affirms that we must continue to speak Truth unto Justice against The Patronizing Disposition of Unaccountable Power.</p>
Wednesday 26 th September	The Portsmouth Diocesan Clergy Conference closes with the Eucharist presided over by Bishop Christopher.
Tuesday 2 nd October	The Revd Jonathan Jeffery receives an email from Deputy Diocesan Secretary Jenny Hollingsworth requesting his attendance at Peninsular House at a pre-determined meeting on 5 th October.
Friday 5 th October	<p>The Revd Jonathan Jeffery attends at the meeting at Peninsular House in the presence of Jenny Hollingsworth and Rachael Brownbill a “contracted-in” HR Consultant.</p> <p>Neither Bishop Christopher nor Archdeacon Joanne Grenfell is present.</p> <p>At the meeting Jenny Hollingsworth explains that proposals are to be put to Bishop’s Council, for ministry to be “done differently” in Leigh Park and Warren Park and that these proposals, if agreed will result in The Revd Jonathan Jeffery being disposed of his office.</p> <p>The letter explaining this process is handed over. The Revd Jonathan Jeffery’s name is spelled wrongly in the pastoral letter handed to him.</p>
Monday 8 th October	Bishop’s Council meets and agrees to a period of public consultation on the proposals.
Tuesday 9 th October	The Portsmouth Diocesan website carries the story of the proposals with Bishop Christopher quoted as saying how exciting the proposals are since the church has failed in these areas (including Leigh Park and Warren Park) and commending the nature of the changes.

The local newspaper (circulating in Portsmouth, Havant, Leigh Park and Warren Park) The News carries a front-page story of how investment and changes in ministry will be advantageous to the Church of England in the area.

Again the Bishop is quoted as saying how exciting the plans are for all the areas involved, since traditional church has failed.

Wednesday 17th October

The public consultation meeting is held at St Wilfrid, Cowplain

3.2 Before my meeting at Peninsular House I had spoken to The Revd Canon Karina Green – Vicar of St Alban's West Leigh about the possible nature of the meeting. Neither of us was clear what it would be about.

3.3 Following our separate meetings on the Friday (Karina's meeting was attended by Jenny Hollingsworth, Rachel Brownbill and Archdeacon Joanne Grenfell) we spoke on the telephone and agreed that as we had a joint service on Sunday 7th October, and given the shortness of time before the public consultation meeting, we agreed to publish a joint statement, and Karina suggested that she produce hard copies too.

3.4 It was a copy of this statement that was posted on social media by a congregation member and a petition begun which attracted over 700 signatures.

3.5 These events also therefore encouraged a wide and full attendance at the Public Consultation meeting at St Wilfrid's Church, Cowplain on 17th October 2018.

Assertion that no proper account has been taken of the responses to the public consultation and the public meeting

4.1 I have noted that the Diocese has undertaken a significant piece of community consultation. The Diocese launched the community consultation at a very well attended public meeting and advertised it widely through positive endorsements from senior clergy in the local press.

4.2 It is unlikely that any of us will have the resources to set up a better opportunity to garner information about what the people of these estates think, or to hear the voice of this community.

4.3 For a community notoriously disengaged from formal authority structures and said to be uncommitted to the church, people responded energetically to the consultation and engaged with the issue that they felt mattered to them.

4.4 The weight of their responses caused Bishop's Council to delay its response by eight weeks.

4.5 The notes of the public consultation meeting are not a sufficiently accurate record of what was said, and how it was said. When it is stated that if an opinion was given more than once then that has not been repeated gives an unhelpful balance to the comments and tone of the responses and does not accurately reveal the true feeling of those who engaged so whole-heartedly with the public consultation process.

4.6 My own contribution has not been recorded in the notes of the meeting with sufficient accuracy.

4.7 The notes of the public consultation meeting do not record the fact that I opposed the proposal.

4.8 From a recording of the meeting I am able to share the full text of my contribution to the public consultation meeting and it is clear that the "official" record is not sufficiently accurate on many important points.

4.9 This is the text of my contribution:-

"Statement of The Revd Jonathan Jeffery
At the Public Consultation Meeting held at St Wilfrid's Church, Cowplain

Can I first of all say how humbling it has been to have so much support both in the community and particularly here this evening. It is a tremendous effort and a tremendous encouragement to myself and Karina, so thank you very much for all of your love and support.

I feel I have to oppose this proposal because it is doing away with something very precious in our community, and above all I am a champion for and a servant of Leigh Park. You are very keen to skirt over some of the aspects of the reality of what is proposed. It was only on the Friday before the details of this scheme were announced – on the Tuesday - there were just two working days – that Karina and I were called in to Peninsular House and given our letter of redundancy. The phrase actually was, to be dispossessed of your Office.

If you had wanted to work with Karina and myself on offering ministry differently across Leigh Park, then you could easily have consulted with us, engaged with us, and taken any of the opportunities that have been offered over the last year to talk about these matters, so that we were doing things differently and also I suspect, better.

That hasn't happened.

If you wanted us to be involved in these plans you could have done this entirely differently, and this meeting, I suggest, could be received entirely differently if Karina was at the front explaining it to the people of St Alban's and maybe I was at the front explaining it to the people of Leigh Park and Warren Park.

You have chosen not to do that.

I am critically concerned that because you want to pursue a timetable to get this money on board, things are being done with unseemly haste and without the proper consultation, and I am particularly concerned about the reputation of the Church, the Diocese and particularly the Diocesan officers, that ten faithful and hard-working clergy are facing redundancy – losing their homes and their families having to re-locate – in order to jump through the hoops to get these funds in.

And I am really concerned that that is the message that people will take away because this has been chosen to be done in this way.

The greatest assets that our communities have are its clergy – particularly in West Leigh is Karina, and the Church needs to use her and build its strategy around her.

This is not about personalities, but it is about people – who are committed to an area, have the experience and the proven track-record that they can deliver but have been under-resourced with people and money.

Now we can make this the start of a six-month process – I hopefully will hear more about the time-table for getting the Archbishop's money – so that, that consultation can be realistic and actually not just hearing what people are saying, but responding to it.

As I said I am hugely humbled and encouraged by your support and we want that to continue. You have our unswerving allegiance to the estate and our work to our community within the church walls and beyond it – but what we want above all is to be involved in these plans in a positive and encouraging way – not just in some abstract way which has no support for our homes and our families.



So thank you for coming, thank you for listening, but above all we'd like to see some action on what you have heard this evening."

4.10 I am aware of the general thrust of the feedback which was gathered during this process. What was said, even though an ecclesial vocabulary was not used, was that the ministry of myself and Karina Green was hugely valued across this estate and that residents wished it to continue.

The implication of this was that ministry in its current form was working – it was reaching people, it was touching their lives, it was trusted, valued and was demanded as part of the future for the Church in this place. The community expressed the feeling that the existing clergy and their ministry must be the foundation on which future plans are to be built.

4.11 The greatest resource for mission on these estates is the existing, serving clergy and it is not strategic to sweep that ministry aside. What is strategic is to build upon what is already here, to support it, fund it and staff it properly and to allow the existing clergy to serve, minister and further mission.

4.12 I feel that, alongside the Parishes' own vision for these estates, it is important to take account of the voice of this community.

4.13 By building on the enthusiastic, energetic, trusted and dynamic ministry of Karina and myself the diocese will be demonstrating a true response to the voices of the people they sought to consult, and will be best furthering mission across these estates.

Assertion that no proper account has been taken of the pre-existing vision for mission

5.1 In Spring 2018 the PCC agreed a five-year plan. This was missional in its focus and sought to build on so much that is good in our parishes.

5.2 Much work is done in partnership with others, ecumenically and with other "service providers" across the wider Leigh Park estate.

5.3 Individual lives are touched and the pastoral care by the church families and by me as the Vicar reportedly make a real difference in people's lives

5.4 The occasional office statistics for the two parishes (combined) in 2018

Weddings	7
Funerals	27
Baptisms	37

Clearly these figures remain strong and speak of personal engagement

5.5 The pattern of occasional offices remains strong across Leigh Park and Warren Park, and it must be borne in mind that these meetings, services, care and follow-up are with me as the sole priest for these parishes

	2017	2016	2015	2014
Baptism Services	68	43	46	38 = 192
Marriages	4	9	5	6 = 24
Funerals in total	35	33	24	38 = 130

5.6 In 2018 there were also four significant community projects run across the parishes

5.6.1 Prayer Spaces in Schools Project - more than 700 children engaged [MOF funded]

5.6.2 Starlight Festival - community Christmas launch with live camel procession [MOF funded]

5.6.3 Food Poverty initiative - part-time community worker employed by the Diocese to work alongside St Francis team engaged with Munch Initiative at Park Community School. Hands on involvement with community foodbank, run from St Francis church building

5.6.4 Community Panto - cast and crew of 45+, cross-community production at St Clare's. With Weekly rehearsals at St Clare's from September to November. Three performances all "Sold out"

5.7 These examples do not provide a full picture of ministry on the estates where individual pastoral and spiritual care, exemplary and extensive schools involvement:-

81 school assemblies and 33 teaching sessions in 2018 – again with me as the sole priest in these estates together with wide and varied community engagement and gentle leadership are incorporated into our offer daily.

5.8 My Archdeacon, Joanne Grenfell has not spoken to me of mission since 2015.

5.9 Archdeacon Joanne Grenfell has not spoken to me meaningfully since 2016.

5.10 My last Ministerial Development Review (MDR) was in January 2016 – but was not conducted by Archdeacon Joanne Grenfell, but by another Archdeacon. None of the agreed recommendations have been acted upon by the senior staff of the diocese.

5.11 I have not been offered an MDR since that time.

5.12 A scoping paper on Administrative Systems produced by me in June 2015 and presented via the Urban Ministers' Group has gone un-acknowledged and un-actioned by the diocese. The scoping paper is presented here for information.

"Scoping Paper on Administrative systems in Parishes in Deprived Areas"

This Paper is the start of a conversation about the nature of support for parishes in deprived areas. The Parish model used by the Church of England still makes assumptions that a "one-size-fits-all" model is appropriate across the board. I would argue that actual Sunday Church attendance is a distinctly "middle class" activity and so not reflected in the life of parishes in more deprived areas.

The two parishes of Leigh Park & Warren Park, where I serve, are in the bottom 4 of parishes in the Portsmouth Diocese on current indices of deprivation, and in the bottom 4% of parishes across the Church of England. They experience high levels of child poverty, pensioner poverty, working age poverty and lone parenthood. One of the most significant issues is relatively low qualification levels.

The patterns outlined here will be likely to be repeated in other parishes in the Portsmouth Diocese.

Strengths:

- *Church family members still feel committed and loyal to their parish*
- *They are very likely to be resident in the parish or area*

- *Committed to much pastoral ministry as neighbours, friends and ambassadors in their community*

Weaknesses:

- *By the nature of their deprived status these communities there are fewer community services*
- *The deprived nature of areas can lead to a sense of "Powerlessness" and an underlying sense of being "treated as second-best" in its residents*
- *The "middle class models" of administration and management are unworkable alongside effective pastoral ministry*
- *Church family members are often likely to be non-professional people often lacking in the skill base required to run a parish and lacking the confidence to appropriately up-skill in the way required by the current model.*
- *There is a distinct lack of money*

Opportunities:

- *In re-imagining ministry there is the chance to offer a new model*
- *Collaborative working alongside the Diocese could see administration and formal requirements lifted or relaxed*
- *Genuine and focussed Diocesan support could be radically employed to remove the burdens of parish administration*
- *Clergy and laity could be "freed up" to be pioneers and missionaries*

Threats:

- *Exhaustion and disillusionment amongst the "capable few"*
- *Church attendance seen as the main measure of success, in the context of declining numbers*
- *An insistence by the Central Church of a "middle class" model forcing parishes in deprived areas to be less than authentic*

Conclusions

I have experienced a turbulent year, with the inadequacies of my and these parishes' administrative working practices brought into sharp focus. This period has forced me to bring certain things into line, but also to confront issues which seem like real obstacles to our collaborative ministry in these places, and emboldened in raising them.

Without a doubt my recent experience has highlighted for me the unsuitable nature of the existing model for the places where I serve, and in conversation it is clear that I am not alone in feeling that there is a better way forward.

- *The role of Treasurer has always been an onerous one, even if the “turn over” is small. The same rules of accounting and reporting exist for all parishes irrespective of size or capability. When the Gift Aid role is added too it becomes a task that is either beyond parishioners or else will take all of their time/energy.*
- *Either the Diocese centrally or suitable parishes locally could support in much more pro-active ways to fill the role of Treasurer or to relieve some of the burden.*
- *There is often a lack of expertise or confidence (or both) in those asked to fulfil the legally demanding and important role of Safeguarding Officer. Again this could easily be carried out through the Diocese centrally or suitable parishes locally – with ultimate oversight and support offered centrally.*
- *Church Architects bring necessary expertise to buildings projects and maintenance but they and the DAC are still working on a level that is often beyond the ability or experience of church wardens. A Projects Officer could ease the burdens on church wardens by taking responsibility for completing necessary procedures for Faculties and permissions. A central diocesan role, this person would be a “permanent project manager” for parishes in derived areas and could be “bought in” as a Project Manager by wealthier parishes.*
- *All of this work is set alongside the core of Priestly ministry and the call to discipleship of all. Parishes in deprived areas are less likely to have retired clergy living in them, nor it seems support from other ministries. A priority for deploying SSMs would ease this somewhat, but must not be seen as a solution, since what I propose will free clergy and laity alike to minister more effectively and more authentically.*
- *A Business Manager deployed across ours and a neighbouring parish would undoubtedly ease the burden of day-to-day work in relation to Halls, Church and associated buildings. Such an appointment would free the clergy to be the pioneers that our areas would benefit from.*
-

Jonathan Jeffery

Re-visited June 2015”

5.13 In Spring 2018 I had a meeting with a Simon Whitbread and Andrew Hargreaves. I had not met either of them before and thought that we were engaging in dialogue about resourcing the parishes.

5.14 I was open and honest with them and shared the parish vision and plan with them.

5.15 I heard no more.

5.16 When I raised related matters for discussion with Archdeacon Joanne Grenfell she referred me to Simon and did not speak to me.

5.17 When the PO9 Pioneers left in April 2018 I was informed that they would not be replaced immediately and that a part-time community worker post would be put in temporarily while it was decided what should happen next. I was not included in that decision although, when I raised the

matter, I was told that he could express my opinion to Simon and Karina Green if I wished to. I did this.

5.18 In June 2018, on my request, I had a second meeting with Simon Whitbread. At this meeting there was a general conversation about the parishes, and about the Diocese bidding for funding from the SDF to help resource parishes such as these, but there were no specifics and no hint of a pastoral reorganisation situation.

5.19 I feel strongly that the no proper account has been taken of the pre-existing vision for mission for these parishes. There have been insufficient attempts to know and understand the context here and to learn what is good and what is growing. The basis for the current proposal shows little or no understanding of these parishes and takes no account of the plans that we have for the furtherance of mission here.

A wider and more dynamic Plan for Mission

6.1 I am aware of the detailed work that the PCCs have undertaken to look at the Pastoral Measure and to understand it. The paperwork submitted by the PCC Secretary, Alison Watson is a piece of work that I whole-heartedly support. Whilst none of us is an expert there are fundamental points that must be raised here.

6.2 The spirit of the legislation is that “actual dispossession of office” for serving clergy will be rare. What is envisaged, I contend is that most “dispossessions of office” will be technical with clergy re-deployed into new roles within a Scheme by way of designation of posts.

6.3 I note that in the current proposals in the four Schemes across three areas there is no designation of posts. It is open to Bishop’s Council to choose to designate posts and to deny yourselves that opportunity is to fetter your discretion.

6.4 The parishes of Leigh Park and Warren Park offer a counter-proposal under which a post would be designated or retained. We as PCCs have remained ready and willing to enter mediation to consider a path to agreement.

6.5 I have heard from the diocesan strategic team that the proposal will only secure two posts. The stipendiary clergy allocation for the parishes of Leigh Park, Warren Park and West Leigh is for three stipendiary clergy as contained in the Havant Deanery Strategic Plan.

6.6 The counter-proposal put forward by the PCCs will use those three posts as the foundation on which to build. Indeed the counter-proposal goes further. If the pattern is for a Proposal to become a Scheme, and for a Scheme then to become a Plan I believe that the fuller picture for Mission and Growth needs the wider Plan to be envisaged from the outset.

6.7 The counter-proposal from the PCCs not only covers the legal formation as an initial step but also offers the wider Plan for ministry across these estates.

6.8 This is based not on personalities but on a form of ministry that is both incarnational and sacrificial. It might be considered “traditional” as if that is some slur, but it is hard-working, dynamic, and engaged. It is a ministry that Karina and I have committed to and which has touched the real lives of real people. It has built their trust, it is hugely valued and it offers the best basis for the furtherance of mission here. For too long we have ministered here under-resourced, under-funded and under-supported. The alternative to the current proposal is to build on what is established and growing and support it, fund it and resource it for the furtherance of Mission.

6.9 I set out the counter-proposal from the parishes of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park

Our Shared Vision

OUR SHARED VISION
We will share
the Good News that people are
made by God, known by God
and loved by God –
transforming the way they think about themselves,
others, their community,
the world around them
and God.

1. SPIRITUALITY

We will provide holistic and seamless
opportunity
for reflection on the mysteries of the
world and our part in them
and so encourage spiritual maturity
and a developing understanding
of the fullness of life.

4. SOLIDARITY NOT CHARITY

We will stand in solidarity
with our neighbours as we face life's
challenges together.

**3. CREATIVE USE
OF OUR SACRED SPACE**

We will create space for
encounter
with each other and with God.

2. WORSHIP

We will create authentic worship
which is true to our aim and communicates
it- peaceful, embracing, encouraging, joyful,
meaningful, making connections;
holding its integrity;
true to the people we serve and to God.
As God would have it be.

5. COMMUNITY COHESION

We will work with, alongside
and for our neighbours and community partners
to create a community of
nurture, learning and opportunity
where all can flourish and grow.

Heart of the Park
St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park

The Counter-Proposal

1. That St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park become one parish
2. That the parish of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park create a formal group under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 with the parish of St Alban, West Leigh governed by a joint council (under impending legislation)
3. That the post of incumbent of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park be designated to the existing incumbent of those parishes
4. That the incumbency of St Albans parish remain
5. That the third post granted to the estates (proposed group) under the Havant Deanery Plan, and previously held by the PO9 Pioneers, be held by a Church Planting Minister with responsibility for three simultaneous church plants at venues across the group (Example venues - H & W Football Club, West Leigh; The Hub, Leigh Park; St Clare's Church, Warren Park)

Points 1 – 5 form the legal proposal

6. SDF bid to include funding for a Business Manager to be accountable to the incumbents and to the joint council and responsible for all matters of administrative compliance
7. SDF bid to also include funding for a community pioneer with responsibility for managing a CAP debt centre and developing the food poverty project drawing clients from across the group
8. Incumbents to work with the Business Manager on buildings projects in relation to community space and hall development at St Francis and St Clare and church building issues at St Albans
9. Significant social enterprise initiatives developed
10. Group to work as a co-sharing and cohesive collaborative whole serving its distinct communities and its vision and mission imperatives by the grace of God, the joy of Christ and the power of the Spirit.

Points 6 – 10 form our suggested plan for wider missional development

Conclusions

7.1 What is proposed here by me, and by the PCCs of St Francis, Leigh Park & St Clare, Warren Park and by the voices of our Community is not a "Business as usual" solution but rather a dynamic model for the furtherance of mission across the wider Leigh Park estate.

7.2 The clergy currently serving here – including myself – are creative, imaginative, committed and seek to be incarnational. By using our commitment to these estates a firm foundation can be built upon to grow ministry, mission and the church in new and exciting ways.

7.3 The process of pastoral re-organisation has been gruelling. It has been frustrating, humiliating, dispiriting and lonely. However, the response of the people within the church family and the wider community has also been affirming, encouraging, loving and wonderfully creative. Do not underestimate the huge effect that this has had on me personally, on my ministry and my well-being. Do not underestimate the damaging impact that it has had on my family and our life together.

7.4 I urge you to listen properly and prayerfully to the voice of this Community and of the churches here.

7.5 I urge you to see the vision for mission that we seek to share and which could bear greater fruit with your support and approval.

7.6 Please take seriously the reputational risk to the Church of continuing with a scheme that has been described by a resident as “[tearing] the heart out of the community it [is] trying to reach”.

7.6 As I said when quoted in The News as the report was made of the start of the formal consultation process,

“It is clear the community values what is already being done here, and there has been a huge outpouring of love, support and a sense of value for me and Karina”

“I truly value this community because not only is it my home, but it is where I feel called by God to be.”

“Leigh Park as a whole is a fabulous place and I want to be part of its fabulous future.”

The Revd Jonathan Jeffery

March 2019



From: Carolyn Owens <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 29 May 2019 07:57
To: Rex Andrew
Subject: Re: Proposed Pastoral Scheme Leigh Park; Warren Park; West Leigh
Attachments: Application Form for the Mission Opportunities Fund.docx; Final Feedback Form.docx; MoF Application Form - Autumn 2017.doc; 3. Finalised MOF Application.docx; MOF Application St C Spring 19.docx; MOF Application St F Spring 19.docx

Dear Mr Andrew,

Re: Proposed Pastoral Scheme Leigh Park; Warren Park; West Leigh

I am writing to express my opposition to the above scheme. I will be prepared to appear before representatives of the Church Commissioners to discuss my views if called upon.

My husband, Jonathan Jeffery, is the vicar of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park and I am an elected member of the St Francis PCC. We have lived in the Vicarage attached to St Francis church since February 2001. We have three children, aged 17, 14 and 11 who are all in education. Two are at a nearby faith school and one attends junior school on the estate, as did the other two. All three of them have been born and brought up on the estate.

As a member of the PCC I have been involved in the PCC submission and I fully agree with the points it raises, but I would also like to make some personal comments, which although not caught by the legislation are none the less important for you to hear. I will break these down into the following headings:-

- 1) Leigh Park, Warren Park and West Leigh
- 2) Background and process for pastoral reorganisation
- 3) What the diocese has said and what actually happens here
- 4) The community voice
- 5) The legislation
- 6) Conclusion - the disconnect

- 1) Leigh Park, Warren Park and West Leigh
Leigh Park and Warren Park

This is a huge housing estate of over 16,000 people, ranking high on IMD data which places the benefice in the top 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in England and amongst the top 5% most deprived parishes in the country.

Leigh Park and Warren Park are communities which are bound together. Warren Park is like the little sister of Leigh Park and, although there is a distinctness about it and it is architecturally different, the communities are harmoniously interlocking and bounded together.

Equally the churches on the two estate were designed to be interdependent, as their dedications, St Francis and St Clare, illustrate. The church families work together with mutual generosity and understanding, which has developed over the years. Until 2014 there was a priest in charge at St Clare's, but this post was removed and replaced by a pioneer post. The pioneers, who job-shared, started in Spring 2016. Like the proposed scheme their post covered Leigh Park, Warren Park and West Leigh, but they lived in the clergy house in Warren Park and worked predominantly in Leigh Park and Warren Park, particularly in the local secondary school and in relation to the development of a food poverty project there. They were already personal friends of ours before they became the pioneers, having previously church planted for the Baptist Church in Warren Park, and we were delighted to have the opportunity to work more closely with them on the projects they were developing. Pioneer ministry was a new concept to our congregations and one which they were a little suspicious of, but under Jonathan's leadership the

churches embraced the possibilities that pioneering represents and warmly accepted the pioneers. It was sad when they left in 2018 and they have been much missed. However, our Archdeacon (Archdeacon of Portsdown Joann Grenfell) had advised from the outset that they were not to be expected to take on any traditional ministry roles within the church and therefore, since 2014 when the last priest in charge left, my husband has worked across the two parishes without any priest colleagues to assist.

This has meant that the warm and friendly relationship which existed between the two churches has grown even closer since, by necessity, many things have to happen together. The regular St Clare's church family is very small and this has allowed the two church families to become more than supportive of each other. Although they love their own church buildings and have their own distinct identities they love, understand and value each other as friends and already work together in clear and unambiguous ways.

With all this in mind, I have no doubt that whatever proposals were in place the parishes of St Francis Leigh Park and St Clare Warren Park would benefit from becoming one parish. There is no benefit or logic to them remaining as two parishes and the change would streamline administration and accountability to reflect the reality of ministry here.

West Leigh

It is often assumed by people from outside the area that the communities of Leigh Park and West Leigh identify strongly with each other. This is because they are both areas of deprivation - St Albans church ranking in the top 10% most deprived parishes in the country. Middle class society views our communities in a very particular way and cannot resist making assumptions about them - starting with the assumption that we can all be lumped together. There is no more middle class institution in society than the Church of England and so it isn't surprising that this is exactly the proposal being made. In truth, it is a proposal based on a short sighted and limited understanding of what is, in fact, a subtly nuanced social situation. West Leigh has its own very distinct identity and it is not one which generally identifies a close association with its neighbours in Leigh Park and Warren Park. There are all sorts of complex sociological reasons for that which we cannot unpick here, but the fact remains that there is a distinction between the areas which the Diocese appears to have taken little or no account of.

In general terms then, estates ministry is a very particular ministry and although there are broad similarities and experiences every estate is unique. It cannot be assumed that they should be forced to merge their independent identities, just because they appear to a team that has no working knowledge of them to be socially similar. What's more, there are no other large housing estates like ours anywhere in Portsmouth Diocese. No-one in Portsmouth Diocese is currently working in full-on estates ministry in the way that Jonathan and his colleague in West Leigh are and, it seems to me, no-one is as experienced in estates ministry in this Diocese as Jonathan is. His understanding and insight into these matters should therefore have been at the heart of the strategic discussions about the future. They have not been.

In specific terms, the wider West Leigh community is a distinct estate with different issues and concerns, largely separated from Leigh Park and Warren Park by a busy dual carriageway. Geographically and practically they are separate.

In terms of the church, the church families have always had a friendly, supportive relationship. The incumbents share morning prayer together twice a week and we worship together at regular times in the year. It is a pleasant and neighbourly relationship, but not all encompassing like the relationship between St Francis and St Clare - which should, probably, have become one parish some time ago.

In addition, few of the Leigh Park and Warren Park congregations have their own transport and on a Sunday there is only one bus an hour from Leigh Park to West Leigh and none direct from the Warren. The journey, which is only a few miles, would therefore require two bus trips and - allowing time for the bus changes - would take in excess of an hour and a quarter one way. The proposals under consideration, which we have been told are for a team rector and church planting team vicar, will provide a legal framework which takes no account of practical matters such as this but which will inevitably require much closer sharing of services and resources. The church buildings may not be closing, but the legal framework proposed (alongside the "direction of travel" of Bishop's Council which has been explained by the Deputy Diocesan Secretary and confirmed by Archdeacon Gavin Collins) would require the team rector to run all the traditional ministry in these parishes and that would inevitably effect how, when and where

services might run.

To conclude, the proposal for a team ministry takes no account of these matters. It is an easy win to say these places should run as a team, but it isn't the only answer and in my view it is an answer which neglects to take account of the particular needs and requirements of the estates, both in terms of church family and the wider community - generally and specifically.

2) Background and process for pastoral reorganisation

I am familiar with the PCC submission and I wholly concur with it. In relation to the background and process for pastoral reorganisation I would only like to add that the personal impact of this process has been devastating and should not be underestimated. The Deputy Diocesan Secretary has attempted to extend offers of support, but these have all been about the Diocese paying to buy-in support such as counselling. I am a great advocate of talk therapy, but it seems to me to be extraordinary that the Church of England will now factor the cost of therapy for the clergy it is dispossessing into its strategic planning and budgeting, rather than engage in meaningful conversation and dialogue as part of the process.

My husband is a person who works with impact and care in this community. In reality this is evidenced in many ways but in terms of this process it has been very clearly expressed through the community response to the public consultation, details of which I know to be included in the PCC submission. However, the Bishop is publicly on record as saying that the church here has poor engagement, which is an unfair reflection on what actually happens. In addition, Jonathan has, in the past, asked on various occasions to have conversations with his Archdeacon about plans for ministry here but has mostly been signposted elsewhere or ignored. The first he knew about the possibility of pastoral reorganisation and "doing ministry differently" here was when he was summoned on short notice to an interview in October 2108. Since then there have been slurs and untruthful assumptions made about him in the senior leadership team of the Diocese which would have gone unaddressed if he hadn't been tenacious enough to challenge them. He has suffered the humiliation of being told that what he does here is not good enough - without any proper explanation of why or how - and that he is not sufficiently well thought of to have a post here designated to him. Nobody in the decision making team has recent working knowledge of these parishes or estates ministry experience. No-one in the senior team has called to see if Jonathan is ok, to validate his ministry or support his tireless work in the parish through this difficult period. The Archdeacons appear to have abdicated all responsibility for care for him and for me and our children. They appear to think that because they are making the strategic decisions they are precluded from exercising pastoral care. This is confused thinking, since nobody in an authority position has had that clerical function delegated to them and so no-one with any commensurate authority or experience has taken on the role.

As a consequence of this poor process and the bad handling of the strategic planning for these estates in terms of both process and subsequent outcomes, my family and I are in turmoil. Bishops Council members have acknowledged that mistakes have been made, but they will not name those mistakes, publicly retract any of the misinformation that has been given or, it would appear, hold anyone to account for any of it.

In the submission sent to Bishop's Council at the end of the formal consultation process the St Francis and St Clare PCCs offered to use mediation to help work towards a balanced outcome. Bishop's Council did not mention this offer, never having raised the possibility themselves - although mediation is specifically encouraged in the Code of Recommended Practice which accompanies the Legislation. When representatives from Bishop's Council were recently asked about the possibility, the Deputy Diocesan Secretary said that mediation might not have worked and therefore the Council would not agree to it because some other parishes didn't want any further delay and it would have taken up too much time. It was not clear whether she was talking about St Alban's parish in our proposed scheme or parishes from other proposed schemes.

I have read the Code of Practice at Chapter 2.39 on this and the accompanying theological comment in Appendix 1.9. I assume that the Archdeacons, the members of Bishop's Council and the Deputy Diocesan Secretary have also read this although that is not clear from their response which seems to fly in the face of any proper understanding of the concept of mediation never mind the guidance. The conclusion of the Appendix says

" A mediator may ensure that each side knows that it has been "heard", and thereby facilitate acceptance, reconciliation, and ideally agreement."

This is, of course, entirely to the point and the Diocese's refusal to engage with it quite neatly summarises for me everything that is wrong in a top-down, authority driven, "we-know-best" attitude and the resultant process.

3) What the Diocese has said and what actually happens here.

From the beginning the pastoral reorganisation has been described as being about doing ministry differently here. The Bishop publicly described the proposals in our areas and others as being necessary to reach people with whom there had previously been poor engagement. It was clear that the public attitude of the Diocese was that traditional ministry was failing our community and, indeed, on one occasion Archdeacon Gavin told our PCC that the Church was failing our community by allowing mission and ministry to continue as it is.

However, there has been no coherent exploration of what this really means and the reasons for it. Furthermore, community engagement in Leigh Park and Warren Park is, in fact, exemplary. You will be aware from the PCC submission of the parishes' Vision for the church here. It is a bold, meaningful and exciting vision and one which is not just about the words, but about action. I attach, for your information, 5 bids which we have made to the Diocesan Mission Opportunities Fund. I feel qualified to include these because I have worked as the project manager on the projects concerned and have prepared and submitted the bids of behalf of the PCCs. The reason I include them is that they give a flavour of the ambition of the PCC for ministry across these estates and the level of community focus and intentionality in prayer that drives this ambition to impactful outcomes. It is true that this is not always reflected in church attendance figures, but church attendance is not the only way to assess creative and sustained engagement and sharing of the Gospel.

The first three funding applications - for the Community Nativity, Prayer Spaces in Schools and the Starlight Festival - were all successful bids and all of these projects have taken off with beautiful and unexpected levels of impact. I have included the MOF feedback for the Community Nativity Play to illustrate this together with a letter of support from the Head of Riders Junior School (written as a contribution during the public consultation) which refers to the Starlight Festival. Further feedback can be made available on request. Interestingly, the bids made this Spring (2019) on behalf of St Francis and St Clare PCCs were rejected.

The picture that has been painted publicly by the Diocese is wrong and unfair. This is evidenced by a closer look at what actually happens here, and that evidence is triangulated by the public response during the informal consultation - the very people the Bishop referred to were amongst those who contributed to that consultation. If the public announcements by the Diocese have been wrong and unfair, I have to say that nothing has been made any clearer during PCC meetings with the Diocesan team or representative of Bishop's Council.

4) The community voice

I just need to tell you how much the community of Leigh Park and Warren Park has enfolded Jonathan and me in kindness and support since this process began in October. People stop me in the street to ask me about it and to check in with me about how we are - people who don't go to church, or don't appear to express a committed faith. They care about us and about Jonathan and about the church here - not the building, but the church represented in the community. I have been as touched and humbled by the love people here have shown us as I have been shocked and damaged by the lack of care that the leaders of the Diocese have inadvertently demonstrated.

Much of the support from the wider community found its way to the Diocese either through Facebook and the ipetition (copies of which were sent to you with the PCC submission) or directly via letter and email (this correspondence was not available to us, but it might, perhaps, be helpful for you to see a copy of the Diocesan file). The support that was communicated was marvellous and also interesting. It seems to me that it is partly about Jonathan and Karina as people, the extensive skills and gifts they personally bring to ministry - but that it is also a reflection of what their ministry - "for all people, at all times, in all places" - means to people in this place. People value the traditional ministry that Jonathan and Karina exercise. The church is much more meaningful in people's lives than any data can evidence and God is far more of an imperative than is recognised by statistics. People value the community leadership and the ever open, unconditional offer of this ministry and they need it. They need it in abundance and, it turns out, they are prepared to say so.

People here generally have a well placed suspicion of authority, but they are not suspicious of their parish priests

who they trust and value. As a result of all of this they became involved in the public consultation phase of this process, supporting the existing clergy to remain in posts on the estate and calling for them to lead the reorganisation. This was, in itself, an amazing demonstration of community engagement, which the Diocese initially described as negative and aggressive, then accused Jonathan of whipping up, took an extra eight weeks in the process to read and ultimately has appeared to entirely ignore. The letter from the Diocese outlining Bishop's Council decisions regarding the proposals simply doesn't mention the public consultation or the community voice at all.

The potential is for this to be incredibly damaging to the reputation of the wider church in Leigh Park and Warren Park. It represents everything that is wrong about the way those in authority treat communities such as ours. At very best it will reinforce the suspicion and cynicism I spoke of above; at worst it will break trust and destroy the organic and carefully nurtured holistic ministry which currently reaches even the hardest to reach here. To put it simply - you can't ask the public its opinion and then, when they say something you don't like, just ignore them.

5) The legislation

I concur entirely with the views in the PCC submission regarding the legislation. There remains a presumption in all the supporting documentation that in pastoral reorganisation situations existing office holders will have posts designated to them - actual dispossession of office being described as rare. The presumption is, as it were, toward technical rather than actual dispossession, the latter not being the expected outcome of the amended Measure even though the 2018 amendment specifically allows for it. As a result, therefore, dispossessing up to ten clergy in four schemes at once appears to be contrary to the spirit of the legislation, and a pre determined discussion regarding this has the appearance of being a fettering of discretion and an indication of pre-judgement.

I also agree with the submission that in overlooking the obvious and evidenced gifts and skills of the existing clergy while putting the proposals together, the Diocese has failed to take any account of the Gaulby judgement.

6) Conclusion - the disconnect

Everything I have raised so far leads me to this moment, this conclusion - that there is a massive and as yet unbridged disconnect between the Diocese and the work on the ground. The wider church has no real understanding or concept of what happens in ministry here already or how ministry would function in future with only one member of the clergy undertaking traditional ministry in such a large estate context. The Diocesan team has strategically planned without reference to this, it has made assumptions about our communities and about the work of St Francis and St Clare's PCCs which are not accurate and it has failed to engage in meaningful dialogue or to properly consider mediating the matter. It has overlooked relevant and controversial parts of the legislation and it has ignored the voice of the community which has spoken loudly during public consultation. The disconnect between decision makers and the rest of us is huge and the results of that are hugely damaging - personally to me and my family, locally to Leigh Park and Warren Park and theologically to the furtherance of the mission of the Church in these places.

Last week the PCC met with two representatives of Bishop's Council and Archdeacon Gavin to hear about how they came to their decision to move forward with these proposals. We asked them first, what they had found in our submission that was positive or impressive. The Archdeacon said that he was impressed by the creativity and dynamism of our project work, bringing dazzle and joy into the community. One of the reps said that he was blown away by our vision, which was second to none and demonstrated everything that modern ministry should aspire to and that he was delighted by the wider suggestions of our counter proposal which demonstrated a flexible and ambitious approach to ministry and mission outcomes.

These things are not just words or documents we put together because we have to. They are real, coal-face pieces of work, which have meaning and impact in these communities. They represent dynamic and intentional engagement and are developed and led by the current team of Jonathan, with my support, and the Church Wardens, upheld and encouraged by the PCCs.

But within minutes of telling us how impressive these things were the same Bishop's Council member was describing how the committee had come to the decision to dispossess Jonathan of his office because ministry must be done differently here and the new post created may not suit his skill set. The Bishop's Council member could not really explain why or how it must be done differently or why it could not be done in a way that would incorporate the architect of the fantastic community projects and the first rate vision for the future; he couldn't satisfactorily explain

why Gaulby didn't apply, or how a blanket decision not to designate posts wasn't fettering discretion or comment on the governance implications of impending legislation regarding Joint Councils in Group Ministries. It seems to me that the decision makers in this process are almost as disconnected from their own narrative as they are from ours.

In conclusion, I object to the proposals under consideration because these parishes need to be valued and validated in ways that the proposals entirely neglect. These communities need ministry that is for all people, at all times, in all places - that is open minded, inclusive, non judgemental, unconditional, constant, offering, flexible, leading and trusted. What I hope for this place is a dynamic future for ministry developed out of something authentic to the community and answering the needs and the voice of its people. It needs to be flexible and dynamic, gentle and courageous, vulnerable and strong, everywhere and exactly where it's required. It needs to be built on firm foundations of love and trust and it needs to sparkle.

And I need to declare an interest. The communities of Leigh Park and Warren Park are where Jonathan and I feel called by God to be. We are passionate about these estates, where Jesus - broken and dazzlingly - is reflected in so much of life. I can't be sure, I really can't be sure that a committee of men and women who have mostly never visited Leigh Park and or spoken to me or engaged with my community, or an Archdeacon who doesn't even speak to Jonathan (Archdeacon of Portsdown) or the Diocesan Missioner and the Strategic Manager, whose joint experience of Leigh Park seems to have been spending an hour in my living room - I just can't be sure that these men and women have really been more moved by the Spirit in all of this than the people of my community and the fire in my heart.

With kind regards,

Carolyn Owens

The Vicarage,
Riders Lane,
Leigh Park



MISSION OPPORTUNITIES FUND



Application Form for the Mission Opportunities Fund – Spring 2016 Diocese of Portsmouth

Please note: All boxes on this form must be completed.

1. Name of Project: The Leigh Park and Warren Park Community Nativity Play - God with Us

2. What do you want to do?

Every Christmas Eve the congregation of St Francis Church, Leigh Park puts on an all-age crib service. They dress up and play parts in a traditional tableaux format with a narrator. There are carols and atmospheric music and donkeys and candlelight. The service is beautiful. It is extremely popular on the estate and well attended, filling the church and attracting a congregation in excess of 200 - quite an achievement here at 5.30pm on Christmas Eve.

The Crib Service is a significant success and something we definitely wish to continue since it clearly meets a specific need in people. However, it is very much about the church's offer - a "come and see what the church is doing at Christmas" offer. This has led us to think about the shared nature of the narrative. The Christmas story is endlessly appealing and a fabulous vehicle for engaging those outside or on the margins of church, but it is not a story which the church owns - it is a story which already belongs to everyone. At St Francis we began to address this in the advertising for the 2015 Crib Service (copy attached) and the corresponding press release (copy attached) in preparation for the community nativity project. People often think that church is not for them, but the gospel narrative is already and always theirs and we want to help them claim ownership of it and the richness of its storytelling. We want to provide an opportunity for people to get to know it better, to connect with it, to experience it, to feel it.

Some members of the PCC at St Francis, and also at St Clare's Warren Park took an active part in last year's Havant Passion Play (HPP) and these experiences have been woven into our thinking and helped us to develop our vision for the Leigh Park and Warren Park Community Nativity Play.

The aim of this is to produce a piece of theatre which draws into its cast and support networks people from across the estate regardless of their church or faith backgrounds and, in doing that, causes a new engagement with and ownership of the story.

Proposed Venue

St Clare's Church, Warren Park

We have thought about staging the play in a secular venue to increase its outward-looking credentials, but somehow this always seemed artificial and we were in danger of doing it for the sake of it. St Clare's is a good community space, with a sliding screen between the hall and church which opens to create one big central space. It also has a gallery which will be useful either creatively or for audience.

Using St Clare's will also highlight the building's profile in the community, while tying in with the new pioneer ministers' placement at St Clare's house. We have not discussed the project with the pioneers as, at the time of writing, they are not yet in post, and we are not therefore relying on their involvement, but there is completeness about using the church building for this community project following the pioneers' arrival at the adjacent clergy house.

The church wardens of St Clare's are aware of the proposals and are supportive. The project will be put to the St Clare's PCC at its next meeting on 11th May.

Proposed Dates

Saturday 3rd December 2016 @ 6pm

Sunday 4th December 2016 @ 2pm

Script

The play is in the process of being written and will be fully scripted.

Community Involvement

We are in the early stages of producing advertising material and are planning to launch the play in the community in the week beginning 9th May.

We intend to use our Facebook page together with existing schools and community group networks for this in the first instance and also investigate the potential for involvement from drama students at Park Community School.

In relation to the involvement of existing church members, the event will also be ecumenical, building on the strong links which exist across the estate and through HPP.

CASTING AND REHEARSAL

The vision is for a series of workshops to take place in June and July, followed by a short period to adapt the script to accommodate new ideas and the particular needs or skills of those who wish to be involved.

Rehearsals will begin on a weekly basis at the start of September. The time commitment will be clear throughout.

Performance

To meet the vision and achieve the aim, this production needs to be as smooth and professional as possible, creating a real engagement from those taking part and those who will provide the audience. Subject to funding, we are therefore planning to hire professional sound and lighting equipment and all other visual and creative enhancement possible.

Experience and Support

Despite our inexperience in directing community theatre, we have a store of other related experience to draw on.

Eg HPP

Continued involvement with and support from HPP Futures Group, including access to props and costumes

Continued contact with and advice from James Burke Dunsmore (professional actor with roles including Jesus at Wintershall and in Trafalgar Square, and director of HPP)

Regular crib service

Previous experience of amateur performance within the organising team

Everyone within the current team is a local resident

3. How will this lead to growth (numbers/spiritual understanding/other)?

We have explained in question 2 what we want to do and achieve, and this encompasses our ideas about growth. It is impossible to assess how our usual Christmas Eve Crib Service impacts on the people who attend, even though it clearly impacts significantly in terms of the church making a welcome offer in the community. The aim of the Community Nativity Play is to have a more specific personal impact, drawing people in to the story and providing an opportunity for individual engagement in a context which is new and fun. Drama and performance are fantastic tools for unlocking talent, commitment and engagement. They are challenging in a secular sense and as a result can inspire the best in people. Our vision is to use these tools, not to evangelise, but to bring people together and facilitate in them a real ownership of the story of the birth of Christ.

Furthermore, it is anticipated that those taking part who are already committed Christians will enjoy an experience of deepening their experience of or connection with the Christmas story.

Through this project we are, therefore, looking for growth in engagement, in depth, in specific activity and in impact.

We are not so confident in our plan as to suppose that it will be self sustaining in terms of creating a precedent for future performances. We are planning it as a one-off. However, there may be capacity for it to become a regular feature and this is something we will have to consider as we move forward. Obviously, by the very nature of the event, it will be assessed as having achieved its specific objectives during the process of casting, rehearsal and performance. There will also be legacy elements of a script, a company of performers and friendships made and fostered.

4. Please identify the geographical area in which the project will take place?

The Community Nativity Play will cover Leigh Park and Warren Park. It is intended that it will take place in St Clare's Church, Warren Park

5. What indicators will you use to measure the impact in terms of growth and how will this be recorded?

Since this is a one-off event we will be looking at how many people on the fringes or outside church become involved with the play, in terms of acting, stage crew, support and audience.

Nevertheless, we will still consider the project a success if it goes ahead as planned but with the majority of participants being existing church members because we anticipate that involvement will lead to an increased depth of reflection and engagement. This is almost impossible to properly measure since it is very much about each person's response and their individual relationships with each other and with God. However, we propose to have a Community Nativity Experiences Book in which participants can record their thoughts and feelings throughout the process and audiences can make comments following the performances.

6. What is the overall budget for the project?

The overall budget for the project is dependent on the success of this bid.

St Clare's Warren Park and St Francis Leigh Park are the third and fourth most deprived parishes in the Diocese and on IMD statistics are in the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in England. The schools on the estates are considered to be the most deprived within Hampshire Education Authority.

In the recent review of Parish Share St Clare's contribution has increased by 20% and St Francis by 30%

The Community Nativity Play is an ambitious project in terms of work and input, but one for which our own financial funds are abysmally, but unsurprisingly, small. We will be looking to make a contribution of around £200 from parish funds and the generosity of those taking part, to cover the hire of donkeys, but this will cover very little else. We intend to look for sponsorship from local businesses and larger local employers such as Asda, but we are at the start of that process and so cannot rely on such monies being available to us. We will charge for tickets, but realistically this will be a token sum, so as to encourage a commitment but not be prohibitive.

In essence, we are passionate about this community. It is full of brilliant people - amazing families, fantastic children, generous and warm-hearted individuals. But it is a community known for its levels of intense social and economic need and many of our neighbours have certain doors in life already closed to them just by reason of where they live or are growing up. As a church family it is not a community we observe, it is a community we are part of and immersed in. It is up to us always to stand with our neighbours, celebrating with them all that is good and together filling the gaps, helping to provide for those needs and open those doors, offering the very best that we can and in doing so communicating a glimpse of the Kingdom. We are excited by this project because we believe it represents something of that offer. Such is our vision for it that we intend to pursue the project with or without funds. Without funds, as is often the case, we will be relying on the grace of God, our wits, our prayers and the kindness of strangers. With funds (a result of God's grace and our prayers?), we will still be relying on these things, but life will be easier and, because we will be able to afford elements that we could not otherwise consider (see below), the project will have the potential to make a more significant impact.

7 How much of this are you applying for from the Mission Opportunities Fund?

We wish to apply for the maximum £5000 grant. You will understand that we are not seeking to put on a run-of-the-mill nativity. This is not a Sunday school production. It is a full-on piece of community theatre providing a rare opportunity to reach a wide range of people in a particular way.

There will be costs incurred on theatrical lighting, sound projection, voice projection, props and costumes, live animals to add real impact to the performances, animals on site to provide focus for those attending, the necessary permissions and licences, advertising and other publicity, programmes and other materials available to audiences, hospitality, copying of scripts and other materials, ticketing, any additional insurance, general administration and other tasks associated with putting on a first class production.

For the purposes of this bid we have specifically costed the following priority spending -

Lighting and sound: £2100

Please find attached an e-mail quote from Expression Events, including an exchange regarding extra costs. This covers hiring the equipment for a ten day period to allow for technical rehearsal time. The company have good credentials and have been very helpful with advice.

Camels: £2500

We appreciate that this might seem like an extravagance. However, it actually represents a significant mission opportunity. At our Crib Service there is no doubt that many of the congregation are attracted in the first instance by the donkeys who take part in the service. We intend to have donkeys at the nativity play, at least for the Saturday evening performance, but the dramatic and visual impact of three camels parading up St Clare's Avenue for the Sunday afternoon performance cannot be overstated and will be something that embeds this event in people's minds.

More vitally, it will be an important draw in terms of advertising and will demonstrate our commitment to making this an exciting, profound and real encounter with the story. We are in no doubt that the extraordinary element of having people riding camels to the production has the potential to move this event from the realms of the ordinary and seen-before to something spectacular, life affirming and mission centred.

Please find attached an e-mail quote from Joseph's Amazing Camels. This company comes on recommendation from James Burke Dunsmore.

Admin costs: £400

We do not have a breakdown of this figure, but would appeal to you for maximum funds to cover publicity, printing, copying, ticketing, necessary permissions and general admin expenses as detailed above.

NB To date we have costed the following additional spending, if further funding sources can be secured –

Mobile Petting Nativity: £585 per performance

We cannot stress enough the importance of living creatures in engaging our audience. The more animals we involve, the greater the visual and creative enhancement and the more vibrant and vital the production will become. If funds allow we will hire a petting nativity to set up outside the venue before and after the performances and, where possible, include animals (sheep, dog etc) in the production itself. To this end, we have obtained a verbal quote from Kidsrome, for the provision of a mobile petting stable.

Kidsrome have provided this facility in recent years for both St Clare's Pre-School and Leigh Park Traders' Association/Shopping Centre.

8. How much of your own funds (parish / cluster / deanery), if any, are you contributing? (Do not include any other grants.)

Please see above. This is a Leigh Park and Warren Park enterprise and as such is bounded by its own community. We do not want to burden that community financially. This is about the church making an authentic offer and we want to show that we will give all that we can. For us that means a lot of hard work, about £200 of our own money and, at this stage, throwing ourselves on the mercy of the Mission Opportunities Fund.

It is not always easy to ask for help and to ask for money is no easier, even in a formal funding bid. It would be good to be able to show our community that we have taken this step and that, as a result, we have the support and backing – figuratively and practically – of the wider church.

Please note that, as well as some funds, the vision, the organisation, the play itself, the goodwill, enthusiasm and the hard work, the parishes are also contributing the use of the building (including heating and potentially forgoing some hall rental), our connections with and knowledge of the community and our commitment to making the project a success.

9. Please outline 'Consultation to Date' for your proposal: Who are the stakeholders involved? What do they think about the idea? Please attach any relevant letters of support from key stakeholders.

Approval within St Francis and St Clare's church families

St Francis PCC agreement. The PCC at St Francis church has agreed the project in principal and delegated responsibility for this bid and further organisation to named members

HPP Futures Group support

Previous RPD community consultation which revealed enthusiasm for drama and performance

Raised with cluster minister's group

Community Led Planning Group affirmation (informal)

Discussion with local school head

NB: Although the project has been raised with the Area Dean in the cluster minister's group, we do not yet have the formal support of Deanery Synod, which does not meet until 9th June 2016. **This has been discussed with Charlie Peer who advised that it would not be a bar to our application.**

10. What other future funding sources have you identified to enable the project to be sustained in successive years? (If applicable).

Not applicable. See question 3 above.

11. Please indicate whether this project is time-critical (e.g. to fit the funding schedule of match-funders), and, if so, give details.

The project is time critical. The play is booked to happen on the 3rd and 4th December 2016

12. What is the position of the PCC's finances? (Please attach a copy of your latest PCC accounts.) Is the parish up to date with its Parish Share payments?

During the course of 2016, both parishes of St Francis and St Clare will need to spend significant extra monies on necessary repairs and increased parish share. Giving is sacrificial, but does not meet the spiralling cost of parish share and buildings upkeep. However, the majority of income comes from varied hall usage, which in turn meets the needs of the community and as a result the parishes remain solvent and continue to pay their way.

An Income and Expenditure statement for St Francis (as lead applicant parish) is attached. Formal accounts are in the final stages of preparation and examination with the accounts department at Portsmouth University.

Both St Clare's and St Francis' parishes are up to date with Parish Share payments.

13. Who is applying?

Lead Applicant: St Francis Church, Leigh Park (Parish)

Contact Person: Carolyn Owens

Contact Email: jonathanandcarolyn@btinternet.com

Contact Telephone No: 023 92475276

Date Approved by parish*: PCC approval 24th February 2016

Can you confirm that your deanery support this bid*: **PLEASE SEE 9 ABOVE**

*Applications cannot be considered without this approval/support having already been obtained.

**DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH
MISSION OPPORTUNITIES FUND
FEEDBACK FORM**

I year review

Allocation Round: Spring 2016 Report Date: May 2017

Parish: St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park

Name of Project: The Leigh Park and Warren Park Community Nativity Play

Amount of grant: £5,000

Your name and role: Carolyn Owens - Project Manager

Please answer all the questions. There is no word limit.

1. Please briefly summarise your original idea.

The aim of our project was to produce a piece of community theatre which drew into its cast and support networks people from across the Leigh Park and Warren Park estates regardless of their church or faith backgrounds and, in doing that, caused a new engagement with and ownership of the Christmas story.

For more information please see the highlighted areas of our original application, a copy of which is attached. (See also file – Item 1)

2. Give a short account of what has been done since the grant was awarded, including any changes or developments from the plan.

The project took place as planned, with performances of the Leigh Park and Warren Park Community Nativity Play taking place on Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th December 2016 as proposed.

The script for the play was completed in time for rehearsals to begin in the first week of September. During the period from May to September 2016 we worked hard to advertise and encourage interest in the production (see file – Item 2). In parts, the script was written to accommodate the particular skills and abilities of local people who had signed up to be involved. Songs and music were written and sourced so as to utilise and showcase particular local and youth talent.

As well as advertising with posters and using our existing Facebook page, we set up a dedicated Facebook page - Community Nativity Play - which proved invaluable. As time went on it became an increasingly good tool for making ourselves known in the community and showcasing what we were about. We even managed to post a video of our attempt at the Mannequin Challenge, filmed at the end of our tech rehearsal! Please visit if you would like to see us in action. We used an original silhouette skyline picture featuring St Clare's and St Francis churches as our profile picture and in all our later advertising. This was specially commissioned for the event and was drawn by one of the St Francis churchwardens. (See file - Item 3) In the few weeks before the production our social media manager was able to customise the profile picture with a glitter app! (See file – Item 4)

In the early stages we held meetings in a variety of venues across the estates and although

these were often not well attended they engendered a slow-burn interest and engagement. We also made thorough use of our extensive schools' links. We were not able to use a core of drama students from Park Community School because their Christmas production was in the week following our performances, but we worked closely with the community department at the school and were included in their Christmas Activities brochure (see file – Item 5). They were also able to access additional funding for us.

We managed to advertise through local media too. For example, at the beginning of August, when we were still short of three magi, we secured an interview with Rich and Zoe on the Heart FM Breakfast Show. They loved the story and created a short recruitment advert for us which they played several times during the show. A copy of this can be made available by email if you would like to hear it. They followed up with a further interview in the week before the performances.

Closer to the date of the production we also advertised with a variety of posters around Leigh Park and Warren Park – some full and descriptive, others more cryptic! (See file – Item 6)

It was important to us that this project should attract as many on the fringes of or outside the regular church family as possible and we did not, therefore, advertise strongly for help or for cast within the local churches or Havant Passion Play (HPP) networks. However, the project had a very real partnership feel to it as several members of the eventual team were ecumenical neighbours and our fabulous site manager came to us from St John's Rowland's Castle via an HPP connection. The congregation of St Francis church was well represented in both the organising team and the cast. There was a remarkable feeling of goodwill toward the project and we felt upheld by the prayers of those around us, especially our HPP friends.

Rehearsals began at the start of September and were timetabled from the outset. We met weekly from 2pm to 4pm on Sunday afternoons until the end of November when extra rehearsals were included (see file – Item 7). There was a fantastic core of cast members from a variety of backgrounds who were very dedicated and attended all rehearsals - although it sometimes seemed that some of the younger participants only agreed to come for the doughnuts we served in the break! There was never a single rehearsal at which everyone who should have been there was present and our three magi didn't rehearse together until the week before the production.

Rehearsals were fascinating and exhausting because each one was like a short play in itself; everyone brought so much of themselves to the project that there was always much more of our normal lives to deal with than actual preparation for the show. This was sometimes hard because generally people's normal lives are challenging and complex, but it was a real joy too and a real sign that the project was achieving what we had hoped it would - an authentic personal encounter with a new group of people and an embedding and enabling of an existing group.

The play took place in St Clare's church, Warren Park as proposed. The screen was open and the play was performed in the round, with the focus for the final scene at the far end. The balcony was used throughout for storage, for relaxation space for the teenage cast members, for mounting the star and, in two scenes, for the angel host. Two cast members sang from the balcony.

St Clare's proved to be a superb venue. There is ample room for audience and cast, adequate practical facilities and a real flexibility about the space that makes it creatively exciting. At the same time it exudes a peaceful and warm energy that marks it out as a welcoming sacred space at the heart of its community. We couldn't have staged the play in a more suitable venue.

Inevitably there was some disruption to the normal life of the church during the run up to the production and over the weekend of the performances. This was kept to a minimum and, in any event, was embraced by the congregation who were delighted to have the church play its own part in the project

Thanks to the vision and generosity of the MOF committee and the Big Lottery Fund we were able to deliver fully on our aim to create an exciting and life affirming event. The Community Nativity Play undoubtedly created a stir in Leigh Park and Warren Park. Indeed, it is our contention that it achieved its objectives in terms of producing "a piece of theatre which drew into its cast, support networks and audience people from across the estate regardless of their church or faith backgrounds and, in doing that, caused a new or deepened engagement with and ownership of the story". One of the things which made this possible was the freedom we had to engage with such a rich variety of visual and creative enhancements. We were fortunate in being able to borrow all the sumptuous costumes we required from cast members and from HPP, as well as from the church, and likewise we were able to be creative with props (see file – Item 8), some of which we were able to borrow from a local school. Our Big Lottery funding enabled us to supplement these resources richly – most spectacularly with 4ft feathered wings for the Angel Gabriel, commissioned from a local artist. Without any doubt, the professional sound and lighting equipment, the fabulous tickets and programmes and the super-star camels which the generous MOF award funded elevated the production from the realms of the ordinary and seen-before to something spectacular, life affirming and mission centred just as we had hoped it would.

We had a fantastic experience with the sound and lighting company, Expression Events. Tim Burgess, the then owner of the company, provided exceptional customer service despite the fact that he was emigrating on the day of our final performance! He made an initial site visit, followed by a script visit so that he could produce a lighting cue sheet for our volunteer lighting crew. With his senior technician he then delivered and set up more kit than we paid for and attended our entire tech rehearsal to make sure everything worked. They even make an appearance in our Mannequin Challenge video! We booked the equipment shortly after receiving the MOF funding, but Tim's hands-on involvement began a few weeks before the show, at a time when things were really hard work. From his first visit we felt the strength of his quiet support. He was professional, capable, hard-working and generous, but more than any of that he managed to make us feel that he understood the point of it all and admired us for doing it. His company provide equipment and services to festivals and big organisations and our event was very small by comparison, but his gentle respect was palpable and a boost to us all. The equipment wasn't cheap to hire, but in the end what that funding bought us was very much more than the spectacular sound and lighting gear. It was a very real blessing in all senses.

The camels were simply magnificent (see file – Item 9). The excitement that booking them created amongst the cast was easily met by the delight of the crowd which turned out to see them on the day. The impact of having them was much greater than the sum of its parts, because they were constantly referenced and brought a different perspective to the whole. Also, as you will see from our disk of pictures (see front of file), our magi looked spectacular on them!

One of the conditions of the MOF funding was that we would spend some of this money on programme printing and that the programme would include contact and Christmas service details. We were keen to meet the conditions but remain authentic and a lengthy meeting with Charlie Peer ensued in order to reach an agreement about how to achieve this. (See file for notes of that meeting – Item 10)

In the end this element of the funding was spent as we proposed. We arranged to have tickets printed, which gave the production a professional edge (see file – Item 11) and used Park Community School's social enterprise initiative Park Design and Print to print the

programmes. A copy of the programme is included in the file (see file – Item 12). You will see that the programme met all the conditions. It also included a piece by Jonathan encouraging people to use our prayer sculpture, and a specially written prayer called Talking (see file – Item 13). It is our understanding that prayer is something people really do engage with at important times in their lives, but that the very being of God is something they wrestle with in the face of the suffering of the world. The prayer was written to reflect that and to clear a path for anyone who has ever struggled with it. We also used the prayer in our Christmas Eve Crib Service (see file – Item 14) and at Midnight Mass, both of which were extremely well attended by non church regulars. Again anecdotally, we have had evidence of the prayer having a significant personal impact and we will be using it again in the future.

3. a) Please refer to question 5 on your original application. Record your measurements of growth here, using the indicators that you described.

The play had a cast of around 40 and was supported by a dedicated back stage team of 12. Of this total number about 20 have no church connections at all. The rest are from, or have a connection with, a variety of local churches across various denominations. We encouraged all participants to write thoughts and reflections in the Reflections Book, but the response to this was disappointing - in terms of quantity rather than content. (See file for copies – Item 15) People often find it difficult to know what to say when they have the freedom to say anything they want to and, for this reason, the reflections book is something that we would think about doing differently in future. We would consider being more specific in what we ask people to write about each time, but also would be much more intentional in terms of asking them to contribute. This time we were a little too polite about it.

We also ran poker-chip polls at several rehearsals and prior to both performances. This involves a specific closed question being asked which participants respond to by placing a coloured poker-chip in a box - one colour for "yes", a different colour for "no". The polls are very focused and produced some interesting results. The results from the polls on the performance days are included in the file (see file – Item 16) and interestingly show that, by the time one performance had happened (ie pre the Sunday performance), the vast majority of those taking part felt "more of a connection with the Christmas story" as a result of helping to tell it. We're not suggesting this is hard evidence and have not over-analysed the results, but they give a clear feel for the way people were responding to the experience of being involved in the project. This is also reflected in the post production comments on the Facebook page (see file – Item 17).

There is, of course, anecdotal evidence regarding the impact of involvement in the project, but this is impossible to measure. We included a beautiful rendition of the song "Mary did you know?" during the stable scene in the play. This was performed by two local women – one a resident and the other a teacher on the estate – but neither they, nor the adult Jesus who appears at the end of the play, were able to come to any rehearsals until the week before the production. The impact that the three of them made at this point was surprisingly intense and drew out some genuinely emotional responses, which we had not anticipated. It was lovely to see and provided moments of real inspiration.

As anticipated, much of the impact of the project was, and continues to be, about an intensely personal response and although we have many stories it would not feel appropriate to share them in any detail - even anonymously. In general terms, no-one has started coming to church on Sunday because of their involvement in the play but we have had many meaningful conversations about the Christmas story and heard of moving encounters with prayer which would not have happened without this experience. People have been inspired and heartened by their involvement and we have been met, in the least expected places, with acceptance and encouragement of our faith. There were times when the project seemed hilariously mad and ridiculously hard to pull off - but it was the work of mission and we were very blessed. When we performed on Sunday afternoon - with the cast assembled, the

audience full, with camels and donkeys and a crowd outside, lines learned, lights shining and costumes sparkling - the late winter sun shone low in a clear blue sky and the whole production was infused with a golden glow. It was glorious and beautiful – more than we imagined it could be, a gorgeous golden blessing.

In terms of the audience and wider community, impact is similarly hard to evidence. At the performances we asked the cast and crew to mingle with the audience during refreshments and to ask them a series of questions. This happened before the first performance and after the second one, so that (although they were different audiences) there was an element of the hot and cold task about the questions - the first audience hadn't yet seen the show when they answered the questions and the second audience had. This only had limited success, partly because the questions needed tweaking but also because by the end of the second performance the cast and crew were exhausted and elated and not in any state to be the vehicle for focused audience feedback. Some of the youngsters in the cast were very keen to help but by this point had contained their Tigger-like exuberance for a considerable time and consequently the results are less full and less reliable than we would have liked. This is a lesson for the future. (See file – Item 18) It should be noted however that significant numbers of those asked said that they did not normally come to church at Christmas.

Without doubt the audience enjoyed the production and owned it. There were many friends and family of cast members in the audience which meant that we had drawn in significant numbers of locals who would not otherwise have come into church over Christmas. We ensured that all audience members together with the crowd outside (who gathered to see the camels and the petting zoo and to enjoy the fairground rides and the delights of the catering van) had access to the programme which included our contact details and our specially written prayer Talking (see above) We also had a prayer sculpture in place in church which attracted some prayer thoughts from audience members.

We were fortunate enough to have a journalist from the Times together with her photographer in attendance at the Sunday afternoon performance, which in itself added to the thrill of the occasion. She came via our camel contact as she writes the bi-monthly Animal Life section for the Times, but she spent the whole afternoon and some of the evening watching the play and interviewing the team, the cast and audience members. The piece she wrote about the play, which appeared in the Times on the following Saturday, was consequently not quite as animal focused as we had originally anticipated (see file – Item 19). It was a fabulous review of the production and a positive endorsement of the good she perceived the church to be doing in the community by creating this project. We hope that you will be as delighted as we were with the opportunity she gave us to talk about Jesus in a national newspaper and her positive response to what we had to say.

b) Estimate, as far as possible, how many people have had contact with the church through this project, who would not otherwise have done.

Please see question 3a) above.

In terms of the profile of the church, our good natured but professional approach to the administration of the event won us many friends in various council departments. We had to appeal directly to the CEO of Havant Borough Council for permission to site the camels on a Portsmouth City Council car park and he was most kind and helpful. We worked closely with the licensing department at a Portsmouth City Council, the traffic team, road closure team and community liaison officer at Havant Borough Council, Norse, the bus company, St John's Ambulance and the police - all of whom were extremely supportive and enthusiastic about the project, and delighted that the church was prepared to work at putting on such an unusual and interesting event. (See file for various relevant documents – Item 20)

In terms of a more personal encounter there were around 20 people heavily involved in the

cast and crew who would not otherwise have had contact with church. Beyond that we had one audience of around 75 and one of about 100. The project excited conversation and interest across the estates and, in addition to the audience, attracted a crowd of between 100 and 200 onlookers on the day of the camels.

Our widespread local advertising meant that large numbers of people were touched by the Nativity project. For example, we were the featured story in the Community page of the Portsmouth News in the week before play took place and reports with photographs appeared in two consecutive editions of the paper following the performances. (See file for a selection of these stories – Item 21)

Furthermore two members of the team had individual guest slots on Express FM talking about the project and about their faith (see file – Item 22), and we had the two short interviews on Heart FM Breakfast mentioned above. It is not possible to estimate the numbers of people these radio appearances will have reached. Finally, the piece in the Times will have had a huge audience. These people will not be turning up at St Francis Leigh Park or St Clare's Warren Park as a result of what they heard or read, but the contact we have made is nonetheless real. The journalist who wrote the piece for the Times told us that she had not been to church for a long time, but that as a direct result of her experiences with us she intended to seek out her parish church and visit over Christmas. She was a pleasant woman and a charming guest, but she had no reason to say this if it was not true. It is our hope that other people may have been inspired in similar ways to think about attending their own churches, or engaging even just a little more with the Christmas story, as a result of hearing about this event.

4. How would you describe the impact of the project on your church and community?

Hopefully, in answering all the feedback questions, we have managed to give you a real feel for the impact of this project on the team, the church and the community.

There is no doubt that the project encouraged and empowered the people involved. It didn't change the world, but it really did change those hours and that weekend. It didn't dramatically transform lives, but it really did transform how we thought about ourselves and how others think about us. It didn't bring in the kingdom, but it really did open eyes and hearts, if only in the moment. It is impossible to quantify the impact of these things.

The whole event created a buzz in the community and showed that the church is prepared to invest in something different and dynamic, as well as walking alongside the community in our shared ordinariness and vulnerability. This will be more impactful if we can find a way to repeat it.

5. How do you see the project continuing to grow and develop from now. Please also describe your plans for sustaining any ongoing costs.

Our passion and love for this community and our understanding and knowledge of it are vital in the work the church does here. This is a community which needs and deserves to be recognised as fabulous and we wanted this project to bring something really special to life. With the aid of the MOF money we were able to make that happen and it was a great success, but anecdotal evidence tells us that for all our extensive advertising many locals did not believe that the camels would come. With hindsight this is not surprising. It is not a reflection on the church, which has a solid reputation on the estates, but on the fact that this is a community which historically has been promised much by authorities and groups which have then lacked the resources to deliver. Besides, people here would simply be surprised to think that anyone would actually go to the trouble and expense of providing something as fabulous and unusual as real camels wandering about Warren Park. To be really meaningful in the community therefore we will need to make it happen again, so that

it isn't a glorious one-off but a sustained investment in producing something exceptional, with local people can learn to trust and rely on - just as they have learned over the years to trust and rely on the church in a more general sense.

What's more, the Community Nativity Players were hugely enthusiastic about working creatively together and it is hoped that this enthusiasm will provide the basis for establishing a regular piece of community theatre on the Leigh Park and Warren Park estates. The play was a success in many different ways and we would love for it to become a regular feature. However, there is not capacity to put on a nativity play of this nature every year. We feel that it would be counter-productive. Our regular Christmas Eve crib service attracts many locals who consider it to be a tradition in their celebration of Christmas, because it follows a fairly traditional format. The play was a very different vehicle - a fully scripted production with an impact which would be undermined by annual repetition. Furthermore, on a practical level, we would not be able to fund it annually.

With all this in mind, and keen to build up a reputation for producing something thought-provoking, inspiring and joyful in our community, we are proposing to repeat the nativity play every two years (2018, 2020 etc). In the intervening year (2017, 2019 etc) we are planning to put on a community pantomime (less thought-provoking, but also less stressful as a result). This will be in the same venue and follow a broadly similar format for recruitment of cast/stage crew and rehearsal. We are planning to advertise it as a fundraiser for the next nativity play and it will therefore be produced on a very tight budget (oh yes it will!) although we are currently investigating possible community funding sources to assist with costuming, lighting and sets. This type of funding may be easier to access for a pantomime due to the non-religious nature of the production, although this might complicate our Nativity fund-raising plans.

We are aware that the MOF has strict rules regarding repeat funding but we are hopeful that the mission focused impact of the nativity play may result in a favourable outcome in the event of us making a further bid in our nativity years, beginning next year.

2017, however, will be a pantomime year! We are planning to showcase our talents in a production of Cinderella with performances on Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd December. The plan has already been endorsed by the Churchwardens and both PCCs and we are building up to a community launch, hopefully in June.

6. Have you spent the entire grant? If not, please say exactly how much remains and outline your plans (including timescale) for spending it on the purpose of the original proposal.

We spent the entire grant as proposed in the application.

7. Is there anything else you have learned from the experience? (for example: what would you do differently if you did it again? ; how would you advise another parish trying a similar project?)

We learned an enormous amount from this experience about a huge variety of things.

Practical Matters

We honed very many skills we didn't know we had - from play writing to contract negotiation and pretty much everything in between. Amongst myriad other things we learned between us how to apply for a Road Closure Order; how to negotiate with a bus company over the re-routing of the bus service; how to work professional lighting equipment; how to direct enthusiastic actors who have never acted before; how to encourage and then manage teenage cast members (we are now qualified to take on any job involving the herding of cats); how not to swear in public whatever the provocation; how to proof read; how to use Google Drive; how to write a best practice guide (see file - Item 23); how to do multiple risk

assessments; how to mount a camel whilst wearing a cope; how to book the St John's Ambulance for an event; how to cater for 100 people on a £30 budget; how to cover inappropriate tattoos with body paint; how to hold it together when we feel like our heads might explode; how to get a licence for a camel enclosure from the council; how to rig lighting; that everyone loves a walkie-talkie; where to get a litter picker; how to conduct ourselves in an interview; how to behave like normal people whilst wearing extraordinary, glittering face-paint; that a surprising number of people have their own high-vis jackets; how to break the photocopier by overloading it; how to walk in 4ft bespoke feathered arch-angel wings; that our lay reader can do the splits; how to fix the photocopier; that you can't get permission to use the tunes of songs from Les Miserables if you are going to change the lyrics; how to write a new tune for the lyrics we were hoping to set to the tune of a song from Les Miserables (see file – Item 24); which people really do work better on their own; how to run a box office; how to stop a running rail collapsing after it has been loaded with costumes; how to schedule and structure 2 days of productions (see file – Items 25) without losing any costumes (see file – Items 26); how to do a Health and Safety briefing (see file – Item 27); how to be flexible and adaptable at all times; and, of course, quite simply - how to ride a camel the length of St Clare's Avenue looking majestic and generally fabulous!

Personal Matters

Just in the process of bidding for funding we learned that it's ok to be bold and unapologetic in our vision because even though some people will not embrace our passion and enthusiasm others will - and anyway, the passion and enthusiasm represent who and what we are and we should never apologise for that. This is a fabulous lesson to learn and I am personally grateful to Charlie Peer for pointing it out.

Naturally, creating an event such as this caused us to understand new things about ourselves and each other and reinforced some things we already knew. Week on week we built relationships, many of which were tentative and fragile at the start because there was such a wide mix of different people involved - some of whom knew each other well and some of whom knew no-one when we began. As ever we sought to welcome each other as we were and accept each other but new things came to the surface too: the church family amongst us learned not to tell our non church-going friends that we hoped to see them on Sunday and started to understand that perhaps this was their Sunday; the non church-going friends amongst us learned not to feel we were expected to go to church and simply accepted the love, kindness and prayers of those around us; we learned how far we could challenge each other and how life-affirming it is to challenge ourselves with the support of our friends; we learned about each other's lives and were touched by the warmth and generosity we encountered; we learned to be firm with each other when required (this may not have been a necessary lesson if we hadn't had the teenagers to factor in!) and to laugh in the face of adversity at all other times; we learned how to push through stress, anxiety and stomach-churning stage fright; how to carry on when we were not really enjoying it; how to uphold each other; how to find God at the heart of it all; how to allow each other space to bring in our real lives; when to step back and when to step up; how to trust each other; how to believe in ourselves and what we can achieve; how to absolutely fall about laughing at our own madness; how to pray and accept the prayers of others.

There were times during the process of organising this play when I felt quite certain that I would not put myself in that position again for love nor money, but, of course, the process is a bit like childbirth - those painful moments are never really forgotten but they are put into perspective by the joyful nature of the outcome. There are small, practical things we would do differently with hindsight - things such as the audience feedback forms and asking specific questions for the reflections book - and we would seek to tighten up rehearsals but, by and large, we would approach the event in the same way.

In a community where confidence is not high and professional skill-sets are under-represented, a lot of responsibility for making this project work fell to a small group of

people, some of whom came to us through the process. One valuable lesson I learned was that when these people came forward and offered help they meant it and were able to deliver on their offer. This was literally an answer to prayer. At the same time, however, it is vital to accept ourselves as we are and to understand that in this place we will always need to be flexible and adaptable, and ready to gather everyone and everything up with us we go.

Our advice to any parish considering a similar project would be to be prepared for it to be really hard work; have a project manager who can give ridiculous amounts of time to it and a team in support; be very organised in everything, but never, never lose your joy in it. If you don't have a passion for your wider community, if you aren't immersed in it, if you don't burn with it, if you are seeking to do something that is just about your church or even 'church' generally - then this might not be the right project for you. The things we spoke about in our original application – particularly in the final paragraph of Question 6* - are the things which inspired us and drove us forward in this project and, by the grace of God, continue to do so.

Thank you for your trust in us and for your support.

Carolyn Owens
May 2017

* "In essence, we are passionate about this community. It is full of brilliant people - amazing families, fantastic children, generous and warm-hearted individuals. But it is a community known for its levels of intense social and economic need and many of our neighbours have certain doors in life already closed to them just by reason of where they live or are growing up. As a church family it is not a community we observe, it is a community we are part of and immersed in. It is up to us always to stand with our neighbours, celebrating with them all that is good and together filling the gaps, helping to provide for those needs and open those doors, offering the very best that we can and in doing so communicating a glimpse of the Kingdom. We are excited by this project because we believe it represents something of that offer."

The Leigh Park and Warren Park Community Nativity Play
St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park



Heart of the Park



Application Form: Autumn 2017**Guidance Notes**

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2. Grants will also be awarded to licensed Pioneer Ministers, according to the same criteria as set out in this document.
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7. Applications can only be made electronically on the attached form. Applications not on the approved form will be refused. They should not be submitted without the approval of the relevant Parochial Church Council / Cluster / Deanery and in all cases come with the support of the associated Deanery / Deanery Standing Committee.
8. There should be one clear named responsible person as contact for all communication (by email).
9. If a grant is awarded, it will be made on a restricted basis with any funds unspent on the project approved to be returned to the Diocesan Board of Finance.
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11. In order to maximise impact, and demonstrate commitment, it is expected that applicants will normally be adding some of their own funds to projects.
12. For consideration in November, applications need to be **received by Tuesday 31st October**. Completed forms should be returned by email to Valerie Agnew, valerie.agnew@portsmouth.anglican.org.

Further guidance

The criteria for the allocation of MOF grants are designed to be simple and clear. However the allocation panel has found that sometimes additional guidance is needed to give applicants the best chance of a successful bid.

Growth: (question 3). We are deliberately working with a broad definition of "growth". Growth could be physical, spiritual, growth in activity or impact. What is important is that each individual application demonstrates a clear vision for what can result from the project. You may find it helpful to consider the three aspects of growth:

- Growth in depth
- Growth in engagement
- Growth in numbers

If you can clearly demonstrate a vision for one or more of these, then you will have a strong application.

Budget: (question 6). Please give a breakdown of your budget, rather than a single figure. The panel needs to know what you intend to spend the money on.

Capital/staffing projects: Please note that from 2016 onwards, the criteria for the fund have changed (see 5 above), and we are no longer able to award grants for building-related costs or for staff costs. This is in order to maintain the focus on small-scale, start-up grants. If you are developing a larger project, you may wish to talk to your Archdeacon or one of the diocesan advisory team.

Application Form for the Mission Opportunities Fund – Autumn 2017
Diocese of Portsmouth

Please note: All boxes on this form must be completed.

1. Name of Project: Prayer Spaces in a Schools Project

2. What do you want to do?

In May 2017 St Francis and St Clare's churches were represented at a Prayer Spaces In Schools training session organised by Ben Mizen and led by Tim Watson, the Leesland Pioneer Minister. This was an inspirational course - encouraging, effective and clear, demonstrating the positive impact of Prayer Spaces In Schools, whilst highlighting its simplicity.

Over the course of many years, St Francis and St Clare's have developed some extremely strong relationships with the 5 primary phase schools in the parishes. It was immediately evident that these existing relationships would provide a good basis for beginning a PSIS initiative. Inspired by the course to move forward quickly with the concept (see Question 11 below regarding timings) and with PCC agreement we immediately launched a trial project, which 2 of the 5 schools took up at short notice. 2 others expressed an interest, but couldn't accommodate the project in the timeframe before the end of term and the remaining school was not pursued. Ultimately we found that, for the purposes of the trial, we had our hands full with the two schools we did run it in, as they asked us to include more children than we had originally envisaged.

We asked the schools if we could run a Prayer Space for Year 6 children (who would be leaving at the end of the summer term) in June or July 2017. (Copy letter attached.) Because we wanted to be able to offer the project to all the schools and because of the short notice, we didn't feel able to open the offer to more year groups at that point. Riders Junior School was the first to respond. They asked us to work with Year 5 because they felt that this would be an investment in the children who were remaining and that the school would reap a greater benefit from this. The SLT said that they would be happy for us to work with Year 6 too if we could manage both year groups and we were happy to take on that challenge.

Barncroft Primary School was also able to make arrangements with us at relatively short notice. They also asked us to work with Year 5, and suggested we might be able to accommodate some Year 4's too, which we agreed to do.

We set up a rapport with the fantastic people at PSIS (www.prayerspacesinschools.com) who helped us in many ways, including by sharing some really creative ideas. Supported by their active and intentional prayers, together with those of our own congregations (the initiative was a special focus during the Thy Kingdom Come season) we sourced some basic resources and decided on and developed a programme of activities for the sessions. (Copy Prayer Station guides attached) The initiative was financed by St Francis parish and by donation from some members of our team. We trained a handful of volunteers and wrote a Safeguarding Guide and Code of Conduct (copy attached) which we cleared with the Diocesan Safeguarding team.

Feeling slightly anxious but supported by a wave of prayer and good feeling we ran our first two day Prayer Space at Riders on 19th and 20th June 2017. It was an extraordinary, almost overwhelming experience and incredibly positive. (See Question 3 below). We followed this up with the Prayer Space at Barncroft in July. We doubted that we would be able to replicate the warm and interactive response we had encountered at Riders, but we have learned from this experience to have more confidence and more faith because again we experienced an intense and positive engagement from staff and children alike (again see Question 3 below)

Following these sessions both schools asked us to return and to work with a wider group of children. We want to do this and to extend the programme into the other 3 schools as well. Our existing links with all 5 schools together with their links to each other mean that we are likely to get a good reception to rolling our Prayer Spaces In Schools programme out across the estate. Our vision is to develop a team who can run 3 day prayer spaces (accommodating Year Groups 4, 5 and 6, together with any extra children who might benefit) in each of the 5 schools twice a year (see Question 11 below). This is an ambitious concept and will take some time and effort to put in place. In the meantime, we are pitching to the schools the idea of running a 2 day prayer space in January and June on a rolling programme, with some flexibility regarding which year groups the schools wish us to work with.

Pete Greig, co-founder of the 24-7 Prayer Movement, spoke at the Prayer Spaces in Schools 2015 annual conference about a definition of PSIS as Purpose, Spirituality, Imagination, Support. We identify very strongly with this acronym. For us, the purpose is to inspire and engage, and to extend a God-shaped opportunity into the lives of others – not to impose or cajole, but to intentionally take the offer to them and create space in their lives to begin or develop their encounter with God and the mysteries of the world around them. It is our aim to do this by encouraging them to focus for a brief time on matters at the heart of the human condition, but inextricably linked to the otherness of God and thereby to foster and encourage a connection with their own inner spirituality. To do this with impact and effect we need to be creative and imaginative – finding ways to make the difference, providing glimpses and insights in what we offer so that it reaches the hardest to reach and provides a meaningful experience for those who need it most. And all of this must be offered in a spirit of partnership and support, knitting and weaving into a holistic pattern across the estate and working closely with all our community stakeholders to build emotional resilience and provide a spiritual safety net for our young people.

We want to be able to provide this for the schools as an open offer, meaningfully and carefully researched and resourced. Prayer Spaces need to be sensitively and simply planned with a depth in their meaning, but they also need to be beautiful spaces, which create something different in an ordinary environment. We are well equipped to research what works best for this community - to plan and provide opportunities for spiritual questioning and enrichment - and we have successfully begun the process of training and building our team to make the project run in a way which enables and encourages. Where we will really struggle is in providing the practical equipment which will create a moment of awe and wonder - the creative and inspirational enhancements which transform a space and turn it into something that people really connect with, and the resources to help them to make the most of that moment of wonder, reflection and quiet thought.

One of the limiting factors when working with schools to set up Prayer Spaces is the actual space itself. Schools have to work hard to find a big enough room which they aren't using for two or three days in a row, because once the Prayer Space is set up it is in situ for the whole period and constantly in use for that purpose. As part of our offer we would like to be able to provide the space as well as the other elements, by having a marquee as a resource which can be pitched on school premises without interfering with room use. (See Question 6 below) We anticipate that in the summer months this will be very well received. The idea was partly inspired by the Head of Riders Junior School who spoke to us passionately about having an outdoor Prayer Space in the future. If the Allocation Panel look favourably on this application we will also be able to use the marquee for pop-up Prayer Spaces at other community events.

3. How will this lead to growth (numbers/spiritual understanding/other)?

We would refer you to the Prayer Spaces In Schools website (<https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com>) in this regard because their evidence is detailed and wide ranging. However, our own personal experience gained from running the trial in June and July was extraordinary. We had heard and read the anecdotal evidence available from Tim Watson and others who have been involved in similar projects, but we had not anticipated the power and significance of the young people's reactions and we were almost overwhelmed by some of the feedback we received from individual children and members of staff.

Before we began, we considered removing the word prayer and replacing it with thought or reflection, because the point of the project is nothing to do with proselytising and none of the activities we chose was specifically Christian. In the end we decided to leave the experience as a prayer space. Prayer is about paying attention to God, and that is exactly what these spaces are for. They provide an opportunity for the children to think and reflect on issues and areas of life which have God at their centre, but which there is often no time for in the busyness and chaos of life. Prayer doesn't have to be directed or formal and for our young people it doesn't even have to reference God directly; it can be about opening their minds and searching their hearts because in doing that they are beginning to pay attention to God. This is a process they often have had no sustained opportunity or encouragement to engage with. It is something there is often no space for in their lives. Literally, many of our children have never had prayer space in their lives before this experience.

Furthermore, the team was led by the vicar who is well known to the children and who, amongst other things, talked to them about their "Big Questions for God" and led them in prayer for forgiveness over the "Sorry Box" at the end of the session. The success of the initiative was largely attributable to the good and trusted relationships that he has built with the schools, the children and their parents and, in a sense, the ground for engagement and growth was therefore already prepared and the seeds sown before the project began. The Prayer Spaces themselves are an impactful and effective means of tending and nurturing those seeds.

We have attached examples of some feedback we received after the sessions. We have also attached anonymised examples of some of the contributions made by the children during the sessions. We would not ordinarily share these, as they are intensely personal responses, but we feel it necessary here in order to properly communicate the powerful impact of the project on the young people taking part. We know that you will treat what you read with the appropriate respect and consideration, but must ask that you do not share it outside the context of this application. Thank you. Some of the responses are extremely moving - we commend them to you.

When reading these reflections please remember the social and economic context of St Francis and St Clare's parishes. These schools are not church schools. The top 4 most deprived schools in Hampshire Education Authority are in the parishes (including Riders Junior and Infant Schools) and the parishes themselves are entirely comprised of areas falling within a definition of the top 10% and 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England. There is no easy way into this community and there is no automatic acceptance of the structures of the church or its message. That the Prayer Space initiative produced such thoughtful and positive responses is a joy, and a real sign of the grace of God at work here through this and other projects.

During the summer sessions we kept the Prayer Spaces open during lunch time and after school. Some staff visited out of curiosity, but it is our belief that if we were to run a sustained programme of Prayer Spaces this would increase and we would be able to develop a Prayer Space ministry to staff and parents. We are hopeful that this could lead to a redevelopment of a previous project "The Big Ask", which we began in the schools two years ago, but which stalled at that time due to illness.

Simply providing this opportunity for our children and our community is a fantastic piece of mission outreach, but we need to sustain it in order to make it properly impactful. The input of the MOF will help us to achieve that sustainability by providing a range of creative, beautiful and reusable resources and will also help us to run more than one Prayer Space at a time if that is required by the timetabling needs of the schools. It is also anticipated that the vicar will take up some of the themes and questions raised in the sessions in his regular assembly slots and visits in all the schools. Together with the project contact person (Carolyn Owens) he and Sara Barron, the PO9 Pioneer, have already talked about the Prayer Room which Sara runs at Park Community School (Secondary) and this project is an opportunity to create a holistic approach across the Leigh Park and Warren Park estates.

The project has the benefit of enhancing the church's offer in the wider community, through the schools to other stakeholder groups. It is a vibrant and ambitious embodiment of the Live, Pray, Serve concept.

4. Please identify the geographical area in which the project will take place?

Leigh Park and Warren Park – with particular emphasis on the 5 primary phase schools.

5. What indicators will you use to measure the impact in terms of growth and how will this be recorded?

We do not anticipate growth in terms of regular congregation numbers, but we do anticipate the project being impactful in terms of spiritual engagement and personal development (see Question 3 above). This will be evidenced in the responses to the activities which form the Prayer Spaces and in the check-out board we use at the end of each session. We will also ask for feedback from children and, in a professional context, from staff in the format attached (or similar).

As outlined in Question 3 above, it is our hope that, over time, adults will choose to make use of the spaces after school and during lunch times, although it is anticipated that it will take some time to build this particular relationship. The gentlest and most patient ministry of waiting will be required. Eventually it is hoped that the impact will be measured through our visitors' responses and feedback in the same way as it is for the children.

Despite the self-evidencing nature of the impact of the Prayer Spaces, it will still be difficult to measure long-term impact or sustained growth. This is something we will need to consider in more depth as the project develops. However, we must never lose sight of the personal nature of this type of work and the impossibility of ever knowing for certain what is in another's heart. We are preparing the ground, sowing the seeds, tending the crops – but the harvest isn't really ours to claim in a way that is measurable by ticking boxes, counting heads, taking a collection or even by asking for feedback. God's grace will not always conform to even the most creative impact indicators.

6 What is the overall budget for the project?

Breakdown of Funding Bid for St Francis and St Clare Prayer Spaces in Schools Project

Fabric: -

To cover and prepare the spaces
[Sourced from Fabric Land]

Sub Total £ 90.00

Lights: -

[Sourced from Lights4Fun]

Lights (plug in) 14.99 x 2 =	29.98
Lights curtain	42.00
Lights heart	5.99
Candle lights	7.99
Candle lights	3.49
Battery tea lights (5 packs)	10.00
Glass orb lights	18.99
LOVE light	13.99
Batteries (estimate)	20.00
Lava lamps (Argos)	40.00

Sub Total £192.43

Inspiration and Activities: -

[Estimate from previous experience. Any grant may be used for slightly different resources and activities depending on the requirements of the particular sessions]

Plasticine	20.00
Pens	15.00
Fizzers	30.00
Photocopying/printing/laminating	20.00
Box	5.00
Card/canvas for "check-out"	10.00
Other	20.00

Sub Total £120.00

Chill Out Area: -

Cushions	15.00
Bean bags (Argos)	45.00
Bean bag slab (Sensory Direct) -	56.00

Sub Total £116.00

For outdoor spaces:-

3m x 8m Marquee (House of Tents)	600.00
Safety fixings (House of Tents)	169.00
Flooring (Gala Tents)	140.00
Lights (battery)[Lights4Fun] 18.99 x 2	37.98

Sub Total £946.98

TOTAL £1465.41

As at 28th October 2017

7. How much of this are you applying for from the Mission Opportunities Fund?

We are asking for the full amount of £1465 from the MOF please, but refer the Panel to Question 8 below in relation to the parishes' financial contribution to the project.

8. How much of your own funds (parish / cluster / deanery), if any, are you contributing? (Do not include any other grants.)

When we set up the trial sessions in June 2017 we invested about £150 in resources. Some of this was from parish funds and some from a donation. With this money we purchased basic equipment – some lights, fabric and other resources necessary for running the activity stations - plasticine, a world map, cellophane, an extra large kilner jar, effervescent vitamin c tablets, a wooden box, pegs, printing and laminating costs etc. Some of these things need replacing, but many are providing the base for moving forward. We do not have any further funds to purchase the increased resources we need to turn the trial into a full-on project.

9. Please outline 'Consultation to Date' for your proposal: Who are the stakeholders involved? What do they think about the idea? Please attach any relevant letters of support from key stakeholders.

*Approval within St Francis and St Clare's church families

*St Francis PCC agreement. The PCC at St Francis church has agreed the project in principal and delegated responsibility for this bid and further organisation.

*The project has been raised at Havant Deanery Chapter, though not specifically in the context of a MOF bid.

*Schools: The trial project run in June/July 2017 received hugely positive feedback as outlined above. Staff in both schools asked us to run the project again. Please find attached, examples of feedback, together with a copy of the feedback from one school's RE co-ordinator and the anonymised examples of contributions made by young people during the sessions.

NB: The project has been discussed with the Area Dean, Rev Karina Green, who is aware and supportive of this application. Timings are such that we do not yet have the formal support of Deanery Synod, which does not now meet until 21st November 2017 (previous meeting 6th July 2017) We understand that this should not be a bar to our application progressing.

10. What other future funding sources have you identified to enable the project to be sustained in successive years? (If applicable).

The investment of funds we are seeking in this bid will provide a stock of reusable resources which will ensure that the project is self sustaining in this context.

11. Please indicate whether this project is time-critical (e.g. to fit the funding schedule of match-funders), and, if so, give details.

The project is time critical. Advice from Tim Watson suggested that January/February and June/July are the best times to run prayer spaces in schools. The start of the Autumn term is too soon in the academic year and the second half is too focused on Christmas. January is a very down time and the January/June cycle enables the impact of the project to be evenly dispersed through the year. Both sessions can have an underlying focus - the Summer term, for example, is a very good opportunity for encouraging the young people to think about how they are feeling about change and transition.

12. What is the position of the PCC's finances? (Please attach a copy of your latest PCC accounts.) Is the parish up to date with its Parish Share payments?

We attach a copy of the latest PCC accounts of St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park.

You will see from the accounts that there is no money to spare in the parishes. As we have reminded the Allocation Panel in the past, giving here is sacrificial but does not meet the spiralling cost of parish share and buildings upkeep. However, the majority of income comes from varied hall usage, which in turn meets the needs of the community and as a result the parishes remain solvent (if stretched) and continue to pay their way. The PCCs prioritise payment of parish share, outside giving and buildings maintenance, and St Francis PCC has recently made a decision to specifically allocate a small fund to mission and to children's work. However, this is an action which demonstrates our intention and commitment, rather than an amount which will have a financial impact on what we are able to do.

Both parishes have paid their parish share in full in previous years and are up to date with current payments despite large percentage increases in recent years brought about by the Diocesan review.

13. Who is applying?

Lead Applicant: St Francis Church, Leigh Park.....(parish/cluster/deanery)

Contact Person: Carolyn Owens

Contact Email: carolynowens@btinternet.com

Contact Telephone No:023 92475276

Date Approved by parish/cluster/deanery:* St Francis PCC 20th September 2017

Can you confirm that your deanery support this bid:* As Question 9 above: The project has been discussed with the Area Dean, Rev Karina Green, who is aware and supportive of this application. Timings are such that we do not yet have the formal support of Deanery Synod, which does not now meet until 21st November 2017 (previous meeting 6th July 2017) We understand that this should not be a bar to our application progressing.

* Applications cannot be considered without this approval/support having already been obtained.

Documents Attached in Support:

1. Copy email sent to schools inviting them to be part of the project in June/July 2017
2. Example prayer station guides
3. Safeguarding Guide and Code of Conduct
4. Photographs of some of the activities
5. Examples of feedback
6. RE co-ordinator feedback
7. Examples from our Mystery and Wonder Wow Wall, The Big Questions for God and Check-Out Boards
8. Blank Feedback forms
9. St Francis 2016 Accounts
10. St Clare 2016 Accounts

Application Form: Spring 2018**Guidance Notes**

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6. Applications will be assessed by an Allocation Panel, comprising the Bishop's Staff with one other representative from each Archdeaconry, in the spring and in the autumn. The panel will meet to allocate this round of funding in May 2018.
7. Applications can only be made electronically on the attached form. Applications not on the approved form will be refused. They should not be submitted without the approval of the relevant Parochial Church Council / Cluster / Deanery and in all cases come with the support of the associated Deanery / Deanery Standing Committee.
8. There should be one clear named responsible person as contact for all communication (by email).
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11. In order to maximise impact, and demonstrate commitment, it is expected that applicants will normally be adding some of their own funds to projects.
12. For consideration in November, applications need to be **received by Monday 16 April 2018**
13. Completed forms should be returned by email to Valerie Agnew, valerie.agnew@portsmouth.anglican.org.

Further guidance

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- Growth in numbers

If you can clearly demonstrate a vision for one or more of these, then you will have a strong application.

Budget: (question 6). Please give a breakdown of your budget, rather than a single figure. The panel needs to know what you intend to spend the money on.

Capital/staffing projects: Please note that from 2016 onwards, the criteria for the fund have changed (see 5 above), and we are no longer able to award grants for building-related costs or for staff costs. This is in order to maintain the focus on small-scale, start-up grants. If you are developing a larger project, you may wish to talk to your Archdeacon or one of the diocesan advisory team.

Application Form for the Mission Opportunities Fund – Spring 2018

Diocese of Portsmouth

Please note: All boxes on this form must be completed.

1. Name of Project: The Leigh Park and Warren Park Starlight Festival

2. What do you want to do?

We want to use our longstanding experience and love of this community to place the church at its heart and to hold it there. We want to continually inspire and engage, and to extend a God-shaped opportunity into the lives of others; to take the offer to the community intentionally, creatively and imaginatively; to find ways to make a difference, providing glimpses of the kingdom and insights into prayer and spirituality in what we offer so that it reaches the hardest to reach and provides a meaningful experience for those who need it most; we want to do all of this in a spirit of partnership and solidarity with our neighbours so that the church always stands together with the community it serves.

Some of what is written here may sound familiar to members of the Allocation Panel. This is because the Mission Opportunities Fund has been extremely generous in its support of us in recent years, which has been a huge blessing. St Francis, Leigh Park and St Clare, Warren Park are small church families in areas of high deprivation, but we are passionate about the communities we are part of and we do not pay lip service to our intentions. Members may recall their sponsorship of our 2016 Community Nativity Play and, more recently, our Prayer Spaces in Schools initiative. These are significant and ambitious ongoing initiatives which tie into our overall stated aim, tie into each other and directly feed into the project which is the subject of this application - The Leigh Park and Warren Park Starlight Festival.

In 2016, with the support of a fantastic MOF grant, we produced a hugely successful Community Nativity Play featuring three live camels. The play was very well received, but also established the foundations of a group of community players who were keen to be involved in future productions. We made a tentative plan to alternate annually between a fully dramatised nativity play and a community pantomime and when we fed back to the panel this time last year we were beginning to think about Cinderella. It turned out that Cinderella was an even bigger hit, playing in St Clare's church to three capacity audiences, attracting new players and audiences from across the community and doubling the money invested in it by two small funding sources. On the basis that this is what people want us to provide we have shelved our plans to produce a nativity play this year and are now in the process of planning Aladdin for December 2018.

The success of this initiative, together with the continued and developing positivity surrounding our Prayer Spaces in Schools project has helped to increase the confidence we have in our ability to deliver on our aims. Our resources are tiny. We are under-resourced financially and in terms of personnel suitably equipped to manage an ambitious programme of outreach, but we are intentional in prayer, relentless in focus and dynamic in aspiration. As a result we are blessed with layer upon layer of opportunity to build toward our vision for the church and people here.

The Leigh Park and Warren Park Starlight Festival is another foundation stone in that building process. Using the solid and trusted reputation already earned by the parish churches here we want to create an event for residents which brings together all community groups and stakeholders in preparation for Christmas. We want to use this to draw people into a reflective rather than commercialised start to Christmas, but one based in community cohesion and active community participation. We want to encourage a time of preparation at a point when the church is looking to Advent, but the world is looking at shopping. We envisage that the event will take place in St Francis church and hall and will act as a marketplace for all the different community activities that will be happening across the estates in December. We anticipate that it will be, in a sense, a Community Christmas launch, with Jesus at its centre. We hope that all community stakeholders will

participate with stalls marketing and advertising their upcoming events and the services they will provide throughout the Christmas season, and local groups showcasing their talents. We will provide craft for children (and maybe adults) and seasonal refreshments, and we will tie all of this together by creating a series of appropriate and thought-provoking Prayer Spaces throughout the setting. To symbolise a thoughtful start to Christmas and to draw the community in we want to fill the building with stars decorated by the children of our seven local primary age schools (and our main secondary school if this can be arranged.) To create a spectacle and demonstrate the church's commitment to providing something unique and special in this place, as well as harnessing an iconic image of Christmas that symbolises our own journeying through Advent, we want to begin the event with a camel procession.

We have spoken about camel processions before. In our feedback following the 2016 Community Nativity Play we wrote,

"This is a community which needs and deserves to be recognised as fabulous and we wanted this project to bring something really special to life. With the aid of the MOF money we were able to make that happen and it was a great success, but anecdotal evidence tells us that for all our extensive advertising many locals did not believe that the camels would come. With hindsight this is not surprising. It is not a reflection on the church, which has a solid reputation on the estates, but on the fact that this is a community which historically has been promised much by authorities and groups which have then lacked the resources to deliver. Besides, people here would simply be surprised to think that anyone would actually go to the trouble and expense of providing something as fabulous and unusual as real camels wandering about Warren Park. To be really meaningful in the community therefore we will need to make it happen again, so that it isn't a glorious one-off but a sustained investment in producing something exceptional, which local people can learn to trust and rely on - just as they have learned over the years to trust and rely on the church in a more general sense."

We hope that we have already demonstrated what we want to do, what we want to achieve with this event, the foundation for it and the rationale behind it. The matter of the camels however - the cost of which forms the bulk of the budget request - requires a little more explanation. The simple fact is that communities such as ours, which are statistically amongst the most deprived in the Diocese and the country, do not expect beautiful and gorgeous things to happen. There is a generic lack of embedded self-belief and a learned cynicism toward institutions. The reasons for this are socially complex, as are the out-workings of it and, inevitably, there are no simple solutions. The wider church is not an institution that figures on the radar here, but the parish churches have earned a trusted reputation by journeying with people in our shared ordinariness and vulnerability. As a result, we know the value of our neighbours sharing something special with us; we know how it feels to be included in someone else's party because they accept us; we know how much of a difference it can make to be thought enough of that we are asked to be involved in something memorable and life-affirming. This is what we want to reflect back. We need to have the camel procession because it will attract crowds and draw people to this event, but also because it is our gorgeous gift. It is our way of saying, "you guys are worth something fabulous and almost unbelievable. You were worth it before, and you are worth it again. You are worth everything we have." That, surely, is a glimpse of the kingdom.

We could ask for funds for something more prosaic, for something with a more practical outcome, but in reality the social needs here are so great that to have significant impact such a project will require a different sort of funding to that offered by the MOF. Our camels are like expensive ointment poured on Christ's feet. They may seem extravagant and ostentatious but they speak of a deeper meaning and they are entirely fitted to the moment.



3. How will this lead to growth (numbers/spiritual understanding/other)?

"...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in Heaven." Matthew 5

Obviously we intend to advertise this event extensively. We anticipate that the stakeholder groups will be equally keen to encourage attendance and therefore the vision is that the church and hall will be full for the entirety of the event. As well as hosting we will have stalls advertising the churches' Christmas offer, including the pantomime which will be due to take place on the following weekend and our popular Christmas Eve Crib Service. We also hope to give away professionally produced brochures containing relevant information about various activities and including all the church details and contact numbers, as well as some prayer material. It is hard to say, at this stage, how successful this will be in terms of increasing numbers at any of our Christmas events, which are generally well attended anyway, but in theory there should be some increased up-take. In addition, the brochures will reach a wide audience and for some this will be their main or only contact with the church at Christmas.

We are anticipating a gentle swell of interest for adults using the Prayer Spaces. Many of them will have heard something about Prayer Spaces from their children and we intend for this event to provide an opportunity for them to explore the concept themselves. There is a huge amount of evidence, nationally, locally and specifically from us, regarding the impact of Prayer Spaces. It does not seem appropriate to repeat that evidence here and we would refer the panel to our autumn 2017 application for further information.

To summarise, the event is planned to result in increased community and church engagement, and has potential to result in further numerical growth across the Christmas season. Our vision is that it will provide an opportunity for gentle and tentative spiritual growth for all those who take part, partly through the Prayer Spaces, and also through the children preparing their stars for display. The latter element ties in with our previous work with schools on the 2016 Christmas Prayer Sculpture and links with the Prayer Space concept.

Most of all, however, the event will give us another opportunity to let our light shine before others and build on our engagement and impact as true and authentic community partners. The Live: Pray: Serve initiative may be a fairly new articulation of Diocesan strategy, but its concepts have long been at the heart of frontline parish work. To quote the Diocesan strategy we believe this project will "encourage individual ... prayer"; that it will draw in those "unlikely to engage with a more traditional way of being church"; that it will "promote the common good for everyone, and draw in others to this work"; that it will "promote community stability and invest in community life and human relationships" deliberately and intentionally encouraging the hard to reach and marginalised; that it will "clearly and strongly articulate faith in the public sphere ... enabling the asking and tackling of difficult questions, and challenging society." In short, this event, with all its component parts, is an imaginative and energetic example of Live: Pray: Serve in action.

4. Please identify the geographical area in which the project will take place?

The project will take place in and around St Francis Church, Leigh Park

5. What indicators will you use to measure the impact in terms of growth and how will this be recorded?

In the course of organising the event we will have a register of participants and community stakeholders taking part. We hope that the event may lead partner groups to develop new community initiatives with the church at the centre.

On the day of the event we will be able to identify numbers and we will make the usual returns which will indicate whether there is any numerical increase in attendance over the Christmas period. We also intend to have sign out boards at the event which we will encourage visitors to use to capture their feelings. This will not give an accurate idea of numbers but will provide a snapshot of reactions to the day.

The Prayer Spaces, as always, will provide their own evidence and we will ensure that there is someone on hand to curate the spaces and address any pastoral issues which might arise.

As always, it will be impossible to measure and record the full impact of the event. We are passionate about our work and our part in this community and we trust that in this application, as in others, we have communicated something of that passion. The parishes are currently working on a strategic plan which will have, at its centre, our vision of sharing the good news of Christ so that it transforms the way people here think about themselves, others, the world and God. But this cannot be a patronising imposition. It is about providing holistic and seamless opportunities for reflection, about shaping moments of worship which are authentic, about creating space and excitement and peace, about standing in solidarity. Mission here, across the breadth of these estates, will never be about counting heads or ticking boxes or checking weekly giving capacity. We work to provide opportunities here for encounter with God, through the person of Jesus, in the strength of the Spirit - but the power and mystery of the Trinity are greater than anything we can think up to measure their effect and, as we have said before, God's grace is not known for conforming to even the most imaginative impact indicators.

6. What is the overall budget for the project?

Items 1 - 5 are approximate. Items 6 and 7 are based on quotes

1) Stars for circulating to schools

We will need between 2,000 and 2,500 stars around 2" in diameter. We may purchase pre-cut stars or put a team together from within the church family to make our own stars. This will be a good way to ensure that certain members, who for various reasons find committing to projects challenging, can engage with the initiative and take ownership of it, but that is matter which we will decide nearer the event. Either way we anticipate costs in the region of £50

To producing stars for schools to decorate 50.00

2) Administration and Advertising

We may source professionally produced advertising material from Park Community School's social enterprise initiative Park Design and Print or we may create the material ourselves. Either way we do not have surplus funds to cover printing and admin costs.

To cover admin and advertising costs 70.00

3) Refreshments

We are planning to negotiate for an outside catering van to be present at the event, but we would like to supplement this with free drinks and pastries available throughout the day

To cover drinks, pastries, disposable cups etc 100.00

4) Craft

High quality craft activities and entertainment are vital to the success of this project. We intend to source engaging craft resources that enable young people to enjoy the event and create items which they can take away with them. We are hoping to be busy throughout the event and so will need to look at bulk purchasing

To provision of craft materials 150.00

5) Miscellaneous

We anticipate that there will be some small costs in relation to equipment and prayer resources.

To cover sign out books/boards, prayer resources, equipment for hanging stars etc 48.00

6) Brochure

We intend to have the brochure printed by Park Design and Print. They have given us a quote for 400 eight page brochures.

To producing 400 colour brochures @ 35p per copy 140.00

5) Camels

We have received a quote from Joseph's Amazing Camels. This is the company that we used in 2016 on the recommendation of James Burke-Dunsmore. They enjoyed working with us and have confirmed their availability for this event. The fee for the camels remains unchanged from 2016.

To cover hire of camels £2035 + VAT 2442.00

TOTAL in the region of 3000.00

7. How much of this are you applying for from the Mission Opportunities Fund?

We are applying for £2,900 please

The reason that we need to ask for almost the full amount from the Mission Opportunities Fund is that our own financial resources are extremely limited.

As part of our community consultation for the event the CEO of Park Families has suggested she would be happy to recommend some fundraising for the camels through the Park Families pre-school. This is a really positive endorsement of the event and would be a very good way to increase awareness of it and to advertise. However, at this early stage, we cannot be sure of it, or of how much it might be likely to raise. We need to be able to put on this event and book the camels in the certain knowledge of everything being paid for and so we appeal to the Mission Opportunities Fund to cover the cost in full, subject to any successful community fundraising. Alternatively we are bold enough to ask that, as an act of extended generosity, the panel might consider meeting the budget in full to allow for any fundraising to create a self-sustaining fund which, if matched by other sources in the future, could allow the event to become a regular feature.

8. How much of your own funds (parish / cluster / deanery), if any, are you contributing? (Do not include any other grants.)

St Francis PCC has agreed to make a contribution of £100 to the project, which seems a small sum, but is all that the parish can afford - particularly at this time of year when the church is committed to funding its annual Christmas Holiday Craft event and Christmas Eve Crib Service.

9. Please outline 'Consultation to Date' for your proposal: Who are the stakeholders involved? What do they think about the idea? Please attach any relevant letters of support from key stakeholders.

Approval within the St Francis and St Clare church families
St Francis PCC agreement. The PCC has agreed the project in principle and has delegated responsibility for finalising and submitting this bid
Susan Parish - Business and Community Manager at Park Community School
Katie Bone - Community Officer for Leigh Park at Havant Borough Council
Sarah Lamburne - CEO Park Families
Lisa Dunning - Executive Head at The Federation of Riders Infant and Junior Schools
Rev Karina Green - Area Dean and vicar of St Alban's West Leigh
All the individuals above have been approached about the event in its entirety and are enthusiastic in their support. Written confirmation can be obtained if required.

10. What other future funding sources have you identified to enable the project to be sustained in successive years? (If applicable).

We have not yet secured any future funding, but please see question 7 above.

Please indicate whether this project is time-critical (e.g. to fit the funding schedule of match-funders), and, if so, give details.

By definition the project is time critical. To be effective it must take place at the end of November. It is currently diarised for Saturday 24th November 2018.

12. What is the position of the PCC's finances? (Please attach a copy of your latest PCC accounts.) Is the parish up to date with its Parish Share payments?

We attach a copy of the PCC accounts of St Francis, Leigh Park. This is in the form produced by the Accounts Department of the University of Portsmouth. The 2017 accounts have been approved by the PCC, although the attached electronic copy is not signed because it is a copy of the original. The document also includes previous years' accounts.

We have reminded the Allocation Panel through previous applications that giving here is sacrificial but does not meet the spiralling costs of parish share and buildings upkeep. There is no money to spare in the parishes, but varied hall use and rent supplement our income as well as meeting the needs of the community. As a result of this and careful management of our financial resources the parishes remain solvent and continue to pay their way.

Both parishes have paid their parish share in full in previous years and are up to date with current payments despite some of the largest percentage increases in the Diocese, brought about by the Diocesan review.

In previous years when the Allocation Panel has generously made an award, there has been a proviso that funds should be paid through the accounts of St Clare, Warren Park. This is because of an issue regarding outstanding historic accounts at St Francis, Leigh Park. We can now evidence at least three consecutive years of examined, filed accounts at St Francis and should be grateful if the Panel would consider this as evidence of the Parish's current financial probity. In the event that the Panel is kind enough to award us this funding it would greatly ease the administration of the event if the funds were to come through St Francis, where the project leader is based. We have been lucky enough to receive funding for other projects via St Francis in the last twelve months from both the Diocesan Secretary and our local councillor, so the Panel would be in good company.

13. Who is applying?

Lead Applicant: St Francis Church, Leigh Park.....(parish/cluster/deanery)

Contact Person: Carolyn Owens

Contact Email: carolynowens@btinternet.com

Contact Telephone No:023 92475276

Date Approved by parish/cluster/deanery:* St Francis PCC 15th April 2018

*** Applications cannot be considered without this approval/support having already been obtained.**

Attached documentation: St Francis, Leigh Park Accounts



Application Form: Spring 2019**Guidance Notes**

1. Parishes, clusters or Deaneries, may apply for grants from the fund, which will be allocated in accordance with clear criteria, up to a maximum of £5,000 in any one year.
2. Grants will also be awarded to licensed Pioneer Ministers, according to the same criteria as set out in this document.
3. This funding is primarily aimed at enabling new work with a mission and growth focus and will give priority to such applications. However, applications for mission/outreach initiatives that expand current successful work will also be considered. Grants are not intended as a subsidy to sustain existing work per se, nor should receipt of a grant create an expectation of further grants in subsequent years. However it is possible for an application to envisage the use of a grant awarded in this year to cover costs for a project which may be spread over 2 or 3 years.
4. In order to maintain the focus of the MOF, grants will not be awarded for any capital building costs, including kitchens and other such fitted equipment or for any staff costs.
5. Applicants should demonstrate that the projects described will foster growth, and demonstrate a clear basis by which that growth will be assessed. It will be important to describe how initiatives will become self-sustaining or will be assessed as having achieved their specific objectives and by when.
6. Applications will be assessed by an Allocation Panel, comprising the Archdeacons, the Mission Development Officer and Pioneer Development Officer with one other representative from each Archdeaconry, in the spring and in the autumn. The panel will meet to allocate this round of funding in early May 2019.
7. Applications can only be made electronically on the attached form. Applications not on the approved form will be refused. They should not be submitted without the approval of the relevant Parochial Church Council / Cluster / Deanery depending on whether it is a parish, cluster or deanery application.
8. There should be one clear named responsible person as contact for all communication (by email).
9. If a grant is awarded, it will be made on a restricted basis with any funds unspent on the project approved to be returned to the Diocesan Board of Finance.
10. Feedback on progress with successful bids will be an important part of sharing experiences of developing mission projects across the Diocese. This feedback with basic monitoring and evaluation information will be required and will add further to the value and encouragement from this investment in growth and innovation.
11. In order to maximise impact, and demonstrate commitment, it is expected that applicants will normally be adding some of their own funds to projects.
12. For consideration in early May, applications need to be **received by Tuesday 30 April**.
13. Completed forms should be returned by email to Valerie Agnew, valerie.agnew@portsmouth.anglican.org.



Further guidance

The criteria for the allocation of MOF grants are designed to be simple and clear. However the allocation panel has found that sometimes additional guidance is needed to give applicants the best chance of a successful bid.

Growth: (question 3). We are deliberately asking the questions in this section to help you think about growth in broad terms that considers the potential journey from engagement with people to them becoming disciples of Jesus Christ as well as others deepening their journey of discipleship through the mission activity. What is important is that each individual application demonstrates a clear vision for what can potentially result from the project. This is why we've focused on the following three aspects of growth:

- Growth in engagement with people
- Growth in numbers of disciples
- Growth in depth of those already engaged at some level in the journey of discipleship

The more of these aspects of growth you can clearly demonstrate a vision for the stronger your application will be. A plan to take into consideration the 4Ps learnt from LYCiG will also help applicants to think through some of the ingredients of mission.

Budget: (question 6). Please give a breakdown of your budget, rather than a single figure. The panel needs to know what you intend to spend the money on.

Capital/staffing projects: Please note that from 2016 onwards, the criteria for the fund have changed (see 5 above), and we are no longer able to award grants for building-related costs or for staff costs. This is in order to maintain the focus on small-scale, start-up grants. If you are developing a larger project, you may wish to talk to your Archdeacon or one of the diocesan advisory team.

**Application Form for the Mission Opportunities Fund – Spring 2019
Diocese of Portsmouth**

Please note: All boxes on this form must be completed.

1. Name of Project: Community Nativity Panto Players project

2. What do you want to do?

In 2016 the parish of St Francis Leigh Park applied for funding to run a community nativity play at St Clare's church, Warren Park. This was a great success, reaching out into the community in many different ways and causing a huge stir on both the Leigh Park and Warren Park estates.

The team that came together for the play was diverse and original. Led by a church-based production team, the wider team included members of the church family at St Clare's as well as St Francis, but also many members of the community who otherwise did not come into church or engage with the Christmas story. The production team was able to draw on the trusted reputation of the church and the vicar across the estates to encourage participation which resulted in a moving performance and the development of new friendships and comradeship. The event also produced some moving evidence of new engagement with spiritual reflection and an owning of the Christmas story where this had not previously been encountered.

The Community Nativity Players enjoyed their experience so much that they suggested putting on a play in 2017. It was felt by the production team that it was too soon for another nativity play and plans were made to alternate between a nativity play and a pantomime. The 2017 production of Cinderella was such a hit however, playing to sell out audiences at St Clare's, that the team shelved ideas for a further nativity and put on Aladdin in 2018. The Community Nativity Panto Player project was born! Aladdin launched at the end of July with new faces and old joining the troupe. The cast and crew numbered in excess of 50 being mostly drawn from the wider community. The script was written over the summer to accommodate the assembled cast and weekly rehearsals began in earnest at the start of September. The show, which took place over the first weekend of December, sold out at three performances and was seen by nearly three hundred residents who laughed, booed, groaned and cheered their way through the entire production. Plans are already underway for this year's production of Dick Whittington which is set for a community launch at St Clare's at the end of June. Through judicious use of small grant funding and a carefully balanced approach to ticket pricing the production team has managed to ensure that the production is currently financially self sustaining. (See question 10 below)

St Clare's PCC has relished the opportunity to open our doors to this exciting church-led community venture and to develop such a vibrant and exciting missional project. In return the community has relished the opportunity to participate and engage. We are delighted with the response which has seen hundreds of people who would not otherwise come into church over Christmas, drawn to our offer where they find joy, fulfilment, fun and laughter. It is, of course, our main aim as a parish church to share the Good News of Jesus Christ not just lark about in a pantomime, but we and the production team are always ourselves and the open, non judgemental, accepting nature of the offer in this project is recognised by all involved as being part of our Christian faith and has been transformative in the lives of many of those who have engaged with it.

We want to ensure that this work grows and flourishes. We see it as an exemplary model of the church at work in the community, being both engaging and innovative in nature. As a PCC we are keen to make a practical contribution and the most useful, practical way we can do that is through this funding application. Although the team has managed to create financial resilience for the productions, this is based on a tight budget which does not allow for the hire or purchase of technical equipment. By necessity therefore there is a complex arrangement of borrowing and transporting delicate sound and lighting equipment from a variety of sources in the week before the production, which causes extreme difficulty and impedes the overall development of the project. It is impossible for the players to rehearse properly with the equipment and it is not always certain that it will even be available for the shows. We want to ensure that these elements of the productions, which are about the resource provision within our church building are the best they can be so that our community feels valued and this fantastic project can develop and grow. We therefore want to purchase appropriate sound and lighting equipment which can be used in this context.

3. How will this lead to growth?

a. Growth in engagement with people

W explained the background to this question in 2) above. There is no doubt that the Community Nativity Panto Players project is growing engagement in our community. If we fail to nurture it with practical assistance and support we will be impeding that growth.

b. Growth in numbers of disciples

It is really hard to evidence how this funding will lead to growth in numbers of disciples. Nevertheless, alongside the parish of St Francis, Leigh Park it is our stated aim that we will strive to bring about transformation in individual lives through sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. We believe that the more people we engage within our community the wider open will stand the door to discipleship. Under the leadership of the vicar we are intentional in our prayers for growth and we have faith that when we knock the door will be further opened.

c. Growth in depth of those involved who have already started the journey as disciples

Partners in the project who are already committed members of church families anecdotally report a warm understanding of the impact of the project on their own journeys. The project is secular in content and delivery, but it is rooted in prayerful intent. It creates secular opportunities for individual self development and confidence-building via a platform which openly promotes community cohesion, but operating in the context of the church in this place and the committed Christian faith of the production team. It is a project which has enormous potential to grow in all these aspects because we believe it to be effective Spirit led ministry.

What is your plan to include elements of the following 4P's in your project?

Prayer (what prayer has/is going on behind the scenes?)

We pray regularly for the success of the Panto Players project and the work that happens as a result of it. We are also intentional in our prayers for growth. We regularly pray the LYCiG prayer for growth which will be a focus for us during Thy Kingdom Come week. We trust that this project is an answer to prayers already said as well as the focus for prayer moving forward.

Presence (how will this increase your presence with people in your community?)

We have done our best to answer this in Question 2 and 3a above.

The Community Nativity Panto Players project has already been proved to reach the community in significant ways and increases the profile and presence of the church across these estates. We want to maintain, sustain and enhance that outreach by helping to develop the project's physical resources. We believe that this will enrich both the actual provision and the reputation of the project and secure it for future flourishing.

Proclamation (how will you speak of God and help people to know who He is?)

The offer in this project is entirely unconditional. The team do not require the cast and crew to listen to them speak of God and rarely pray as a group before rehearsals. There are prayers together before shows and worship is shared ahead of Sunday performances, but people are encouraged to drift in and out of this as they feel comfortable.

However, the physical context of the project is unequivocal. People engaging with it literally have to come into the warm embrace of church and be present in a holy space in the midst of the community. Every week members of the cast and crew help to move the furniture of the church to create the rehearsal space and replace it at the end, and every week they become more familiar with the gentle spirituality of that environment which speaks of God's grace.

In addition, the project is led by a team which is honest and open about its faith and which shares generous hospitality reflecting God's abundant goodness to us.

Our lights and sound desk won't directly help people to know God, but they will encourage and sustain this project which we believe brings God into the heart of our community and into the individual lives of those who engage with it.

Persuasion (how might hearts be won over to follow God through your project?)

We refer you to our previous answers. This project is about opening up opportunities in this community - opportunities for personal growth and development, for encouragement, for nurture, for fun and friendship, for tolerance and understanding, for challenging ourselves and each other, for learning new skills and relearning old ones, for promoting community cohesion and consistently achieving something generous and joyful. As a PCC we want to offer practical support for all of that and the most effective way we can do this is by providing modern, easy to use, streamlined resources which will promote and sustain the excellence of an excellent project.

We hope that we have already demonstrated our commitment to mission and the intentionality of our planning and prayer. We do not win hearts for God. We do not believe that the hearts of others are ours to win. Rather we believe that God wins hearts where hearts are open to hearing him. We believe that this project, with its gentle and unconditional offer, creates an environment where hearts can and do open, and we want to do all we can to support and nurture that opportunity.

4. Please identify the geographical area in which the project will take place?

St Clare's Church, Warren Park

5. What indicators will you use to measure the impact in terms of growth and how will this be recorded?

The PCC receives regular reports and updates about the project. During periods of recruitment following the launch we have been and will continue to be updated regarding numbers and engagement. The impact of the project in terms of engagement is very clearly identifiable and recorded through numbers taking part as cast and crew and in ticket sales.

Growth in terms of spiritual development is, of course, harder to evidence. In all conscience we cannot say for sure that we expect to see growth in terms of obviously committed discipleship or regular attendance at worship, although there has been some evidence of that in the previous years and we pray that it continues. However, what the project provides is a delicate offer to the community and we feel it would be counter-productive to overplay the numerical growth aspiration at this point. The impact being sought is not entirely quantifiable or tangible, so instead the production team encourages individuals to feel welcome and accepted and, from time to time, to record their feelings in a reflections book. There is some reticence amongst the cast and crew about recording how they feel so this is a work in progress. God is constantly surprising and we cannot allow ourselves to be too distracted by the ineffective nature of the impact indicators at our disposal. Some of what happens requires simple faith and trust.

6. What is the overall budget for the project? Please give a breakdown of your main budget items and planned expenditure within that total:

The overall budget for the project is £4800.

We are aware that St Francis Church, Leigh Park which is currently a separate parish with its own PCC is currently bidding for funds for a very different project, but also for sound and lighting systems. The project co-ordinator has liaised on behalf of both projects with Ben Fletcher and Barry Fletcher who lead the Sound and Lighting crew for Havant Dynamo Youth Theatre. They have kindly assessed the needs of the project and put together a package of resources which they believe would best meet these needs and requirements and suit the abilities of our team. As lighting and sound provision goes it is a basic, but comprehensive package and is broadly similar to the package put together for St Francis PCC. It is the opinion of Ben and Barry, who are very experienced technicians in this context, that what they are suggesting will increase the capacity of the project to deliver exciting, professional quality outcomes within the capabilities of our crew. They have offered to assist with the sourcing and setting up of the equipment. They are also clear in their advice that the delicate nature of the equipment - lights in particular - together with the unwieldy nature of cables and safety measures mean that each parish should have its own resources and that this initial outlay will save funds in the longer terms by avoiding costs in transporting equipment, repairs and breakages.

Please see attached Resources Schedule for budget breakdown and expenditure details.

7. How much of this are you applying for from the Mission Opportunities Fund?

We are applying for the full £4800 from the Mission Opportunities Fund.

8. How much of your own funds (parish / cluster / deanery), if any, are you contributing? (Do not include any other grants.)

Sadly, we are not in a position to contribute financially towards the resources we wish to purchase. We have had some significant outlay in capital building costs in recent years together with a substantial rise in parish share. The hall is well used as a community resource and our income and expenditure is carefully managed, but this means that we meet our overheads rather than that we have funds to contribute to developing this project. It would not be possible to fund raise for such resources in this community, which is ranked as the 387th most deprived parish in the country out of 12,508 on IMD statistics.

We feel uncomfortable that we are not to be able to make a fuller financial contribution and that we have to ask for the full amount from the MOF. However, what we lack in funds we make up for in commitment. We are fully committed to the project and support it in prayer and encouragement as well as in practical ways such as letting the church and hall to the project without rental charge. This means that from September to December we are unable to let the hall on a commercial basis at certain times and therefore lose income. Our contribution is significant and real even though it cannot extend to the resources which we believe will make such a difference to the efficacy of the project.

9. Please outline 'Consultation to Date' for your proposal: Who are the stakeholders involved? What do they think about the idea? Please attach any relevant letters of support from key stakeholders.

The project has already proved to be a great success and the community has been hugely supportive of it. We have not specifically raised the possibility of enhancing the production with lighting and sound equipment with the wider community but we are confident that anything which enriches the project would be endorsed by them.

In terms of stakeholder support we refer to the email below from Beryl Francis, ward councillor for Warren Park which she sent in response to a feedback request regarding a St Francis event.

Dear Carolyn,

The Church in Leigh Park has produced some wonderful events that bring the Community together and add sparks of liveliness to the area where there is much deprivation.

The visit of the Wise Men with their camels this year gave such a lot of pleasure and brought people into the church, as did the earlier Nativity which was preceded by the Wise Men riding up to St Clare's church along with sheep before the production.

I would like to thank you for the energy and joy that you have given to local residents. I, most certainly, hope that you will be able to continue with such events, including the pantomimes, in the future.

[some text removed as not relevant here]

With best wishes

Beryl Francis

Cllr Warren Park Ward

10. What other future funding sources have you identified to enable the project to be sustained in successive years? (If applicable).

The production team have, as outlined above, secured some small levels of grant funding and with this was able to fund last year's productions and generate ticket sales. A small grant is also held for this year's production and, working on a tight budget, the situation currently looks to be financially self-sustaining.

The Community Nativity Panto Players are not a separately constituted group. Their funds are currently held as a restricted fund within the accounts of St Francis PCC. This application to the Mission Opportunities Fund is from St Clare PCC specifically to provide sound and lighting resources as part of the fabric of what the church building can offer to the project.

11. Please indicate whether this project is time-critical (e.g. to fit the funding schedule of match-funders), and, if so, give details.

The project is time critical. The next production will begin rehearsal in September 2019 with shows diarised for Saturday 30th November and Sunday 1st December.

12. What is the position of the PCC's finances? (Please attach a copy of your latest PCC accounts.) Is the parish up to date with its Parish Share payments?

We attach a copy of the 2018 accounts of St Clare, Warren Park as approved by the PCC.

As a result of careful management of our financial resources the parish remains solvent and continues to pay its way. The PCC has paid parish share in full in previous years and continues to do so.

* Applications cannot be considered without this approval/support having already been obtained. Parishes only need PCC approval, clusters need approval from relevant PCC/DCCs in the cluster, deanery bids need approval from deanery synod.

13. Who is applying?

Lead Applicant: St Clare, Warren Park PCC.....(parish/cluster/deanery)

Contact Person: Carolyn Owens.....

Contact Email: carolynowens@btinternet.com.....

Contact Telephone No: 023 92475276.....

Date approved by parish/cluster/deanery:* 26th March 2019.....

Application Form: Spring 2019**Guidance Notes**

1. Parishes, clusters or Deaneries, may apply for grants from the fund, which will be allocated in accordance with clear criteria, up to a maximum of £5,000 in any one year.
2. Grants will also be awarded to licensed Pioneer Ministers, according to the same criteria as set out in this document.
3. This funding is primarily aimed at enabling new work with a mission and growth focus and will give priority to such applications. However, applications for mission/outreach initiatives that expand current successful work will also be considered. Grants are not intended as a subsidy to sustain existing work per se, nor should receipt of a grant create an expectation of further grants in subsequent years. However it is possible for an application to envisage the use of a grant awarded in this year to cover costs for a project which may be spread over 2 or 3 years.
4. In order to maintain the focus of the MOF, grants will not be awarded for any capital building costs, including kitchens and other such fitted equipment or for any staff costs.
5. Applicants should demonstrate that the projects described will foster growth, and demonstrate a clear basis by which that growth will be assessed. It will be important to describe how initiatives will become self-sustaining or will be assessed as having achieved their specific objectives and by when.
6. Applications will be assessed by an Allocation Panel, comprising the Archdeacons, the Mission Development Officer and Pioneer Development Officer with one other representative from each Archdeaconry, in the spring and in the autumn. The panel will meet to allocate this round of funding in early May 2019.
7. Applications can only be made electronically on the attached form. Applications not on the approved form will be refused. They should not be submitted without the approval of the relevant Parochial Church Council / Cluster / Deanery depending on whether it is a parish, cluster or deanery application.
8. There should be one clear named responsible person as contact for all communication (by email).
9. If a grant is awarded, it will be made on a restricted basis with any funds unspent on the project approved to be returned to the Diocesan Board of Finance.
10. Feedback on progress with successful bids will be an important part of sharing experiences of developing mission projects across the Diocese. This feedback with basic monitoring and evaluation information will be required and will add further to the value and encouragement from this investment in growth and innovation.
11. In order to maximise impact, and demonstrate commitment, it is expected that applicants will normally be adding some of their own funds to projects.
12. For consideration in early May, applications need to be **received by Tuesday 30 April**.
13. Completed forms should be returned by email to Valerie Agnew, valerie.agnew@portsmouth.anglican.org.



Further guidance

The criteria for the allocation of MOF grants are designed to be simple and clear. However the allocation panel has found that sometimes additional guidance is needed to give applicants the best chance of a successful bid.

Growth: (question 3). We are deliberately asking the questions in this section to help you think about growth in broad terms that considers the potential journey from engagement with people to them becoming disciples of Jesus Christ as well as others deepening their journey of discipleship through the mission activity. What is important is that each individual application demonstrates a clear vision for what can potentially result from the project. This is why we've focused on the following three aspects of growth:

- Growth in engagement with people
- Growth in numbers of disciples
- Growth in depth of those already engaged at some level in the journey of discipleship

The more of these aspects of growth you can clearly demonstrate a vision for the stronger your application will be. A plan to take into consideration the 4Ps learnt from LYCiG will also help applicants to think through some of the ingredients of mission.

Budget: (question 6). Please give a breakdown of your budget, rather than a single figure. The panel needs to know what you intend to spend the money on.

Capital/staffing projects: Please note that from 2016 onwards, the criteria for the fund have changed (see 5 above), and we are no longer able to award grants for building-related costs or for staff costs. This is in order to maintain the focus on small-scale, start-up grants. If you are developing a larger project, you may wish to talk to your Archdeacon or one of the diocesan advisory team.

**Application Form for the Mission Opportunities Fund – Spring 2019
Diocese of Portsmouth**

Please note: All boxes on this form must be completed.

1. Name of Project: St Francis Church, Leigh Park Worship Sound and Lighting Enhancement Project

2. What do you want to do?

As we explained in our last application for Mission Opportunities Fund funding we "want to use our longstanding experience and love of this community to continually place the church at its heart and to hold it there. We want to inspire and engage, and to extend a God-shaped opportunity into the lives of others; to take the offer to the community intentionally, creatively and imaginatively; to find ways to make a difference, providing glimpses of the kingdom and insights into prayer and spirituality in what we offer so that it reaches the hardest to reach and provides a meaningful experience for those who need it most."

This is the context for our work in Leigh Park. It is also the context for our stated and agreed vision that:-

"We will strive to share the Good News of Jesus Christ that people are made by God, known by God and loved by God – and that in doing this we will transform the way people think about themselves, others, their community, the world around them and God."

Part of this agreed vision (see copy attached) relates specifically to worship and it is in relation to this that we make our current application for funding. As a PCC we are committed to creating -
"authentic worship which is true to our vision and communicates it - peaceful, embracing, encouraging, joyful, meaningful, making connections; holding its integrity; true to the people we serve and to God. As God would have it be."

We want, therefore, to develop our worship offer and increase our capacity for new and innovative forms of worship in ways which will encourage new disciples and nurture those on the cusp of discipleship. As with everything we do, we want to develop this offer intentionally, creatively and imaginatively.

We want to use our big, airy church building in powerful and inventive ways. As well as working out in the community we already regularly bring the community in - for example through extensive schools engagement, through well established and well attended Christmas and Easter celebrations, through our significant baptism and funeral ministry and so on. Our experience is that this engagement makes a significant difference in individual lives and goes a considerable way to holding the church at the heart of the community. It is a form of engagement which is only possible through the trusted and organically developed relationship which exists between the parish church and the community and it certainly provides glimpses of the kingdom and insights into prayer and spirituality which reach the hardest to reach. We want to be able to develop and evolve this ministry, so that the experiences of those who engage with it are the very best they can be. We want to create moments of awe and wonder within the simplicity of our offer, moments which reflect the love and the glory of God and draw people to it irresistibly. In this way, we want to deepen the experience and create the best possible environment for profound encounter and nurturing discipleship.

At the same time as this, we are also exploring new and progressive forms of worship. We are contemplating the blending of old and new styles and the development of new all age worship services to foster and kindle questioning and the sharing of our journey with God, guided by the life and teachings of Jesus. It is our desire to experiment and explore until we find ways of worship which sit alongside our existing liturgy, but which roll with a more fluid accessibility and provide an alternative for those who are less comfortable with the formal poetry of a traditional Eucharist.

We have explained to the Allocation Panel on previous occasions that our resources in the parish are tiny. In our most recent application for funding for the very successful Starlight Festival Community Christmas launch we said "we are under-resourced financially ... but we are intentional in prayer, relentless in focus and dynamic in aspiration. As a result we are blessed with layer upon layer of opportunity to build toward our vision for the church and people here." This remains the case. Whilst maintaining our inclusive, outward facing, community focussed ministry we are now at the point of wanting to develop and strengthen our 3rd and 4th P provisions and what happens when we look inside our building. This is, in effect, the next layer as we build toward our vision.

We have a small but prayerful and reflective group who will work with energy and enthusiasm to support the vicar in this. The dynamic intentionality of our prayer and aspiration under his direction and leadership can sustain us and what we will seek out and offer. As ever, though, we lack physical resources and the finances to acquire them. The PCC is in agreement that we will require superior resources to achieve our aims, in particular in terms of lighting and sound system provision. We want to be able to enhance all that we offer with modern, up-to-date, professional equipment that will enable us to create a worship environment that is ambient and accessible to all. We believe that this will encourage even greater community engagement and enrich the worship experience we develop in ways which will foster new and maturing discipleship.

3. How will this lead to growth?

a. Growth in engagement with people

The thinking behind our mission strategy is, like the work of mission itself, an holistic thing. Our plans, along with the impact of them, are organically created working from experience, growing through relationships and rooted in prayer. We feel that the best way to express this to the Allocation Panel is to mirror it by giving an articulate overview of the whole, which we have done in answer to Question 2. We therefore refer you to that answer in relation to Question 3.

To elaborate here, however, our experience suggests that - up to a point - the more generous the offer the greater the level of engagement. Whilst it is our desire to capture the hearts of our community in the power of the Spirit and the unendingly generous message of Jesus Christ we are also aware that physical surroundings and atmosphere are important in setting the scene for this engagement. Just as we have found with our Prayer Space ministry, our sacred space needs to be beautiful space, transformed by creative and inspirational enhancements which turn it into something that people really connect with and which will draw people to it. We work hard at this within our church building, but we think that the free standing lighting and sound system enhancements we are proposing will increase those moments of connection, wonder and reflection.

b. Growth in numbers of disciples

We do not necessarily anticipate large growth in numbers of new disciples through this project because the harvest is not ours to reap, but gathered by God's grace at work in people's lives. However, our vision is to create a metaphorical and physical environment which encourages spiritual maturity and enhances each person's understanding of life in all it's fullness - which to us is about living life in the light of Christ.

We are committed to innovative use of our sacred space, so that it is truly a space for encounter with each other and with God. In developing our worship offer with generosity and creativity we feel sure that God will bless us with new enquirers keen to learn more about Jesus.

c. Growth in depth of those involved who have already started the journey as disciples

We refer you to Questions 2, 3a and 3b above. In creating new but authentic worship which is true to our aim and communicates it - peaceful, embracing, encouraging, joyful, meaningful, making connections; holding its integrity - and in developing and enriching the worship we already offer we think that those who are already involved will find new challenge and new joy. We are excited by this possibility and are keen to secure the support we need to achieve it through this funding bid.

What is your plan to include elements of the following 4P's in your project?

Prayer (what prayer has/is going on behind the scenes?)

We have considered many of these issues over a considerable time, particularly since the adoption of our parish vision which is rooted in intentional prayer. The PCC is in agreement that the resources we are asking for will enrich our offer to this community and strengthen our capacity to deliver on our mission aspirations. In that sense we feel that the bid is a response to the prayer that has got us this far.

We openly pray for growth together and individually, using the LYCiG prayer for growth and alongside this we regularly pray simply that God send people to us. Since we have been doing this we have seen many examples of people new to faith coming through the church door. When the intentionality of our prayer is focused in this way the result can be amazing. We intend to continue to pray this way and to use the Thy Kingdom Come season to encourage a wave of private prayer for growth, wisdom and guidance.

Presence (how will this increase your presence with people in your community?)

We have done our best to answer this in Question 2 and 3a above.

Our presence in the community is already significant and provides the foundation for all other outreach and mission here. Without the trusted relationships that lead to this presence there would be no solid foundation for growth. Led by the vicar we constantly strive to be outward looking and, although it is specifically about looking inside, we are confident that this project will increase our offer to the community and enhance our presence by using modern, streamlined resources to help us explore and develop the way we use our sacred space.

Proclamation (how will you speak of God and help people to know who He is?)

This project is about worship and using our building in creative and innovative ways for God. We aim for everything we do in church to speak of God and the purpose of the resources we use in this respect is to support people in exploring for themselves their relationship with and feelings about Him.

Persuasion (how might hearts be won over to follow God through your project?)

We cannot be certain that a streamlined sound system and intense and colourful lighting options will win over hearts to follow God. We are certain however that our intention and our motivation are sincere, that our prayers are genuine and that our aspiration is profound. We believe that gently developing and innovating within our church building is a Spirit led response to our stated vision for the church in Leigh Park and that a streamlined sound system and intense, colourful lighting options are powerfully enabling resources in this context.

4. Please identify the geographical area in which the project will take place?

St Francis Church, Leigh Park

5. What indicators will you use to measure the impact in terms of growth and how will this be recorded?

It is our hope that in developing and exploring in the ways we have outlined we will see, over time, obvious signs of impact through attendance at worship services and events. We would hope to see the green shoots of impact from this within a two year time frame.

As always, there will be significant intangible elements as well. As we have explained before we are passionate about our work and our part in this community and we trust that in this application, as in others, we have communicated something of that passion, but our vision for this place cannot be imposed on it. It is about providing holistic and seamless opportunities for reflection, about shaping moments of worship which are authentic, about creating space and excitement and peace. Mission across Leigh Park is not about conforming to pre-existing ideas of what might work elsewhere, however ground breaking, and will never really be about counting heads or ticking boxes or checking weekly giving capacity. We work to provide opportunities here for encounter with God, through the person of Jesus, in the strength of the Spirit and the impact of that will not always be quantifiable.

6. What is the overall budget for the project? Please give a breakdown of your main budget items and planned expenditure within that total:

The overall budget for the project is £5190. We have sought advice and support from Ben Fletcher and Barry Fletcher who lead the Sound and Lighting crew for Havant Dynamo Youth Theatre about the equipment which would best suit our setting and our requirements. They have kindly assessed our needs and put together a package of resources as attached.

We understand that St Clare's PCC is submitting a bid for a different project but also for sound and lighting equipment in a similar package. Ben and Barry have offered to source the equipment for both parishes and to assist in setting up. It is their opinion that both parishes would benefit from dedicated equipment and should invest in individual resources to avoid damage, breakage or loss. Both PCCs are aware and supportive of the other's bid and the project co-ordinator is working across the parish boundaries on both projects.

7. How much of this are you applying for from the Mission Opportunities Fund?

We are applying for the full £5000 from the Mission Opportunities Fund. The increase in parish share experienced by the parish in recent years, together with other significant overheads means that our finances are extremely tight. Regular parish fundraising for these kinds of resources is not an option in this community which remains in the top 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in England.

8. How much of your own funds (parish / cluster / deanery), if any, are you contributing? (Do not include any other grants.)

As explained in Question 7, we are not in a position to make a large financial contribution towards these resources, but we will be able to fund the £200 excess. The PCC is also committed to mission and will find ways to fund all other elements and expenses which might arise from developing our worship programme. We will also, of course, be making an enormous contribution and commitment in terms of vision, strategy, creativity, missional relationships and prayer.

9. Please outline 'Consultation to Date' for your proposal: Who are the stakeholders involved? What do they think about the idea? Please attach any relevant letters of support from key stakeholders.

In previous applications we have been able to cite support from a variety of stakeholders for our outreach projects. This application is different. It has at its centre our knowledge of our building, of liturgy, of creative use of sacred space and what speaks to people in these contexts. We have not felt it appropriate to undertake further stakeholder consultation at this point. This may change over time as we explore, develop and broaden our offer.

In the meantime, symbolic of stakeholder engagement and of support for the ways in which we can foster and encourage relationships with God we commend to you the comment gathered from one of the children engaged in a recent School Prayer Space:-

"You make me say wow God!"

We would like you to help us reveal more wow moments for this community

10. What other future funding sources have you identified to enable the project to be sustained in successive years? (If applicable).

This is not applicable in this case. The resources we are looking to purchase are one-off purchases which we hope to make use of for many years.

11. Please indicate whether this project is time-critical (e.g. to fit the funding schedule of match-funders), and, if so, give details.

The project is not time critical in the way our previous projects funded by the MOF have been. However, we are ready to begin this phase of development and are keen to move forward as soon as possible.

12. What is the position of the PCC's finances? (Please attach a copy of your latest PCC accounts.) Is the parish up to date with its Parish Share payments?

We attach a copy of the 2018 accounts of St Francis, Leigh Park as approved by the PCC. This is in the form produced by the Accounts Department of the University of Portsmouth on our behalf.

We have reminded the Allocation Panel through previous applications that giving here is sacrificial but does not meet the spiralling costs of parish share and buildings upkeep. There is no money to spare but varied hall use and rent supplement our income as well as meeting the needs of the community. As a result of this and careful management of our financial resources the parish remains solvent and continues to pay its way.

The PCC has paid parish share in full in previous years and continues to do so.

13. Who is applying?

Lead Applicant: St Francis Church, Leigh Park PCC.....(~~parish/cluster/deanery~~)

Contact Person: Carolyn Owens.....

Contact Email: carolynowens@btinternet.com.....

Contact Telephone No: 023 92475276.....

Date approved by parish/~~cluster~~/~~deanery~~:* 16th January 2019

* Applications cannot be considered without this approval/support having already been obtained. Parishes only need PCC approval, clusters need approval from relevant PCC/DCCs in the cluster, deanery bids need approval from deanery synod.



The Federation of Riders Schools

Riders Infant and Junior Schools

Kingsclere Avenue, Leigh Park, Havant, Hampshire PO9 4RY

Executive Headteacher: Ms Lisa Dunning

School Business Manager: Mrs Emma Wilkins

Heads of Schools: Mrs Sue Holdway and Ms Claire Linfield

Infant & Junior Tel: 023 9247 5342 Fax 023 9249 2127

Email: adminoffice@riders-inf.hants.sch.uk

Email: adminoffice@riders-jun.hants.sch.uk

6th November 2018

To whom it may concern,

Father Jonathan is a pivotal member of our school community.

Throughout the school year, Father Jonathan interacts with all of the children in the junior school through fortnightly assemblies. Within these assemblies, the children learn about the Christian faith and the wider world. Father Jonathan engages them in discussion and raises deep questions through teaching, challenges and games. The children love his assemblies and they are always well-thought out, resourced and pitched perfectly to engage and entertain but also to teach. This is especially evident at Harvest, Christmas and Easter, when Father Jonathan leads the children and staff in our celebrations and reflections.

"I love it when Father Jonathan comes in. Once he made a massive flower out of newspaper and we learnt all about growing." Year 4 child.

"He teaches us about things we wouldn't know about if he didn't come. The world & God & other people." Year 3 child.

"He blew up a world beach ball-thing and he showed us about how small the world could be but how big it could be too. He makes me think. You know about things more than school." Year 5 child.

We have welcomed the Prayer Space into our school on 3 occasions. Questionnaires following have shown that the children and staff in our Years 5 & 6 (6 classes) have appreciated the opportunity to contemplate life and their thoughts and beliefs in a supportive environment. The children are allowed and supported to explore complex issues such as forgiveness, gratitude and solace. Father Jonathan has taken our Music Room and transformed it on each occasion to provide a serene environment, totally unlike the children's everyday school experience. Father Jonathan has taken responsibility for all communications with parents (through letters) and the children (through assemblies) and we have been left with a small display or object made by the children to remind them of their experience. These are displayed in my office and children will comment upon them frequently and positively.


"I really liked it. It made me stop and think. There was one activity where you put a tablet and it dissolved. You had to stand and watch it bubble and think about things that you would like to say sorry for. When the bubbles go, so does your bad feeling." Year 6 child.

"There was a space just to sit. I didn't like the room to start with because I thought you had to do the things that were there. Father Jonathan told me about the place to sit and just listen and think. When I was ready, I did the other bits and it was good." (Year 6 child)

When we have sought to make changes in the way we present and share with parents, Father Jonathan is flexible and supportive. He has supported a wide range of initiatives from playground carolling to orchestrating a 3rd Age tea that our Year 6 (3 classes) children could host. We are able to use Father Jonathan as a link to our wider community and provide our children with worthwhile experiences as a result.

Federation Website: www.ridersschools.co.uk

Federation Blogs: www.ridersblogs.co.uk

The children all visit the Church and have also been part of the displays there. They are aware that they have joined with children across Leigh Park to create what have been beautiful and symbolic displays, which in turn create a sense of wider community and shared beliefs. 

Throughout the year, we hold performances, fairs and workshops for parents. Father Jonathan attends the vast majority of these. He is present when our Year 6 perform at both the production and the Leavers' Assembly, he leads our Christmas performances (12 classes) and he is present when we celebrate attendance. He also comes to all school fairs. In times of crisis, Father Jonathan is on hand to provide support; spiritual or practical.

When our children join Year 3, they already know Father Jonathan from the stories he has read and the assemblies he has held in the infant school. When children join us from other Leigh Park schools (& there is significant movement between schools), again, he is a familiar and reassuring face. Our children and their parents can hold negative views of those in authority and be nervous of adults outside of their immediate family. Father Jonathan bridges this gap. He takes the time to get to know our children, our parents and our staff. When I joined the school and was new to the Leigh Park community, I was invited to the Church so that I was able to understand better the needs of the families that I was working with. This level of personal commitment is what makes Father Jonathan such an important member of our school and the wider community.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Ms Claire Linfield

Head of School – Juniors.