Shaping for Mission

## Reviewing Our Parish

There are five sections to this review: the place, the people, information and resources, Discipleship, Vocation and Evangelism, and conclusions. Some parts of sections one and two and all of section three has already been completed for you, but you may want to add in any additional financial and building information that you may find helpful.

### Our Parish – The Place

This section focuses on the geographical area of the parish; what it includes in terms of Church of England presence, other Christian activity, other organisations and institutions, key gathering places etc.

#### 1. Church of England presence in our parish (St. Oswald’s only).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Church Schools | Morda C of E Primary |
| Fresh Expressions  | Messy church (currently online) |
| Chaplaincies | Felicity to Oswestry schoolRJAH Orthopaedic HospitalDerwen College |
| Other Parishes locally | Holy Trinity Oswestry All the other parishes in Oswestry Deanery |
| Other | Civic connections/ chaplaincy to the Mayor/Town CouncilOswestry Christian Bookshop |

#### 2. Ecumenical partners in the parish.

*What formal ecumenical partnerships or Churches Together groups are there?*

* CTOD (Churches Together in Oswestry District)
* Schools Christian Worker Project
* Oswestry Christian Bookshop

*Where are there good informal ecumenical relationships?*

* Pre-COVID, Oswestry churches members and clergy/leaders meet and collaborate (moved online) though more could be done (Resume).
* Pre-COVID the quarterly joint CTOD services were well attended by most of the churches and joint initiatives including Christian Aid, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, World Day of Prayer (Resume).
* Initiation and support of the Food Bank and Schools Christian worker Project. (ongoing)
* Volunteers at the Christian Bookshop (Resume).
* We are creating informal links with the Orthodox church in Shrewsbury
* *Rhdycroesau – has informal links with ORYC*

*Where are other denominations or Christian organisations doing work that we could support rather than repeat?*

* Oswestry has Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, URC, and several free evangelical churches/chapels. The Welsh speaking chapels are currently in abeyance.
* *Rhydycroesau is surrounded by several Welsh speaking chapels who actively support Welsh language services.*

*Where are the bits of our parish with no, very little, or no effective Christian presence?*

* Very little Christian presence to Commercial areas and Industrial estates except those businesses operated by Christians.
* East European communities, especially those who speak little English.
* Morda is an almost forgotten part of our parish… apart from the school.

#### 3. Partnerships and networks

*What organisations operate in the parish with whom we have shared values?*

* Numerous Schools; businesses which trade ethically and sustainably; public services; Lions Club; Oswestry Borderland Rotary; Oswestry Food Bank, Christian Book Shop, Schools Christian Worker Project, Cubs, scouts, brownies, guides, etc. St John Ambulance.
* There are numerous organisations which individuals have connections with so the ‘Christian network, is very large albeit not connected.
* *Rhydycroesau – the Village Hall*

*What resources are there in this area whose work overlaps with our mission and ministry?*

* Foodbank, Schools Christian Worker Project, town churches

#### 4. Institutions and organisations

*What major institutions and organisations are there in the parish? What connections do we have with them? (Hospitals, prisons, universities etc)*

* Schools - through governorships & Christmas services, etc.
* RJAH Hospital - church members are involved as both staff and volunteers.
* Derwen College - The Vicar is chaplain to the college & individual church members fundraise and/or serve on the governing body.
* Residential care homes – Home Communions and pastoral visiting (pre-COVID)
* Hope House children’s hospice
* *Rhydycroesau - none*

*What schools (other than church schools) do we already have relationships with?*

* Oswestry School/Bellan House – several church members are governors, shared Christian worker, choral scholarships.
* Moreton Hall – use our building Confirmation and a Carol Service
* The Marches school uses the building at Christmas.
* The Meadows & Woodside School has a carol service and Year Groups often visit the church during the year.
* *Rhydycroesau - none*

*Are there any big employers in the parish, and / or big centres of employment? (Factories, shopping centres, etc) What connections do we have with them?*

* The two main concentrations of employment are the town centre area and the industrial estate on the Maesbury Road – no connections other than those run by church members.
* Sainsbury’s and Morrison’s (not actually in the parish) - no connections with these centres of employment.
* The idea of a Town Centre Chaplaincy was suggested some years ago.
* The Marches School (circa. 160 teaching, support, and admin staff). The site manager is the husband of a church member otherwise there is no strong connection.
* Woodside School has around 130 staff in total. No connection beyond their visits to the building.
* Town centre markets
* *Rhydcroesau – the biggest employer is ‘farming’ and we have contacts with individual farming families*

#### 5. Gathering places and Centres

*Where are the main centres or gathering places in the parish? (town centres, larger villages, community halls, etc)*

* Town centre, especially pedestrianised areas/area around the Bailey, the Cross and Red (Festival) Square.
* The Memorial Hall; Library; St Oswald’s Parish church & Centre; Smithfield
* Cae Glas Park.
* The weekly livestock market for the farming community.
* Numerous Pubs and Restaurants.
* *Rhydycroesau – the Village hall*

*What are the distinctive geographical features of the parish and / or places of particular interest?*

* We still have the feel of a rural parish despite the expansion of the town
* Parish - the church; town museum; railway museum; old grammar school/heritage centre; Castle Mount & ruins of 12th C castle; St Oswald’s Well (place of pilgrimage)
* Places of particular interest – the Racecourse, Offa’s Dyke; Old Oswestry Hill fort; Welsh border
* Easy access to countryside, and to North Wales, well placed for Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham
* *Rhydycroesau – is a geographically large parish with a very small population. There is a church, a village hall (well supported) and an upmarket B&B/hotel*

*What are the geographical opportunities and challenges of the parish, in terms of thinking of collaborating and joining together across the deanery?*

*Opportunities:*

* Oswestry is a ‘hub’ market town for residents of some of the parishes in the deanery, this means there a degree of cross-parish familiarity rather than ‘insularity’.
* Road connections between the parishes in the deanery are pretty good
* Oswestry has two C of E parishes with different styles of worship and both churches have congregations that gather from across the town and surrounding villages.
* Presence of other denominations and churches in the town.
* A lot of talented people in the town churches which might be a resource for the rural areas.

*Challenges:*

* Oswestry has two C of E parishes with very different theologies and cultures which has proved problematic
* We are a large deanery geographically
* Sense of ‘us and them’ between town and country parishes
* Transport links across the deanery are difficult except by car, not very good bus services.

#### 6. What else is useful to note about the geographical area of the parish?

* The town is on the ‘tourist map’ there are coach trips to local attractions which take in places such as the Iron Works and the Market. In summer the church receives many visitors, not all from afar as a significant number come from the local area.
* It is a Welsh border town and Welsh influence and culture remains strong.
* There has been a recent influx of East European workers and their languages are now the most commonly heard foreign languages in town.
* Nearer to Chester than Lichfield

### Our Parish – The People

This section is looking at the make up of your parish in terms of both the general population and the Anglican population. Some of this section has already been completed for you.

#### Population

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Approximate population of your parish (number of people who live in the geographical area? | Oswestry: C 9,000 of total town 17,400 (2017)*Rhydycroesau: 350* |
| Number of people who attend the parish and when | *St. Oswalds***Sunday worship (some overlap)**8:00 – 1510:30 – 120Evensong - 25-30Weekday Holy Communion – 15-20Major feasts - c 250 – 300**Weekly**Under 5’s – c. 25Choir - 25 adults & 12 juniorsOswestry School - c. 350 adults & young people Place of Welcome c. 30Tourism- c. 80 **Others…**Messy Church C. 25 (monthly)Charity Christmas cards – 200-300 (over 5 weeks). Remembrance Sunday – c. 500 (annually)Civic Service – c. 300 (annually)Baptisms, funerals, weddings. Concerts, recitals,Brownies, monthly Ladies Group*Rhydycroesau***Sunday worship**9:30 – 8-12No other attendance |

#### 2. Formal Roles

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of Authorised or Licensed Lay Ministers | 3 |
| Number of people with formal lay roles (Church wardens, treasurers, PCC secretary) | *St. Oswalds*4 CWsTreasurer, PCC Secretary, Electoral Roll Officer, *Rhydycroesau*2 CWsTreasurer, PCC Secretary, Electoral Roll Officer, |
| Number of Clergy, Stipend and NSM | 1 stipendiary4 regular PTO + 1 irregular PTO |
| Any other paid roles (church administrators, youth workers etc) | *St. Oswalds*PT Administrator (*supports Rhydycroesau*), PT youth worker, Director of Music, Organist; PT Caretaker, 3 PT vergers (funerals & weddings) |

#### Volunteers

Are people in your parish involved in any of the following on a voluntary basis? The table has been filled out using the Diocesan mission stats and information from the Dementia- Friendly Church network, Eco Church and Places of Welcome.

* Do add in any further categories you think are important here
* Do amend anything you think is out of date or inaccurate

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Places of Welcome | Yes |
| Dementia-Friendly Church  | In process of working towards it |
| Eco Church | Rewilding of area of Churchyard in process planned pre COVID |
| Sunday school / Sunday kids work | Monthly Messy Church |
| Parent/ carer and toddler group or play group | Wednesday Under 5’s (closed COVID) |
| Youth work | PT Youth Worker, looking to restart ‘Open Door’ |
| Community Café | No |
| Foodbank | Recent Volunteer helpers. Church/vicarage is donation point |
| Pastoral provision | Yes – significant home communion and visiting, phone support during COVID |
| Night shelter or other homeless provision | No |
| Money matters and debt advice | No – refer to Foodbank |
| Breakfast / after school clubs | Morda PS holiday clubOur Lady’s PS Messy Church after school club planned |
| Mental Health support connected with the church | Yes, No |
| Support / activities for older people | Home Communions to residential care homes and private houses.Lifts to churchSignificant home visitingHard copies of Sunday worship delivered by post |
| Other community activity  | Monthly Prayer breakfastLeague of Friends to RJAH HospitalRunning charity Christmas card stallMany parishioners are members of voluntary organisations |

### Our Buildings and Financial Information

This section will be filled in before the template is given to the deanery team.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What buildings do we have? | *St. Oswalds*Church and parish centreHouse in Lower Brook Street (rented out)*Rhydycroesau*Church & open churchyard |
| Share payment history (over last 5 years) | *St. Oswalds & Rhydycroesau*Paid in full and on time |
| Subsidies available from either low income community funding or mutual support | none |
| Summary statement about affordability based on points 1-3 | Both churches are committed to paying parish share. |

### Our Parish – Discipleship, Vocation and Evangelism.

Consider the following headings. Make notes on the mission and ministry in your parish in these areas. What is happening? Where is God at work? Consider all ages and stages of faith across the breadth of the parish, including any chaplaincies, schools and fresh expressions as well as church. You may have examples of things that happened before covid, thing that started during lockdown and things that are emerging now. Any of these are worth noting in this section.

You do not have to use every heading, they are there as indicators of things to look for. If you want to see some examples of what might be included under each heading go to: https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/about-us/our-vision/shaping-for-mission/vision-of-a-healthy-deanery.php

#### Discipleship.

How does your parish support people and communities to grow more like Christ? The different headings in this section provide a space to make notes of the different ways in which discipleship is supported. For each heading note the key processes, events and activities that support this area.

1. **Worship, Prayer and personal spirituality** *(This may include church and online worship, regular prayer meetings, resources for prayer and spirituality.)*

*St. Oswalds*

We’ve done a lot of work on this over the last few years in terms of developing prayer and study, with well-attended groups. We’ve been aiming to build up people’s confidence in talking about their faith and this has borne fruit.

Pre COVID:

* Church open daily for private prayer. Weekly morning and evening offices, three Sunday services, mid-week Eucharist, major Saints days and festivals. Full calendar of services for Lent, Easter, Christmas. Common Worship and BCP used.
* Home Communion, church library, twice monthly prayer and care (prayers for the sick), church prayer board.
* Regular weekly prayer meetings: 10:10 – prayer before morning Eucharist to pray for the service, clergy & worshippers) Franciscan and St. Chad’s prayer meetings, Prayer Breakfasts (6 times a year). Taster days to encourage different forms of prayer. Thy Kingdom Come Day of Prayer. Lay people leading Sunday intercessions.

Post COVID:

* Church open for private prayer twice a week, published prayers and devotional resources on website. ‘Praying Together Apart’ set time for prayer at home with resources provided.
* Live streaming of Sunday service from church, live streaming of daily Morning Prayer mid-week.
* We are being seen by people who have never attended St Oswald’s; many have discovered the joy of hearing the Bible read every day. This is a new ministry and hard work.

*Rhydycroesau:*

Pre COVID:

* Weekly Sunday services… lay led family worship on the 1st Sunday, Holy Communion on the others. Fifth Sunday is morning prayer led by a licensed reader.

Post COVID:

* Worship on two Sundays a month, first Sunday Holy Communion, third Sunday is lay led morning prayer.
1. **Study and theological reflection** *(This may include Bible studies/ small groups, online discipleship, growing new initiatives)*

*St. Oswalds*

* Groups - Bishops Certificate, Bible study – offering different approaches to studying, varying from quiet reflective groups to lunch and study. Lent courses (all moved online during pandemic). We need to look at differentiating our offer to suit newcomers through to experienced disciples
* Others - Seasonal quiet days, Prayer Taster Days, Bible Reading Fellowship,
* Oswald’s Tree, St Chad’s Learning Group short course, magazine reflections, library (a work in progress)
* We could do with more groups starting up, it’s important to have face to face meetings, building trust and confidence.

*Rhydycroesau*

* As most of the church membership lives in Oswestry there is virtually nothing offered in the parish. Some church members join in with St. Oswalds Lent activities
1. **Nurturing new disciples** (2nd Mark of mission)(This may include nurture courses, engaging with those baptised/ confirmed/ mentoring new disciples.)
* Pre COVID: baptism/confirmation/wedding preparation. Ladies’ Group sends cards on anniversary of Baptism, admittance of children to Communion.
* Sending out invitations to Christmas services to Baptism families at Christmas. Bishop’s Certificate groups
* Needs work
1. **Spiritual direction and mentoring** *(This may include use of spiritual directors, teaching on Christian living, ethics and faith in everyday life.)*
* Conversations with clergy, most teaching is through sermons within the regular services
1. **Stewardship** *(This may include weekly giving, stewardship campaigns, non financial stewardship, giving to world church/charities.)*
* Financial Stewardship - church finances are on a sound basis. St. Oswalds gives a set percentage of church income to charities (c.4K/year); targeted giving to one-off fund-raising events for particular causes… emergency appeals/Children’s Society, hosting ‘Cards for Good Causes’.
* No stewardship campaign run since 2010/2011 (‘Giving in Grace’).
* ‘Giving to world’ seems to be private individuals so we are not as a church, seen to be involved in the wider world.
* Non-financial stewardship – very many people give their time, labour and talents to support the life of the church and maintenance of its buildings
* More money is spent on supporting ‘worship’ than on mission.
1. **Diversity, inclusivity and community** *(This may include provision for all ages, ethnicity, work focused on intergenerational, different abilities and inclusivity, dementia friendly.)*
* The parish demographic is overwhelmingly of white British (English and Welsh) with a very small BAME community.
* We have an open baptism policy; Gender and sexuality is not an issue.
* All Age Worship; working toward being “Dementia Friendly”, good compliance with DDA (e.g. wheelchair access, hearing loop, handrails). Service books are reasonably easy to follow by someone unfamiliar with liturgy.
* We are quite good at welcoming outcasts into church but do not seek them out
1. **Relating to the wider church** *(This may include relationships with other churches, global church and mission and outreach.)*

*St. Oswalds*

* Lent Lunches support for Bishop’s Lent Appeal; CMS and USPG, Church Army, Childrens’ Society, Christian Aid Week, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
* CTOD - but not on a congregational level
* Most ‘wider church’ relationships are through individuals rather than St. Oswalds

*Rhydycroesau*

* Lent Lunches in line with St. Oswalds and Harvest supper
1. **Other** *(Anything else that you supports discipleship in the parish)*
* Up until 2019, the church made itself available to local schools through the ‘Open Door’ programme.
* Places of Welcome provides a listening ear, a safe space ‘to be’ for everyone; Home communions; pastoral care groups and the phoning system; Oswald’s Tree – yearly parish meeting for re-assessment, discovery of priorities in the light of God’s will.

#### Vocation

In what ways is vocation encouraged? How are individuals and communities supported to follow their calling to be Christ’s body transforming the world? The different headings in this section provide a space to make notes of the different ways in which vocation is supported. For each heading note the key processes, events and activities that support this area.

1. **Exploring and nurturing everyone’s vocation** *(This may include nurture groups, promoting vocations – lay and ordained, exploring gifts and passions, online opportunities, helping understand that God calls.)*
* *There are a lot of hidden talents that could do with uncovering. No substitute for the tap on the shoulder! There is lots of lay involvement but always room for more*
* *Vocation in its widest sense is regularly preached from the pulpit, responses to individuals; articles in Parish Magazine; leaflets and advice; Bishop’s certificate course*
* *Folks are very reticent about coming forward and think that a calling is something that happens to other people!*
1. **Collaboration between lay and ordained in leading worship, prayer and study** *(This may include opportunities for all ages to lead worship, lay and ordained to work together within a team, a wide variety of people leading church groups.)*
* Plenty of lay participation in services. Well run ministry team that meets monthly in normal times (now online); Mission and Ministry Team; a strong rota of readers for services, a core of lay intercessors, lay leaders of Bible study and prayer groups… (always room for more lay participation to build confidence)
* Committees and activity groups lay-lead include music, Ladies Group, ringers, Parish magazine, Messy Church.
1. **Encouraging and caring for volunteers** *(This may include a supportive culture, drawing on gifts/ calling, regular contact and training and a healthy turnover of volunteers in roles.)*

*St. Oswalds*

* Historically there has not been a ‘healthy turnover’ in roles as many people have seen their roles within the church as lifetime vocations so it has been difficult for newcomers to find a way-in. This is changing and people are now being encouraged and enabled.
* There is a need for regular meeting of volunteers who lead for example, in prayer, to nourish and support and develop new ideas.
* Communicating what is needed and for suggestions to be made.
* Training happens informally.

*Rhydycroesau*

* The nature and size of the congregation means everyone is effectively a volunteer
1. **Supporting whole-life vocation, Monday – *Sunday*** *(This may include teaching to enable discovery of vocation in home and workplace, resources, E.g. LICC, honour and support of all vocations.)*
* Study groups have supported this by exploring new things.
* The culture of coming on a Sunday is enough is strongly held by many
1. **Care and loving service in the wider community** *(3rd Mark of Mission)**(This may include church members active in community, groups created to meet unmet needs, active involvement in Schools, help services, E.g. food bank, debt advice etc.)*
* Church members are active individually in a wide range of charities and community groups: Royal British Legion, children’s charities, school/college involvement, carers, members of Oswestry Lions, Rotary, helping elderly neighbours in our vicinity, welcomers in church during the summer, supporting the Foodbank (primarily through donations), prison chaplaincy.
* Other than ’Place of Welcome’ there is sense of this being an expression of the corporate parish life.
1. **Working for justice and peace** *(4th Mark of Mission)**(This may include church and members being active in campaigns to seek change, awareness of injustice, prejudice, poverty and suffering and responding, being active in politics.)*
* Many members are aware of injustice, prejudice and poverty and respond as individuals rather than as ’church’.
* The church has traditionally included Town Council members and past Mayors among its members.
* Resources from Christian Aid and other organisations are available, there has been some study group activity around this subject
* We could probably do more in this respect
1. **Care for creation** *(5th Mark of Mission)**(This may include participation in activities with this focus, Memberships, E.g. Green churchyard management scheme, Eco church status, participation in environmental groups.)*
* The Lent groups we had before COVID showed that here was a massive amount of concern about this and enthusiasm for doing something both as a church and individually.
* Informal support through sermons, teaching and magazine articles
* Early participation in Oswestry Community Solar Energy Partnership (currently dormant).
* Pre-COVID there was a project involving the re-wilding of an area of the churchyard involving the Town Council and local schools… (resume).
1. **Encouraging specific vocations and ministries** *(This may include information about different sorts of Ministry - lay and ordained, encouragement to formal ministries, encourage opening to service abroad.)*
* There is a lot of encouragement for new ideas and projects.
* Few of the congregation consider themselves to be at a stage of life where they are exploring new avenues of vocation.
1. **Other** *(any other ways in which vocation is supported)*
* Encouragement for those who have an idea e.g. for prayer day, to go ahead and try it out.
* Getting people involved as volunteers in specific projects.

#### Evangelism

In what ways is evangelism enabled in your parish? How are individuals and communities inspired to share the Good News of Jesus? The different headings in this section provide a space to make notes of the different ways in which evangelism is encouraged. For each heading note the key processes, events and activities that support this area.

1. **Understanding of God’s holistic mission** *(May include awareness and teaching of holistic gospel relating to things like 5 marks of Mission, expectation for God to be at work in the world and people’s lives.)*
* This happens through sermons and articles in the parish magazine;
* There is a belief that Mission is something which is best left to the professionals.
* I think evangelism is still a word no-one wants to hear.
* Few people are willing to talk about what God means to them and his action in their lives. I think there is very little expectation that God will be at work.
* The pandemic has provided significant opportunities for people to reach out to their neighbours in acts of love and service
1. **Developing approaches to evangelism that are sensitive to different traditions in the church and society.** *(This may include appreciation and support for different ways of evangelism, using the gospel to respond to context and culture, treating people as those God loves rather than those to be converted, understanding of different faiths and interfaith relationships.)*
* Historically not a significant issue for the parish as people aren’t minded to go out and convert, instead to let the example of their everyday life do the speaking for them.
* Use of Open Prayer Days (pre-COVID) was opportunity to provoke thought and challenge in a non-threatening way and people did respond.
* Place of Welcome provides a safe space in which people can reflect upon the deep issues of life, joy and grief.
1. **A culture of invitation and relationship building with those on the fringes of church** *(This may include intentionally re-engage with new members such as baptism families, attendees to one off events etc, having a culture of ‘Invitation’ creation of come-back activities, encouraging others to invite.)*
* We do this well - Place of Welcome, Christmas lunches, charity card sales, broadcasting services online, church open for private prayer.
* Baptism families nurtured and cards keep us in touch with them, invites to Christingle, All Souls, Carol services etc. especially creating series of events such as over Christmas with invite to next occasion handed out at present one.
* Messy Church
* Pre COVID we were trying to create a rolling system of advertising so that anyone who came to a service was aware of the next big thing – what when where, why should they come….eg on Mothering Sunday have all the Easter info available.
1. **Building personal relationships in the wider community that can lead to faith** *(This may include chaplaincies in community, working with Schools, meeting local needs, attending community events, local visiting.)*
* Traditionally seen as a role of the clergy although some lay individuals have roles in hospital and prison chaplaincies.
* Work in Morda School by Vicar.
* Place of Welcome has reached some people in the wider community, but it doesn’t have an explicit aim of ’leading to faith’.
* Church members work in the town and have their own frontiers and connections; many civic opportunities, town council etc, businesspeople, those with shops create good relationships and goodwill, relationship with Oswestry School through their chaplaincy team and some teachers, other schools too; Schools’ special services in church.
* ‘Open Door’ brough many school children through the door to have fun.
1. **Creating confidence in sharing personal faith** *(This may include encouragement and opportunities for congregation to share their faith, courses to support this E.g. talking Jesus.)*
* We have tried over the last few years to establish people’s confidence in their faith and become more willing to talk about it and perhaps we can start to build on that now.
1. **Creating a missionary presence through digital media** *(This may include online worship, good website access, Church has presence on social media, people equipped to share faith on social media.)*
* One positive effect of Covid has been to demonstrate the importance and power of a digital presence and during lockdown many people have become internet watchers/listeners.
* The vicar has created a good presence through Facebook, live streaming of services, zoom meetings for bible study and prayer good and we should build on these. It is however, a steep learning curve for some.
1. **Creating spaces to deepen relationships and explore questions of life and faith** *(This may include courses such as Alpha, discussions and events in community venues and pubs, open meals as safe spaces to explore big questions, halfway points created such as book clubs, sports sessions etc.)*
* Our Bible study groups aim to be a safe and secure place where people’s thoughts and ideas can be explored without fear of judgement or recrimination whilst finding out more about faith and the bible.
* Emmaus courses have been run in the past and pub discussion groups and book clubs have been suggested
1. **Discovering and releasing those called to be evangelists.** *(This may include people with gifts in sharing faith identified, given training and support, opportunities to tell people directly about the Christian faith.)*
* I’m not aware of anything locally, but we financially support organisations and individuals engaged with this.
1. **Sharing good practice across the deanery** *(This may include Sharing things that work amongst churches, making Deanery Synod a sharing ground for vision and review and celebration.)*
* This used to happen regularly in Synods; deanery ‘get-togethers’ but there is now a sense that Deanery Synod doesn’t know what it’s for.
* Hopefully this will be the outcome of the initiatives within ‘Shaping for Mission’.
1. **Planting fresh expressions of Church** *(This may include Identifying communities where fresh expression are likely to be needed, knowing how they belong to the deanery and have appropriate involvement.)*
* We are always open to the idea of a fresh expression should one appear or be requested in the parish.
1. **Other** *(Any other ways in which evangelism is developed and encouraged in the deanery)*
* We support ORYC and the Schools Christian Worker Project
* St Oswald’s has a fine historical building which could be a powerful evangelistic resource

### Drawing some Conclusions

Looking at the information you have gathered for the review, make notes in the following areas:

1. **What themes, issues or even words came up repeatedly?**
* God, Christian, school, church, town, community, care, caring for own congregation, prayer, people meeting together, a need for evangelism, vocation, service.
1. **What are some of the main strengths of the parish?**
* Wonderful building; well maintained and cleaned, healthy (or healthy enough) finances supported by careful management.
* High quality worship with excellent music and major inputs from both ordained and lay members of the church family; a good-size worshipping congregation and a good corps of volunteers in many roles; large ministry team.
* St. Oswalds has a respected and welcomed civic role
* Church wardens, Place of Welcome, administration, prayer and study groups, proximity to town. People might not need a church often, but it’s there when they do.
1. **What are some of the areas of weakness?**
* The heavy emphasis on music and traditional worship
* The make-up of the church congregation does not reflect the demographic of the people in the parish
* Some resistance to change
* We don’t always communicate very well with strangers and we are not making connections with people where they are. Little outreach to young people so, very few families.
* General communications within the Parish.
1. **Where is good collaboration and partnership happening?**
* Between clergy and lay teams, MMT and LEAD Academy, Town and Church, schools, CTOD and its schemes and projects.
1. **Where is energy being wasted?**
* Literally- through the chimney. St Oswalds will find it hard to meet the C of E’s Zero net carbon emissions target by 2030 unless alternative forms of energy can be used.
* In introverted concerns rather than a desire to reach out to and serve the whole parish in Christ’s name.
1. **What are some of the key challenges the parish faces?**
* The future for the town is going to be challenging, with higher unemployment and financial hardship in the aftermath of the pandemic; the High Street is likely to be de-energised, with a number of shop closures.
* Making the church relevant to all demographic groups within the parish.
* Identifying and encouraging vocations.
* How to capitalise on the growing online community post Covid-19, with all the extra work that involves.
* Mission and ministry to children and young adults.
* Learning about evangelism
1. **What is unique about this parish?**
* Not ‘unique’ but perhaps somewhat atypical.
* We are a large town Centre church near the Welsh border, we manage to maintain it and pay our way. The church is open every day and offers a range of opportunities for worship or prayer, not just on Sundays.
* It’s position in the town and it’s potential to be a focal point for both town and the surrounding rural areas.
1. **Looking at all of your responses, what do you think is the vocation of this parish?** *This will be the focus of the vision setting process, any notes you make here will help as you start that piece of work.*
* Make ourselves more attractive to the local community and to build relationships to show loving service to others, in ways that may allow us to extend invitations that might lead to faith
* Christ described himself and his role as that of a servant. If we have inherited the role of being his body then, too, we have inherited to need to see ourselves as the servant of all around.
* To continue to present a strong message of God’s kingdom to a world that thinks that it is irrelevant.