

DIOCESAN SYNOD

Title: **VOCATIONS**
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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper provides an update on developments in our vocations work since this Synod passed a motion in 2010 to encourage the growth in the number and diversity of vocations. It notes encouraging research and support from the National Church. And it sets out a new motion that highlights our shared responsibility to continue to foster vocational discernment among all God's people and to increase vocations to authorised ministries in order that the church may thrive in mission now and in the future.

2. 2010 VOCATIONS MOTION

In November 2010 the Diocesan Synod considered the current state of vocations in the Diocese and noted the exceptionally large number of stipendiary clergy likely to retire in the coming decade. In response to this, members voted overwhelmingly in support of this motion:

“This Synod rejoices in the variety of gifts entrusted to God’s people for mission and ministry in the church and world, and

- i. endorses the commitment to raise the number of vocations in order that the gifts of all God’s people are valued, discerned and released; and the full range of ministerial resources are available to support God’s mission and ministry in the future*
- ii. recognises that the first responsibility for discerning and fostering vocations rests with the local church; and calls on every PCC to work actively with their licensed ministers to provide discernment opportunities that nurture the vocations of all the baptized to fully reflect the rich diversity of our communities*
- iii. calls on each deanery to ensure that their Deanery Vision Documents include a collaborative approach for vocational discernment and encouragement that supports the work in the parishes*
- iv. encourages the on-going work of the Area and Diocesan vocation advisers and the Area Vocation Days.”*

3. DEVELOPMENTS TO DATE

Since the 2010 motion passed there has been an encouraging growth in a variety of vocations, lay and ordained.

This paper concentrated on vocations to specific forms of authorised ministry within the church. This is the easiest to quantify but is largely dependent on the more general vocational development work across the diocese which is much harder to measure.

The 2010 motion noted that the primary responsibility for nurturing vocations in its broadest sense lies with each local church. To support this work, the diocese continues to promote the SHAPE course¹. We have anecdotal evidence that the course is appreciated but we do not know how many parishes offer this or a similar intentional vocational discernment process.

A very large number of those who offer themselves for authorised or licensed ministries trace their calling back to the Course in Christian Studies. This discipleship course has been a long-term feature of our lay development provision and it continues to attract around 150 new participants each year. Next year, CCS will celebrate its 30th anniversary and, for the first time, will be available as an e-learning course for anyone who cannot meet regularly at one of our local centres.

We also recognise and affirm the variety of parish and deanery developed courses that are tailored to particular local needs or make national material available locally.

Our *Transforming Presence* priorities explicitly and implicitly encourage vocational discernment among all our worshipping communities. The Bishop's *School for Disciples* evenings and the *Refresh* gathering of licensed ministers that will both be happening in 2017 will affirm the connection between the discipleship and the vocational journeys.

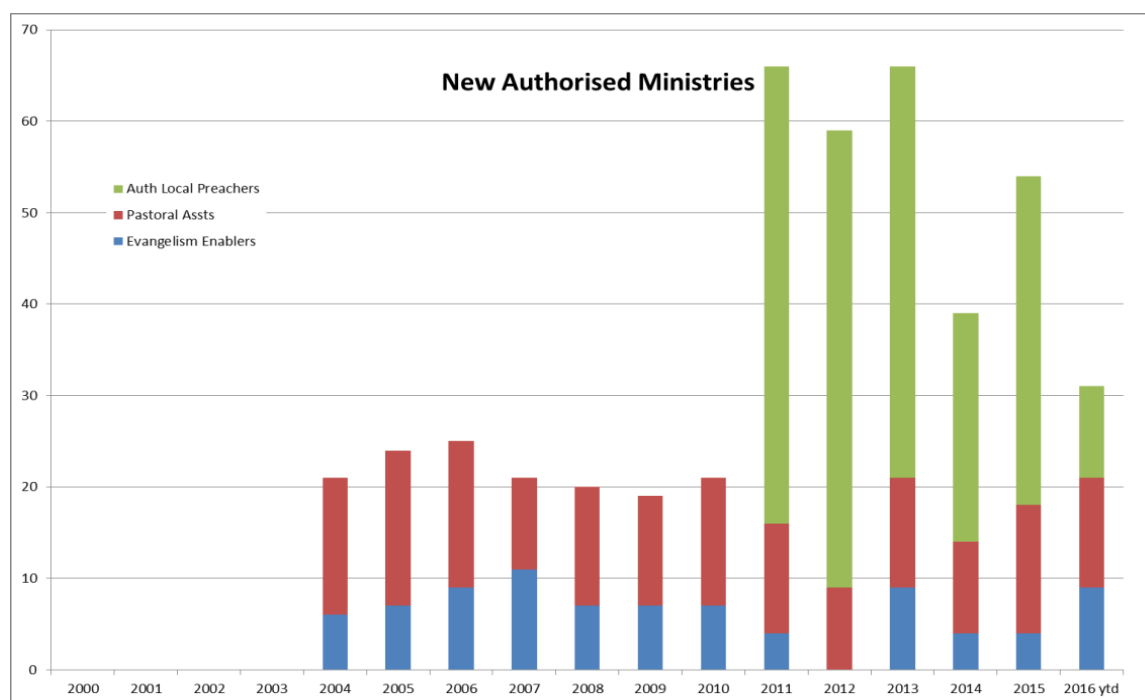
Lay Ministry

In respect of vocations to authorised lay ministries, we have a better understanding of what a distinctive vocation to lay ministry looks like. Some key developments include:

- The introduction of Licensed Lay Ministers with a clearer focus as adult educators. The first 15 LLMs were licensed in 2015 and we are beginning to see a reversal of the long-term decline in new Readers with 17 new LLMs entering training this year.
- The development of two diocesan centres for pioneer mission supported by £150k of Mission Development Funding committed to each. One based in Collier Row (the St Cedd Centre) and working in partnership with CMS commenced 2016. This has a particular focus on lay pioneer minister development and 15 people are involved in the first wave of training. A further centre in Colchester is in development linked to their fresh expressions and planting experience with DNA Networks and the SOURCE.
- A shift from “authorised evangelists” to “evangelism enablers” to emphasise that evangelism is the responsibility of all, with a vision for an evangelism enabler in every benefice.

¹ See: <http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/faith/finding-your-ministry>

- The number of those exploring pastoral care ministry have grown significantly since there has been a first semester, open to all and a second semester for those who will have leadership responsibilities in the parish as authorised Pastoral Assistants.
- An authorisation scheme for Children, Youth and Family Workers – believed to be the first in the country – which provides these workers with a framework in which they are properly trained and supported. This is currently being revised in light of feedback from those who have worked with the scheme.
- An additional Children & Families Ministry Advisor role agreed in Barking Area to support growth of this ministry
- Overall, huge growth in authorised ministry particularly through new Authorised Local Preacher recognition – see chart below



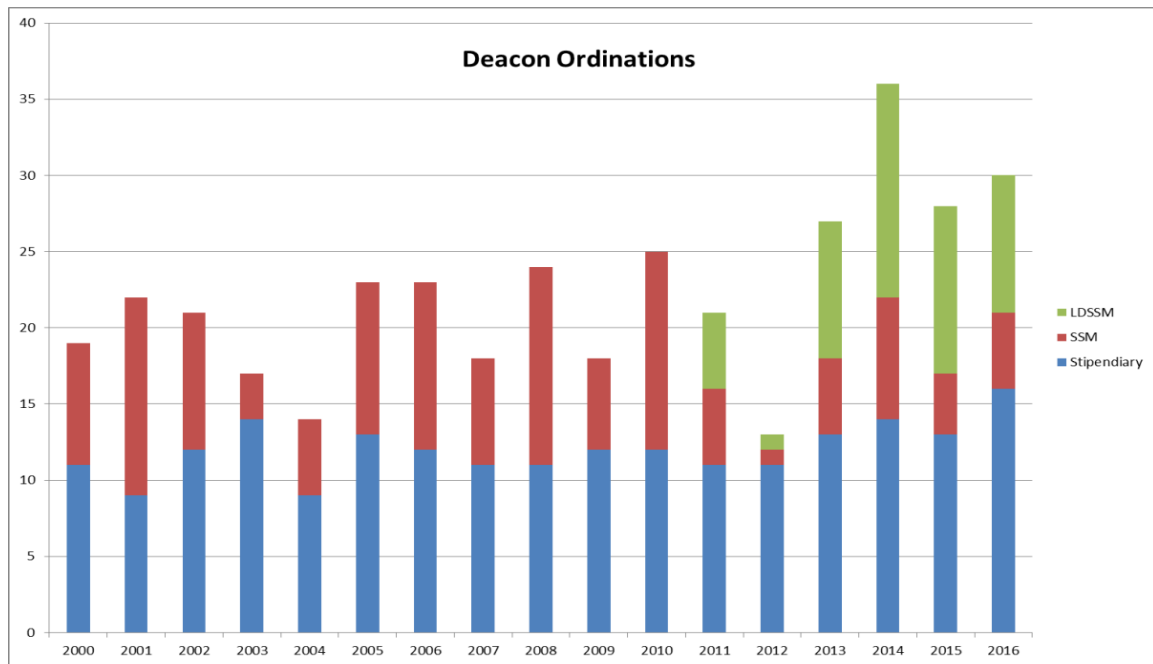
Ordained Ministry

In respect of ordained ministry we have seen:

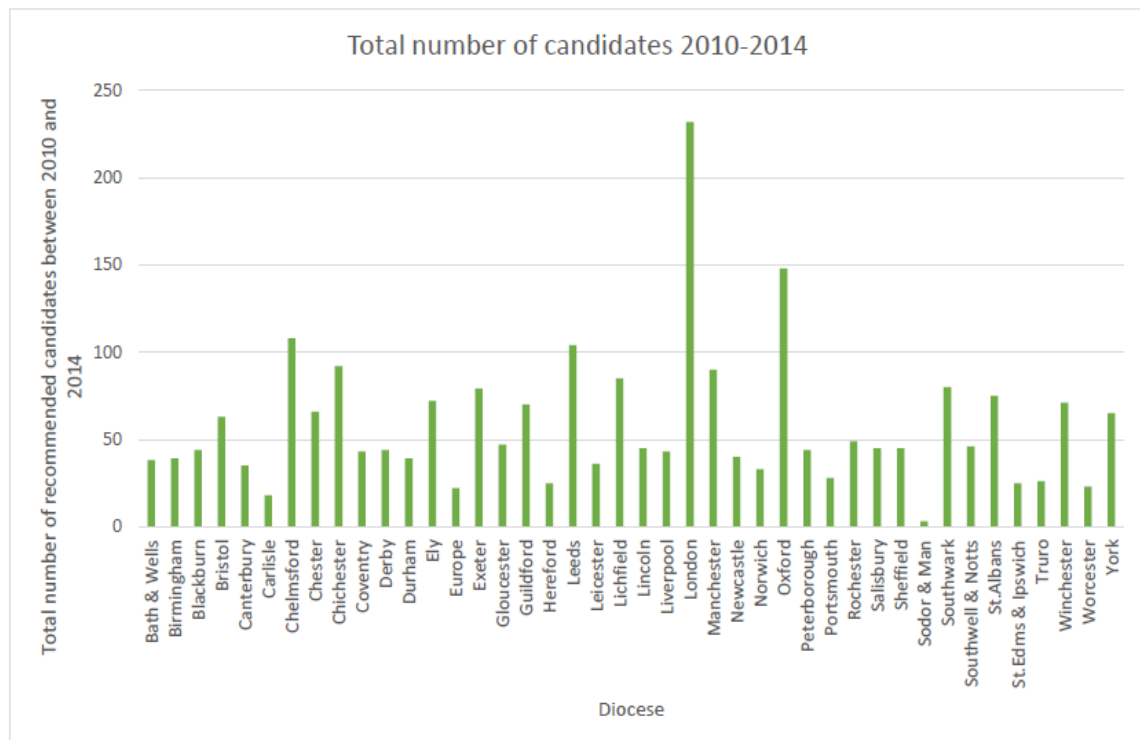
- Deacon ordinations up by 43% from 5 years ago; a clear upward trend.
- A second Assistant DDO joined the team in 2015 to respond to growth in ordinand numbers and to encourage our work among ethnic minority candidates.
- Budgeting for 2017 anticipated increases in the cost of future ministry training and curacies.
- Assuming current numbers continue, a move to becoming a net exporting diocese in 2018;
- The formation of the Diocesan Young Vocations Scheme – including residential internship scheme “Encounter” from 2014/15. 8 interns completed this scheme of which 2 have been recommended for training and others have discerned a calling

to other types of ministry. This work is currently being reviewed with a view to recruiting the next cohort in 2017.

- The introduction of Locally Deployed Self Supporting Ministry.



Recently published statistics show that Chelmsford Diocese had the third highest number of recommended candidates for Ordination between 2010 and 2014 (see chart below), when adjusted in proportion to our size, we are equal eighth².



² From 'Ordained Vocations Statistics' published by Ministry Division - <https://churchsupporthub.org/download/downloadordained-vocations-statistics-report-ministry-statistics-focus-stipendiary-clergy-projections/>

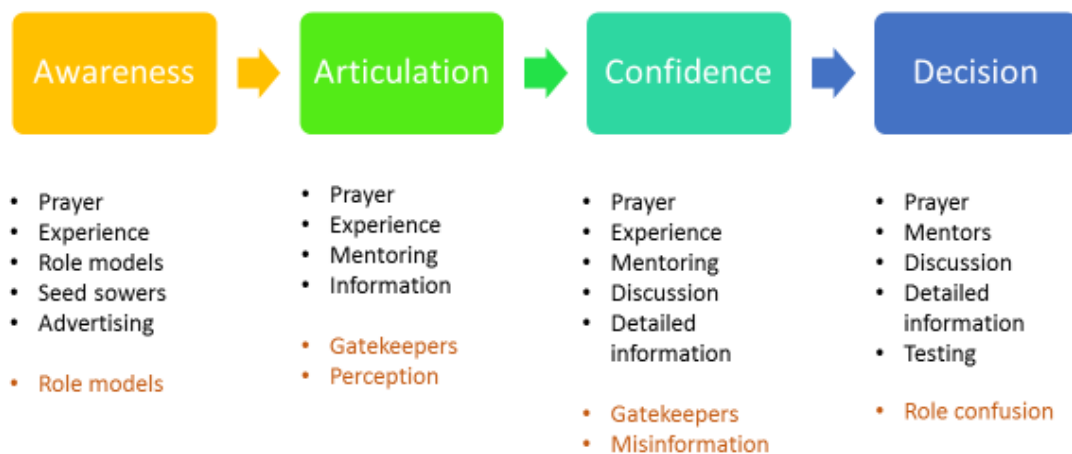
In respect of diversity of those coming forward for ordination, the new deacons male/female balance is about 50/50, although younger deacons have tended to be male. The average age of those being recommended for training increased to 48 in 2014, but this is largely because of our increase in LDSSM candidates who tend to be older than average. We have seen a growing number of recommended candidates under 32 (19% in 2010 - 2014). In terms of BAME vocations, the total number of recommended and conditionally recommended BAP candidates for this Diocese is around 13%. Members will recall the Synod resolution in November 2015 calls for more to be done on diversity matters, including workstream on vocations and training. There is a discussion with St Mellitus College underway and an Assistant DDO, with a brief to develop BAME vocations, is in post.

4. NATIONAL RESOURCES

The new head of Discipleship and Vocations in Ministry Division, Catherine Nancekivill, is developing some helpful guidelines for good practice (based on research which is about to be published) and providing resources on-line and in print for dioceses, parishes and individuals to use. Please see www.churchsupporthub.org/vocations.

One example is this diagram, which shows how vocational journeys develop and what helps or hinders that development at each stage:

Thinking about vocational journeys



5. WHERE NEXT?

There is much to celebrate and much to do as we seek to consolidate and build on these positive developments. It is still true that the majority of our candidates for authorised or licensed ministries come from a minority of our parishes. More work is needed to spread good practice so that we can encourage vocations from among all our Church members to every form of ministry. We must also continue to focus on certain under-represented groups, so that our ministers are more representative of the people

they serve. In particular, we need to focus on younger vocations (especially women) and vocations from BAME candidates and those from under-represented educational and social backgrounds.

In order to do this we will need to review whether our current processes and resources are adequate.

6. MOTION

The Bishop of Bradwell to move that:

- a) *This Synod celebrates the achievements in vocational work since passing the 2010 motion.*
- b) *Reaffirms the beginning of the 2010 motion:*

“This Synod rejoices in the variety of gifts entrusted to God’s people for mission and ministry in the church and world, and

 - i. *endorses the commitment to raise the number of vocations in order that the gifts of all God’s people are valued, discerned and released; and the full range of ministerial resources are available to support God’s mission and ministry in the future*
 - ii. *recognises that the first responsibility for discerning and fostering vocations rests with the local church; and calls on every PCC to work actively with their licensed ministers to provide discernment opportunities that nurture the vocations of all the baptized to fully reflect the rich diversity of our communities.*
- c) *Invites each Deanery, Mission and Ministry Unit and Parish to examine the national and diocesan resources and to develop appropriate local strategies to foster the full variety of vocations in their contexts.*
- d) *Commends the Bishop’s plans for the School of Disciples initiative in 2017.*
- e) *Commits to the Renewal and Reform target of an increase of at least 50% in ordinations on 2013 figures sustained annually from 2020.*
- f) *Requests Bishop’s Council to examine the adequacy of our vocational processes and resources.*