

Interim Minister and Associate Archdeacon of Stoke-upon-Trent

In the Diocese of Lichfield we extend an invitation to **Come follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad**. Our diocesan vision states that:

As we follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad, we pray that the two million people in our diocese encounter a church that is confident in the gospel, knows and loves its communities, and is excited to find God at work already in the world. We pray for a church that reflects the richness and variety of those communities and partners with others in seeking the common good, working for justice as a people of hope.

As we seek to live our vision for this diocese, we have discerned that culture change needs to be at the heart of all we do. We all are called to be advocates for change, and to help people meet the challenge of being outward-facing, confident believers in a sceptical world.

This process of change must be handled in a sensitive and relational manner, particularly for those for whom reimagining ministry maybe perceived as threatening. In all of this we are inspired by the example of St Chad, the first Bishop of Lichfield, who worked across boundaries and reached out in relationship to all whom he met. Relationships, rather than structures, need to be paramount.

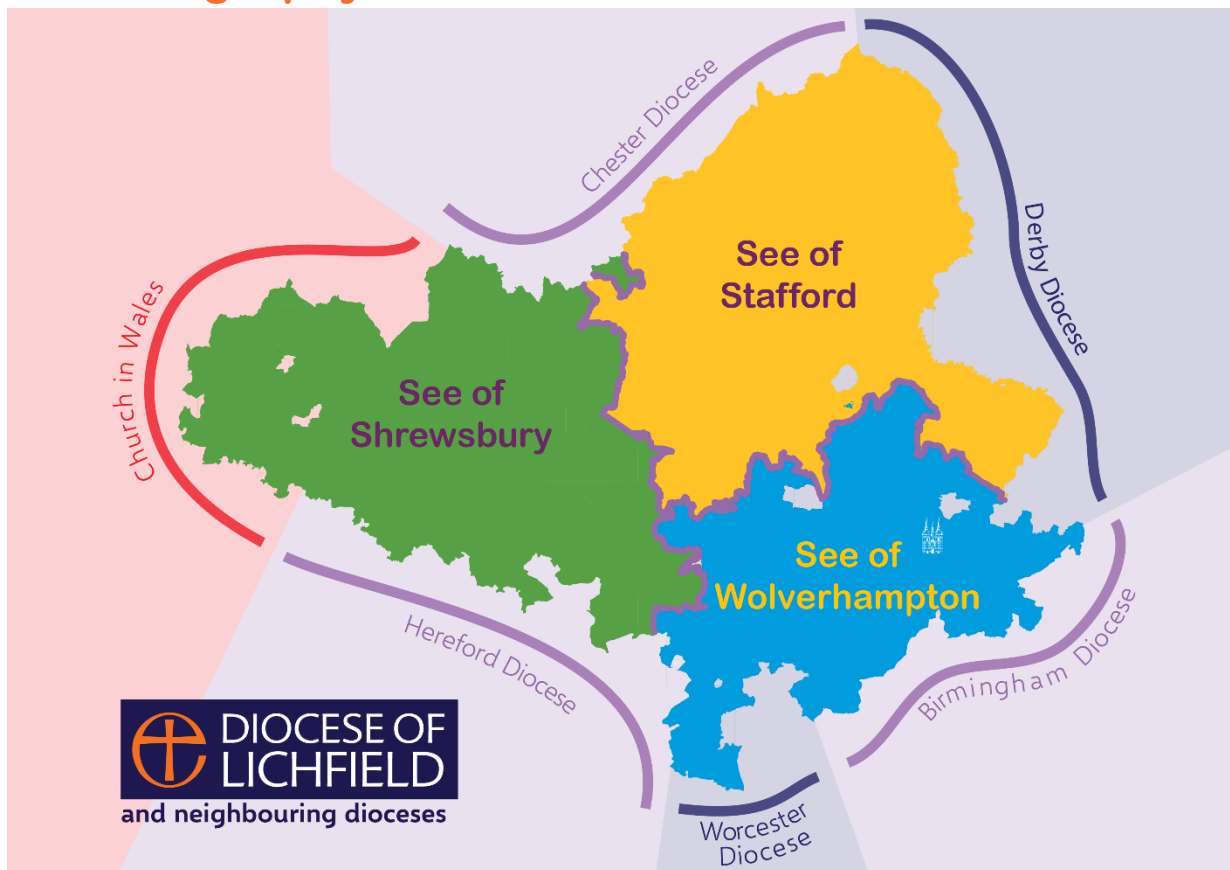
In 2024 we developed a diocesan strategic framework: [Seeking the Kingdom](#), which gives shape and form to our hopes for the future and proposes a way forward for this diocese.

The strategic framework is the outcome of a deanery-based process called Shaping for Mission, which began after the pandemic, in which we identified our next steps in new circumstances.

Our Strategy Programme Director is helping us to root and grow our strategy framework into a lived reality through three workstreams: Feeding our Faith, Supporting our Ministry, and Building up our Parishes and Communities. We are always seeking to encourage creative missional ideas and are willing to experiment and take risks to grow the kingdom.

You can read more via the front page of our website: lichfield.anglican.org

Our Geography



Stretching from the Welsh border to the Peak District and from north Staffordshire to the Black Country, the Diocese of Lichfield is one of the largest in the Church of England serving just over two million people in 1,744 square miles.

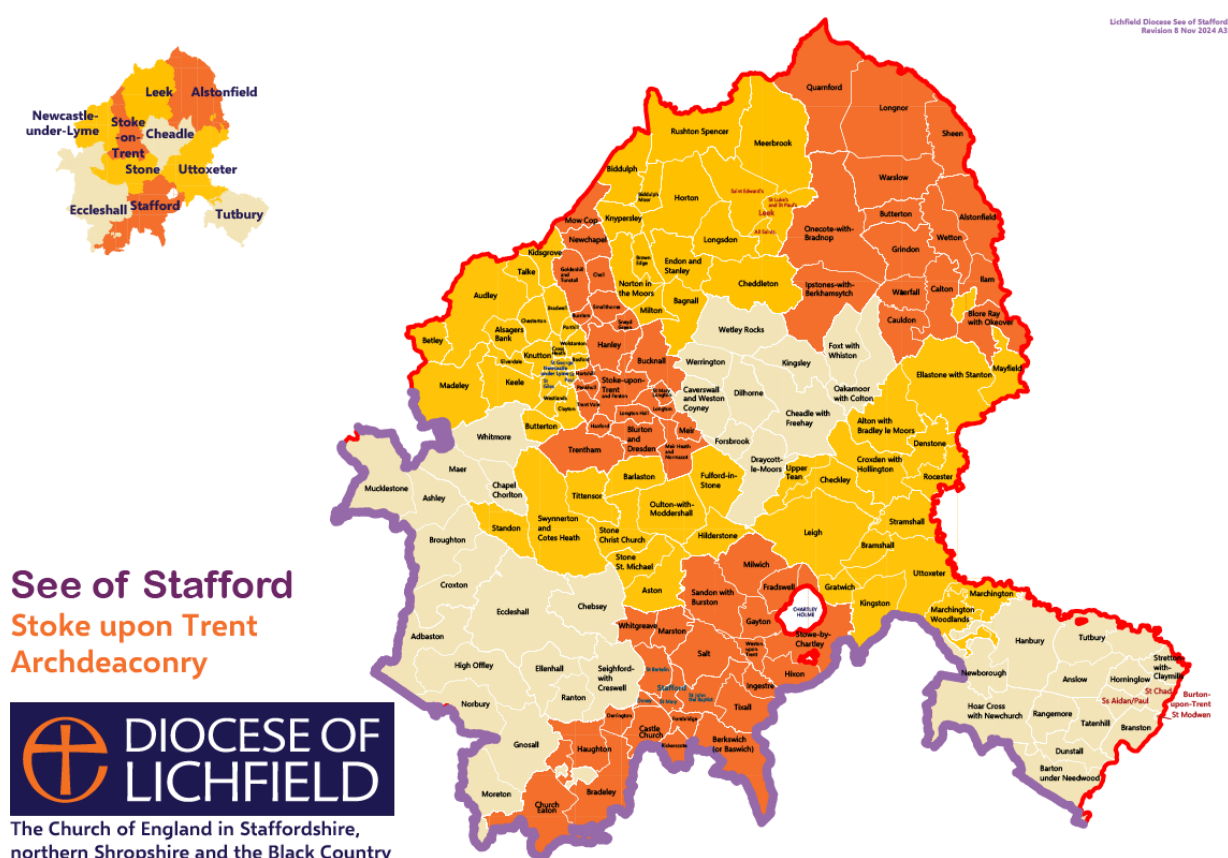
It is an exciting and often challenging field for sharing the love of God with the people we serve. It is at the heart of England, not just geographically but culturally and socially. Areas of spectacular natural beauty sit beside the legacy of centuries of industry and commerce; areas of growth, aspiration and hope beside urban deprivation, rural poverty and despair.

We are committed to proclaiming the Gospel in the public arena and transforming our communities with a prophetic voice and a distinctively Christian identity. In our large and complex diocese we are proud of our unity in diversity. We are collegial in our working-out of mission at the levels of diocese, episcopal area, deanery and parish and in partnership with the national Church. We have developed robust processes of governance that have enabled us to make difficult decisions on issues such as clergy deployment. Our finances are centred on the needs of mission. But above all we have shown a capacity for honest self-evaluation that has made our governance dynamic and responsive to change.

The Archdeaconry of Stoke-upon-Trent

The Archdeaconry of Stoke-upon-Trent (which is coterminous with the Stafford Episcopal Area) covers about 530 square miles and five local authority areas: the city of Stoke-on-Trent, the Boroughs of Newcastle and Stafford and the districts of Staffordshire Moorlands and East Staffordshire.

The archdeaconry sits in the north of the diocese and is bifurcated by the M6 from north to south and A50 from west to east. The West Coast Main Line also runs through the archdeaconry as will the proposed HS2 rail link.



It is an area of considerable diversity in terms of its geography and socio-economics with inner city and urban estates, market towns and remote hilltop hamlets.

The City of Stoke-on-Trent is a unitary authority that is also, still, a slightly uneasy collection of small towns federated in 1910. It is a wonderful place full of the warmest people and it has a long and noble history of producing some of the most beautiful objects in the world through the manufacture of ceramics. There has been a modest resurgence in the pottery industry through 'craft pottery' firms such as Emma Bridgewater. Modest because, whilst there are still some bulk producers remaining, the industry no longer employs the thousands it once did and the distinctive and rather elegant bottle ovens are now largely gone from the cityscape except from one or two heritage sites. But this is a city, which is six towns, that still thinks of itself as the Potteries and is trying to forge a new identity in a post-industrial world.



The skylines of Stoke encompass the 'six towns' of this creative midlands hub.

Stoke-on-Trent has been ranked the 16th most deprived area in the country. The churches are part of the story of finding a new future for the city through, for example, participation in the multi-agency Hardship Commission. Churches across the city support community facilities, food banks, debt advice, and work with asylum seekers and hard pressed families, and they speak to the city of the Gospel hope.



Joiners Square is the hub of a new SMIBB-funded project to students and young families in the heart of Stoke

The neighbouring, but very independent, Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme is the home of Keele University, which, along with Staffordshire University in Stoke, is one of the two Universities based in the archdeaconry. They have 20,000 undergraduates between them and each has a full time chaplain. Like many British universities, there is significant and lively diversity in the student body with around 20% of students coming from UKME backgrounds.



Keele University Chapel, one of many education/hospital/prison & forces chaplaincies in the archdeaconry

Rural Staffordshire has some of the most delightful and undiscovered countryside in England with remote moorland villages (Flash is the highest village in England) and charming market towns such as Eccleshall, Leek and Uttoxeter. The diocese's two retreat centres, Dovedale and Shallowford House, are in the archdeaconry. However, this is no rural idyll. Large numbers of farmers are leaving the industry, sometimes heartbreakingly, ending generations of connection to the land. Our rural churches are a listening ear for the farming community and a steady presence in rapidly changing communities.



One of the diocesan retreat centres, Dovedale House is in the heart of the beautiful Staffordshire Peak District

The county town of Stafford and the borough of Stafford are witnessing, along with other parts of the archdeaconry, the building of thousands of new houses. These new communities pose particular challenges for local services and communities and for the church's mission.



The annual Stafford Show is a major event in the county and also for the Churches Together outreach

To the east of the archdeaconry, Burton-upon-Trent still produces a lot of beer, largely – though not entirely – in vast modern breweries owned by large corporations. As is the case with the pottery industry, it no longer employs the numbers it once did in the heyday of the Bass, Marston and Worthington families. Nonetheless the smell of hops still lingers in the town.



Like many midland towns, Burton has lost some traditional industry and is busy encouraging some new ones

The archdeaconry is diverse not only in its geography but in its increasingly multi faith and multi-cultural complexion. It is predicted that the 2021 census will reveal that 9% of Stoke's, and 11% of Burton's, population will be from UKME backgrounds, the largest group being Asian and British Asians. In Burton, as in Stoke, the main interfaith work is with the Muslim community. The Rector of Stoke Minister, as City Faith Officer, coordinates the city's Faith Leaders' Forum.

Church life in the archdeaconry is just as rich and variegated. There is a wide range of traditions, including churches that identify as Church Society, those who look to the extended episcopal care of the Bishop of Ebbsfleet and all points in between. Despite these differences there is a good spirit of working together in chapters and deaneries and the diversity is largely regarded as strength not a problem. The ministry of the archdeacon is offered to and accepted by all churches, irrespective of tradition.



Adjacent parishes in Newcastle-under-Lyme celebrating – the opening of a replacement church hall and culmination of community engagement project

There are growing congregations, but many churches are struggling with falling numbers and ageing membership. Mission Action Planning is well established in most churches in the archdeaconry and there are a growing number of Fresh Expressions of church including two new Bishop's Mission Orders. Our 80 church schools in the archdeaconry (including two secondary schools) represent a significant investment in education and an important mission opportunity.

North Staffordshire has a deep-rooted non-conformist tradition. Mow Cop was the birthplace of Primitive Methodism and Methodism is still strong in Stoke. Roman Catholicism, with roots in a tenacious recusant history, is also strong, and there is a growing presence of black-majority churches, particularly in Stoke. The work of Churches Linked Across Staffordshire and the Potteries (CLASP) brings together the established denominations and is now drawing in representation from the newer streams of Christian churches.

Deaneries	10
Team Ministries	7
Benefices	87
Parishes	166
Church schools	80
Stipendiary Clergy (FTE)	83
PTO Clergy	91
Licensed Lay Ministers	134

Role Description

Interim Minister (Stafford Episcopal Area)

Main purpose of the post:

To provide interim leadership in one or more benefices and to enable the benefices to equip themselves more effectively for mission and prepare the way for a future pattern of ministry. This is an enabling ministry rather than one that encourages a relationship of dependency.

The interim minister will report to the Bishop of Stafford and Archdeacon of Stoke-upon-Trent.

Main duties and responsibilities:

To work with a series of benefices in need of support, as identified by the Bishop and Archdeacon for a period that will normally be between six months and a year in each benefice.

Mission And Ministry

By its nature the role will vary from benefice to benefice and therefore a flexible approach will be required.

Undergirded by a commitment to a renewed life of prayer and worship, the interim minister is likely to be involved in helping parishes to:

- come to terms with the past, lose old fears and find new hopes

- discover a fresh identity
- strategically consider its future witness, mission and ministry
- reassess its resources, needs and priorities
- see where and how it needs to change, and work through the inevitable transition
- make plans for the future
- prepare for the next chapter of its life

Relationships

1. To provide effective leadership that will include developing good relationships with the churchwardens, PCCs and other officers of the parishes and working collaboratively with them to identify their mission priorities and the best ways by which these can be achieved.
2. To draw in resources from the wider Diocese to support the development of parish life and offer new perspectives.
3. To work closely with Deanery colleagues, especially the Rural Dean, to support the benefice in a time of change

Parish Life

4. To establish forms of governance in collaboration with the PCC that can provide good and sustainable leadership for the foreseeable future.
5. To encourage the parish in finding a firm, sustainable financial footing so that it can meet all its obligations in full, including payment of Common Fund.
6. To support the PSO and PCC in ensuring that there is a healthy and effective safeguarding culture across the benefice
7. This job description provides a guide to the duties and responsibilities of the post and is not an exhaustive list. The post holder may be asked to undertake any other relevant duties appropriate to the post

Person Specification

Interim ministers need skills in healing, conflict resolution, management of change, organisational development, setting short-term objectives, team building and entering and exiting a situation. Though all interim ministers are to be ordained, not all ordained ministers can serve effectively as interim ministers.

They need to be:

1. clear about their own identity and being called to this role to facilitate the Church's mission.
2. willing to prepare the way for the next ministry.
3. aware of being a significant but limited part of the Church's history.
4. able to honour and affirm the work of others, past and present.
5. a non-anxious presence in the midst of transition, grief and conflict.
6. able to join congregational systems quickly and with ease.
7. able to diagnose a situation accurately and develop action plans quickly.

8. able to provide honest and accurate feedback.
9. able to communicate clearly to the benefice that interim ministers are ineligible to be considered as a future leader to that congregation.
10. willing to work flexibly and collaboratively across the Episcopal Area.

The appointee will:

- Have significant experience in ordained parochial ministry
- be prayerful, seeking to grow in personal holiness and discipleship;
- have a heart for mission and evangelism;
- be a person of vision, with theological acumen, confident in the gospel and able to help others to see where God is at work in the world;
- have a track record of working collegially and collaboratively
- is able to work sympathetically across a range of contexts, both urban and rural
- is committed to promoting diversity at every level of church life;
- is able to relate to and to value all traditions within the Church of England;
- can listen, question, encourage, enable, admonish and inspire trust and confidence;
- has demonstrable administrative and executive ability;
- holds a full driving licence.

Associate Archdeacon Of Stoke Upon Trent

Specific role:

Associate Archdeacons are called to share in the mission of the church as members of the Area Senior Staff Team. They play a part in the oversight, discipline and pastoral care of the Archdeaconry. They are to ensure that the Archdeacon and Bishops are aware of the needs and concerns of clergy and people. They work closely with the Bishops, and Rural/Area Deans to help grow the churches in their care. Acting as the Archdeacon's Commissary, they can induct and install ministers, conduct visitations, and admit churchwardens to their office. By teaching and example, they are to encourage good order in the Church, exercising their authority with wisdom, gentleness and vision; in all things remembering that they are servants and pastors in Christ's flock.

Regular items:

- Monthly attendance at Bishop's Staff Meeting, and an invitation to the BSM residential
- Attendance at the Stafford Area Staff Meeting
- Attendance at Stafford Area Mission and Pastoral Committee (quarterly)
- Attendance at Diocesan Advisory Committee meetings if needed to cover for the Archdeacon
- Attendance at Archdeacon's meetings (quarterly)
- Attendance at Archdeacon's Visitations
- Supporting and working with parishes through vacancy processes where requested by the Archdeacon, including preparation of Vacancy Assessment documents.

As required:

- Responding to parishes queries, including advising on matters of parish governance, buildings, churchyards and Faculty Jurisdiction, finance, and pastoral matters.
- Attendance at Rural Deans/Assistant Rural Deans/Lay Chairs meetings (quarterly)
- Induction/installation of ministers as Commissary of the Archdeacon
- Attendance at Parish Assessors' Archdeaconry meetings
- Admission of churchwardens to their office
- Supporting parishes through pastoral reorganisation
- Supporting clergy in times of need/difficulty/encouragement/conflict
- Supporting parishes/clergy/laity with particular projects/matters, eg buildings, safeguarding, vision development and mission planning etc.
- Any other duties as requested from time to time by the Archdeacon.

Time Commitment:

- 1 day per week + 1 evening per week (or equivalent)
- Occasional additional times by negotiation
- Invited to attend the BSM Residential (4 additional days)

Appointment / Line Management:

- Appointment of the Bishop of Lichfield
- Line management by the Archdeacon of Stoke, with reference to the Bishop of Stafford.

Conditions of Service

The appointee will be an employee of the Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance. The salary of £48,470, equivalent to Residential Canon stipend plus housing allowance.

Working expenses are fully reimbursed in line with Diocesan policy.