

# PORTSMOUTH PASTORAL AREA DRAFT MISSION PLAN

*"It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and to the ends of the earth ." Acts 1:8*



31/05/2024

## MISSION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

PASTORAL AREA	Portsmouth
DATE OF COMPLETION	31st May 2024 (latest draft)
CONTRIBUTORS	
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<i>Pastoral Area Working Party</i>	Martia Augustine, Catherine Hobbs, Brian McCreesh, Sue McCrohon, Janette Nevett, Paul Pillai, Lucy Sayer, Ryan Taylor, James Ugbo
<i>Other Clergy Leaders</i>	Canon Simon Treloar, Fr Emmanuel Rinda, Fr Paul Nwune (Pastoral Area clergy)
<i>Other Lay Leaders</i>	Nathan King (seminarian), Jerrin Varghese and Zacharias Parambi (deacons in training).

## INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This **latest draft** of the mission plan for the Portsmouth Pastoral Area (PA) is a **work in progress**. It will therefore necessarily evolve with the passage of time. It is the fruit to date of a PA wide consultation, which began with a public meeting on 13th November 2023. This was followed by the reflections of a small steering group, comprised of delegates from each of the five church communities in the PA, which has been meeting at least once a month since February 2024. More work needs to be done to increase the participation of the faithful of African and East Asian origin.

The steering group has agreed the following principles and key points:

- 1) The aim is to combine the three parishes on Portsea Island together into one canonical parish by **1st September 2026**. This will hopefully facilitate (a) the deepening of faith, (b) becoming more missionary and (c) enable better stewardship of resources (human, financial and buildings).
- 2) The whole endeavour is first and foremost a **spiritual** venture. As well as being underpinned by **prayer** (the mission plan is already a specific intention of the PA Rosary group), there will be regular communication of the bishop's six "Holy Habits", via preaching, the newsletter, and other channels. In the first year of the transition period (2024/25), there will be coordinated preaching and catechesis (using resources from the U.S. such as *Ascension Presents*) on the Sacraments of Reconciliation (Advent and Lent) and the Eucharist (Eastertide). We hope to have a *Corpus Christi* procession in Victoria Park on or near the feast day, drawing people from across the PA.
- 3) Essential will also be regular **communication *ad intra*** (to the people in the pews on what is happening and why – including, in time, a PA wide newsletter) and ***ad extra*** (e.g., a new website which will be evangelistic in its focus, providing links to other resources, especially from the U.S.).
- 4) To oversee the process, the hope is to have **two teams**, one whose focus will be on "**Formation for Service**" and one whose focus will be on "**Stewardship of Resources**". Each team will have at least one representative from each of the three current parishes on Portsea Island (ideally, each group would have at least one representative from each of the five current church communities). In time, the Formation for Service team could become the Evangelisation Strategy Team (EST) for the new parish and the Stewardship of Resources team could become the Finance and Property Committee for the new parish.
- 5) The remit of the **Formation for Service** team will be the first two of the three areas of focus of the diocesan Mission Plan: Deepening Faith and Becoming More Missionary. Its focus will therefore be **outward looking** (mission) and will include:
  - a. How can we effectively build a **community of communities** (churches and schools) in the new parish?
  - b. This will include research into the make-up of current communities in the PA (e.g., church/school/Mass by ethnicity, age, particular needs, etc.) and a consideration of what is needed for greater cohesion between them and for each of them to become more **outward looking**.

- c. Review of the **music** provision across the PA.
  - d. Ongoing **faith formation**, which will incorporate but not be limited to sacramental preparation. The aim is for sacramental preparation to move away from “programmes” to a model of continuous formation.
  - e. More research into the needs in the wider community on Portsea Island, current provision and a “gap analysis” to discern projects – perhaps in collaboration with others – in which we could engage to benefit **the local community**, beyond Church walls.
- 6) The remit of the **Stewardship of Resources** team will be the third area of focus of the diocesan Mission Plan (Prudently Managing Resources). Its focus will therefore be on:
- a. **People** (volunteers and employees), in particular the support of leaders and the development of future leaders.
  - b. **Administration** – in the first instance, standardisation across the PA with a view to creating efficiencies through an appropriate rationalisation (compliance, communications, etc).
  - c. **Buildings/fabric**, including a review of what is needed for **future mission** in the light of expected repair and maintenance costs.
  - d. **Money**, including the achievement of best value for money through **common purchasing** and **priorities** discerned by the Formation for Service team.

## CONTEXT

The Portsmouth PA covers the whole of Portsea Island. It currently consists of three parishes, served by four priests, about 90 volunteers with DBS checks and 4.4 FTE employees, most of whom are engaged in parish administration. Mass attendance in autumn 2022 was 1,444, a 20% decline overall since 2015. In the same period, many people from Africa and Asia have joined our congregations, which means that more than 20% of those who worshipped with us in 2015 and earlier have lapsed since then. In the same period there has also been a noticeable decline in the numbers receiving the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion), as well as receptions into full communion, marriages, and funerals.

According to information provided by the diocese, 42% of the total spend in the PA in 2022 was on buildings. The PA contains five churches (one of which is the cathedral, and which is a Grade II listed building). None of the churches is in good condition, one is in fair condition and four (including the cathedral) are in poor condition. One church (St Joseph) has been closed since December 2022 due to severe water ingress. Excluding Cathedral House (which forms part of Bishop's House, which is looked after by the diocese), there are four presbyteries (two in fair condition and two in poor condition), five halls (all in poor condition) and no investment properties. The hall beside St Joseph's church is used extensively by the local community, generating a lot of income for the parish. The other halls are used less frequently.

The PA contains one Catholic secondary school (St Edmund's) and three Catholic primary schools (St John's, St Swithun's and Corpus Christi). There are good relations between the parishes and schools with Mass and reconciliation services in each school.

The PA is ranked by the diocese in the healthiest quintile for overall financial health, due mainly to investments arising from historic bequests. There are no loans outstanding from the diocese. In the 2021/22 financial year, 31% of total income in the PA was from the offertory, which is declining in both absolute and in real (i.e., factoring in the effect of inflation) terms. Substantial investment will also be required to bring churches, presbyteries, and halls up to a good condition.

Sacramental preparation programmes take place at a parish level for baptism of infants and First Holy Communion, and at a PA level for Confirmation and RCIA.

# 1 To be a Christ-centred Church; putting Christ at the Centre of our hearts and our lives.

## 1.1 Uplifting and devotional liturgy through music and prayer. (YWMBW page 29 and 36-39)

WHERE WE ARE NOW
<p>Most “practising” Catholics only attend Mass.</p> <p>A small number engage in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and a <i>Lectio Divina</i> group (at the cathedral).</p> <p>Music is variable in quality and style and is not part of every Mass.</p>
WHAT WE PLAN TO DO (2024-2027)
<p>Establish which style of music fits each Mass (sometimes none).</p> <p>Consider music across Churches to see if it is possible to pool resources. Training for worship leaders might boost creativity and quality.</p> <p>Encourage more people to be involved and increase professionalism.</p>
RESOURCES & SUPPORT REQUIRED
<p>A possible work group to gather musicians and to get feedback and a clear pathway to gather more musicians with training to suit our liturgies across whole parish – find a lead.</p> <p>Could teaching be integrated within the homily?</p>

**1 To be a Christ-centred Church; putting Christ at the Centre of our hearts and our lives.**

1.2 Ongoing formation in faith for all; both clergy and lay. *(YWMBW page 31 and 36-39)*

WHERE WE ARE NOW
<p>(Clergy formation is assumed to be a Diocesan activity and responsibility.)</p> <p>Very little formation for adults except what is freely available online.</p> <p>Lack of enthusiasm to talk about faith matters.</p> <p>Little to offer non-Catholic family members.</p> <p>Sacramental preparation is programme based and is offered at parish level for Baptism and Eucharist and at PA level for Confirmation and RCIA.</p>
WHAT WE PLAN TO DO (2024-2027)
<p>Change the focus from 'programmes' to ongoing formation (of which sacramental preparation will form a part).</p> <p>Continue to do Confirmation preparation and RCIA on a pastoral area basis.</p> <p>FHC parents as a significant group for evangelisation and formation.</p> <p>More targeted communications. This is a significant part of engaging with parishioners and should be done to suit the age/stage of the target audience.</p> <p>Marriage prep – to assist the couple to live their vocation as parents and to establish a longer-term relationship with the parish.</p>
RESOURCES & SUPPORT REQUIRED
<p>More work needs to be done to have an integrated approach (a) at all stages of the faith journey for children and adults and (b) which is more explicitly evangelistic in nature.</p>

# 1 To be a Christ-centred Church; putting Christ at the Centre of our hearts and our lives.

## 1.3 Locally-Led evangelisation (YWMBW page 31 and 36-39)

<b>WHERE WE ARE NOW</b>
<p>There is little which is formal and “joined up”.</p> <p>Much of what we do is passive except for a few groups (InSight/Christmas lunch) who serve the community.</p> <p>Evangelisation, if it happens, tends to be on personal initiative.</p>
<b>WHAT WE PLAN TO DO (2024-2027)</b>
<p>Offer regular retreats (for both faith formation and evangelisation).</p> <p>Use successful programmes such as Sycamore and Catholic Alpha.</p> <p>Develop strategies to become a more “invitational Church” – ‘something for everyone’.</p> <p>Focus on something in each church location to which new people can be invited (e.g., rejuvenation of the “Night of Light” events in Southsea).</p>
<b>RESOURCES &amp; SUPPORT REQUIRED</b>
<p>Training of volunteers/potential leaders.</p>



## 2 To be a missionary community; going out on Christ's service and mission.

### 2.1 Leadership focused on mission and service. (YWMBW page 45 and 52-55)

WHERE WE ARE NOW
<p>A lack of people both willing and able to take responsibility.</p> <p>A lack of an outgoing mentality among most Catholics.</p> <p>No training for leadership.</p> <p>A lack of faith formation leading to a reduced emphasis on mission and service.</p>
WHAT WE PLAN TO DO (2024-2027)
<p>Intentionally identify more leaders.</p> <p>Increase awareness through preaching and other messaging of the Gospel message of service – that it is a whole way of being and sharing.</p> <p>Creatively find ways to change the culture concerning expectations around commitment: you receive, you give, and you see the need for ongoing formation.</p> <p>Have better signposting of what is available with respect to training for mission.</p>
RESOURCES & SUPPORT REQUIRED
<p>Identify and encourage leadership – people who are both willing and able to assume responsibility.</p>

## 2 To be a missionary community; going out on Christ's service and mission.

### 2.2 Our young Church nurtured and inspired. (YWMBW page 47 and 52-55)

WHERE WE ARE NOW
<p>Each parish has a children's liturgy and a FHC programme. Confirmation preparation is done at a PA level. There is a youth group (for those aged 13 to 17) which meets monthly at the cathedral. The university Catholic Society (CathSoc) is also active and uses the cathedral's facilities. St Edmund's school has parish ambassadors providing a link between school and parish. The school foundation governor link is largely passive.</p> <p>There are sacramental preparation programmes rather than continuous formation.</p>
WHAT WE PLAN TO DO (2024-2027)
<p>Consider joint paid/volunteer youth leadership team.</p> <p>Encourage a closer liaison between parish and school – to inspire people and integrate all ages into Church activity. Ideally there ought to be a seamless relationship between home, school, and parish.</p> <p>Be better at signposting youth events – to Y2K, New Dawn, Joel's Bar, BCF etc.</p>
RESOURCES & SUPPORT REQUIRED
<p>Financial implication of a salaried youth worker. A cost/benefit analysis will need to be performed.</p>

**2 To be a missionary community; going out on Christ’s service and mission.**

**2.3 Church beyond walls** *(YWMBW page 49 and 52-55)*

WHERE WE ARE NOW
<p>Outreach is limited to a few established groups (InSight, Christmas lunch, foodbanks).</p> <p>There is a new SVP group based at the cathedral which is considering opening a clothes bank. The Cathedral Discovery Centre is in discussions with PCC regarding the use of its facilities as emergency overnight accommodation in cold weather.</p> <p>Group outreach is not an expectation, outreach is rather left to individuals to pursue as best they can.</p>
WHAT WE PLAN TO DO (2024-2027)
<p>Find the gaps in provision in the city (it was on this basis that InSight was created about 8 years ago) and determine what might be possible.</p>
RESOURCES & SUPPORT REQUIRED
<p>More volunteers are required.</p>

### 3 To be prudent stewards of Christ’s Church; making wise choices to leave a sustainable legacy for future generations.

#### 3.1 Reshaped Structures *(YWMBW page 63 and 68-69)*

WHERE WE ARE NOW
<p>See the information provided by the diocese and included in the Context section above.</p> <p>We have some beautiful churches, which need much money spent to repair and restore them. Many of our halls are under-utilised.</p>
WHAT WE PLAN TO DO (2024-2027)
<p>Create one canonical parish on Portsea Island by 1st September 2026 by the combination of the three existing parishes.</p> <p>The Stewardship of Resources group will review our estate and its needs, in the light of our mission priorities (and net-zero aspirations), with a view to us being able to make informed decisions concerning:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) The repurposing or disposal of buildings which are surplus to requirements and/or which we can no longer afford to maintain at or bring up to the required standard.</li><li>2) How income from external sources (repurposing of property, the letting of property, hall hire, rental of parking spaces, etc.) can be maximised.</li></ol> <p>The group will also examine and make proposals to the PP concerning the administrative function required by the future parish.</p>
RESOURCES & SUPPORT REQUIRED
<p>Volunteers with the requisite skills (e.g., a surveyor) to conduct a review of the estate of the PA.</p> <p>Support will be required from the diocese concerning criteria to be used in the evaluation of the viability of buildings and the canonical processes required for alienation of goods (by disposal) and the combination of the existing parishes.</p>

**3 To be prudent stewards of Christ’s Church; making wise choices to leave a sustainable legacy for future generations.**

3.2 Prudent stewardship of our resources. (YWMBW page 64 and 68-69)

WHERE WE ARE NOW
<p>Three autonomous parishes with administration being done exclusively at a parish level.</p> <p>A relatively low number of volunteers and few lay leaders.</p> <p>There is not much cash available to meet pressing repair and maintenance needs.</p>
WHAT WE PLAN TO DO (2024-2027)
<p>Conduct an “audit” of the PA to determine what the PA’s resources (especially people and their talents/professional skills) and needs really are. This will assist in informed decision making and the creation of a realistic three-to-five-year plan for the PA through and beyond canonical consolidation into one parish.</p> <p>Encourage a more generous attitude to the placing of one’s time, talents, and treasure at the service of the mission of the church in the PA.</p> <p>Achieve cost savings through the more efficient delivery of “back-office” and other administrative functions. This will include common purchasing. Any money released can then be reinvested in mission related activities, including communication <i>ad extra</i>, according to a clear set of priorities.</p>
RESOURCES & SUPPORT REQUIRED
<p>Having sufficient well motivated and properly skilled volunteers to do the work required.</p> <p>Continued support from Diocesan Support and Administration Services (DSAS).</p>

**3 To be prudent stewards of Christ’s Church; making wise choices to leave a sustainable legacy for future generations.**

3.3 Investing for the future (YWMBW page 65 and 68-69)

WHERE WE ARE NOW
Poorly formed laity. Minimal laity leadership roles and superficial working relationships with clergy. No spare money for investment in mission priorities. Buildings in poor repair and in need of much work.
WHAT WE PLAN TO DO (2024-2027)
Aim to reduce duplication and to achieve savings of time and money by the combination of back-office functions – a central parish office. Aim to be a charism-led community where people work to their gifting. Develop an “ecosystem” of gifted laity and clergy for all areas of ministry in which a mindset of “co-responsibility” for all aspects of the Church’s life and mission is the norm.
RESOURCES & SUPPORT REQUIRED
Establish a core group to manage the creation of ministry-focused groups, to identify potential leaders and to invest in volunteers (faith formation and evangelisation). Also, need to find and support a leader who will form a review group to increase our knowledge and understanding of our church communities – what are the enablers to ministry and what are the desires/possibilities. There needs to be structure for succession planning (for volunteers and young leaders).

## PROPOSED TIMELINE FOR PARISH AMALGAMATION & KEY STRUCTURAL CHANGES

DATE	ACTION
31st May 2024	Deliver latest draft of the mission plan to the bishop.
Autumn 2024	Establish Formation for Service and Stewardship of Resources teams.
By 31st December 2024	Have a PA website up and running, one which will easily be transformed into a website for the new canonical parish.
Autumn 2025	Canonical consultation on the creation of a new parish. PA wide newsletter to replace current parish newsletters.
Spring/summer 2026	Consolidation of back-office functions.
1st September 2026	Creation of new parish.