

Wrexham Mission Area Review

Summary of Key Recommendations

Recommendation One

The Mission Area Executive is encouraged to work with the archdeacon to develop a Mission Action Plan, ready for implementation by the end of November 2021. This plan should have SMART objectives and identify opportunities and locations for growth that need investment of time and resources. The MAP should be articulated in LYCIG terms, using the framework of the 4Ps: Presence, Prayer, Proclamation and Persuasion.

The MAC should draw on the mapping information available on the diocesan website in developing this plan and ensure that the MAP reflects the unique socio-economic and demographic profile of the Mission Area. The variance from the national and diocesan average in the following areas is particularly noteworthy:

- The age profile of the local communities – the Wrexham population is younger with a significantly higher proportion of people living in rented accommodation than the diocesan and national average.
- The level of car ownership is lower than the diocesan and national average.
- The level of educational and HE qualifications is lower than the diocesan and national average, yet more people aged over 16 are currently in full-time education.

Recommendation Two

Wrexham Mission Area currently has a different system of governance from the other Mission Areas in the diocese and it is recommended that governance arrangements are changed to ensure consistency across the diocese. We recognise the unique character and opportunities offered at St Giles church and are clear that we will need to work together to ensure that this is accommodated in the new governance model. There will be a commitment to ensuring that all churches will be able to flourish in the future. We recommend that clear and specific Terms of Reference are developed that make it clear where decision-making responsibility lies and that acknowledge both the unique position of St Giles and the importance of all the church communities in Wrexham.

Recommendation Three

We strongly support the comprehensive and realistic plans that have been produced for the reordering and repair of St Mark's Church. We recommend that the Mission Area works with the provincial and diocesan property teams to establish whether it would be possible to use the St Mark's vicarage, when it becomes vacant, to test and prove some of the innovative social outreach projects that are proposed for this location.

Recommendation Four

Wrexham Mission Area is responsible for a significant number of buildings and other physical assets. We recommend that a Mission Area Property Committee is established post Covid under the leadership of a Property Chair to develop a strategic plan for property that will identify priorities in a realistic and achievable way. Given the potential scale of the work involved, it is recommended that the Diocesan Churches Inspector should be a member of this Committee. This additional expertise and resource will be of particular benefit for the schemes planned at St James and All Saints. Care should be taken to develop a realistic and achievable plan that identifies the priority areas for focus. This will be important to avoid resources being stretched too thinly.

Recommendation Five

There are 5 Church Halls in Wrexham Mission Area and several of the church buildings offer flexible space and are regularly hired out. These buildings all offer important outreach and service to the local communities and are capable of generating useful income. The intention of the Mission Area to investigate centralising the booking arrangements for these buildings in order to maximise income, improve efficiencies and benefit from economies of scale is warmly encouraged. This could provide useful learning and benefits that could be shared more widely across the diocese.

Recommendation Six

Once current Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, all of the churches in the Mission Area should consider opening every day if they are not already, depending on their context. All churches should be registered on the Explore Churches website and opportunities for increasing the ministry of hospitality and welcome embraced wherever possible. The ministry of hospitality, welcome

and tourism is particularly strong at St Giles Church and there is much that can be learnt from this across the diocese.

Recommendation Seven

Most of the churches in the Mission Area expressed increasing concern about their financial situation. It was good to note that the Church Treasurer at St Giles has now adopted the Finance Coordinator software and we recommend that all churches across the Mission Area adopt the Finance Coordinator software for 2021. This will give improved financial oversight and efficiencies for the MAC and the Church Committees.

Recommendation Eight

Adoption levels for Gift Direct vary significantly across the Mission Area and there is a clear opportunity to improve the financial resilience of churches: currently 22% of regular attenders use Gift Direct compared to the diocesan average of 30%. It is recommended that the Diocesan Director of Resources helps develop a plan to engage with churches that are having difficulty promoting online giving as part of the coordinated way to move forwards. This should acknowledge honestly the current reasons behind any reluctance.