

Diocese of London 2030 Vision Stepney Area Vision 2030 Strategy Document



1. Foreword from the Bishop
2. Stepney background to the Vision
3. Three Ambitions in Stepney
4. Three Priorities in Stepney
5. Four Resources in Stepney
6. Appendices

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine,
according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church
and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3.20-21

A foreword from the Bishop of Stepney

In the Stepney Area we long for every Londoner to know the love of God in Christ Jesus.

We take seriously the call as a Church to be here *for every Londoner*. We will seek to support a broad range of parish churches and new worshipping communities of all traditions, to ensure our continued presence in the poorest (all) areas. We will continue our tradition of generosity towards each other, towards those outside our church families, traditions, and cultures, and towards the next generation. In this way we seek to reflect that God's love is unconditional and that His church can do more together than individually.

We know that we need to grow as a Church, in depth, impact, and number. We intend to prioritize developing and supporting ministry which has the potential to grow the church.

Our headline aim is that we will seek to double attendance (measured both by total worshipping community (TWC) and usual Sunday attendance (USA) by 2030.

We are committed to the Vision 2030 Three Ambitions

CONFIDENT DISCIPLES: Growing and developing confident disciples who can share their faith in the world. **COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES:** Developing churches who reach out in compassion to those around them and speak out on their behalf. **CREATIVE GROWTH:** Working for growth in depth, impact, and number, so that churches are innovative, healthy, and able to work well in partnership with others.

We are committed to the Vision 2030 Three Priorities

GROWING YOUNGER as a church and enabling the needs of diverse young people to be seen, their voices heard, and their leadership at the heart of the church. Good youthwork starts with good and effective kids work which we intend to build and to build onto. **BECOMING SAFER** with strong safeguarding policies, robust responses, and a culture of care and attention to all safer church matters. **STRIVING FOR RACIAL JUSTICE** through being committed to the full and just representation and empowerment of Black, Asian and other people of colour within our church structures and beyond. We will commit time to theological learning and to truth-telling about our heritage and current context in order to see change.

We are committed to using well and further releasing the Vision 2030 Three Resources

BUILDINGS, PEOPLE and FINANCE

We are committed to uphold all we do with **PRAYER**

'Let us rejoice always, pray continually and give thanks in all circumstances,
For this is God's will for us in Christ Jesus' *1Thessalonians 5.16-18*

I am asking every church community in Stepney Area to play a part in the Stepney strategy, praying together that we will develop confident disciples, serve our communities with compassion, and see our churches grow creatively.

I am grateful to those who have given their time in prayer, conversation, and planning, as part of the Stepney Strategy group and those who participated in the consultations over the Summer of 2020.

+Joanne Stepney December 2020

The full version of Bishop Joanne's introduction is available at www.StepneyLives.org

The Background to the Stepney Vision

We are a church of faithful and prayerful people, for whom serving others is key. We relate well across social, cultural, and ecclesiological differences. We have seen instances of considerable growth in some church congregations and have supported innovative new projects. There is much to be thankful for.

But life in Stepney is changing...

Stepney Area has a growing population. It is young, diverse, and creative. Its diversity is wide and stretches across culture, ethnicity, and socio-economic capacity.



Population growth	2005	2018
Hackney	216k	280k
Islington	184k	239k
Tower Hamlets	212k	312k
Stepney Area	612,000	831,000

It is an area with many social needs, some of the highest rates of poverty and unemployment, overcrowded and unaffordable housing, and inequalities around ethnicity, health, and education. 25% of the population are in the 10% most deprived nationally. Tower Hamlets regularly tops the table for child poverty in the UK. And across Stepney 32% of households live in some degree of poverty.

In Stepney 22% of the population are children and youth and 48% of the population is under 30. Just 41% of the population identify as British and 45% of the population are people of colour. The 4th highest of any archdeaconry in the Church of England.

And the Church is not keeping step

Usual Sunday Attendance (USA) in Stepney churches is currently around 7700, just 1% of a fast-growing population, projected to be 950,000 by 2029. Given the population growth projections and the planned residential developments we are unlikely to stay at this percentage.

60% of Stepney churches have seen Sunday attendance decline over the last 5 years. Excluding the larger churches that have grown exponentially, the average decline in attendance has been 8% over the last 5 years and 14% over the last 9 years.

We know that it is hard for churches which have declined, and now have small congregations, to find the energy for renewal or the ability to make new disciples. Without the church planting which has taken places across all three deaneries in the last decade, our USA would be far lower.

Our 71 churches, (7 BMOs) are supported by 66 stipendiary clergy posts, many self-supporting lay and ordained licenced ministers, and crowds of faithful, prayerful, and generous disciples. But there is much to be done if we want to turn this story of decline into one of fruitful numeric growth.

We have few **young people** in our churches, despite being one of the youngest boroughs in the country. Few people in positions of authority or leadership in our churches are under the age of 40.

Our churches do not reflect the **cultural diversity** of our area, our area and parish leadership reflect it even less. The need to address issues of diversity is acute and to see the cultural make up of our leadership change to reflect our culturally rich local communities.

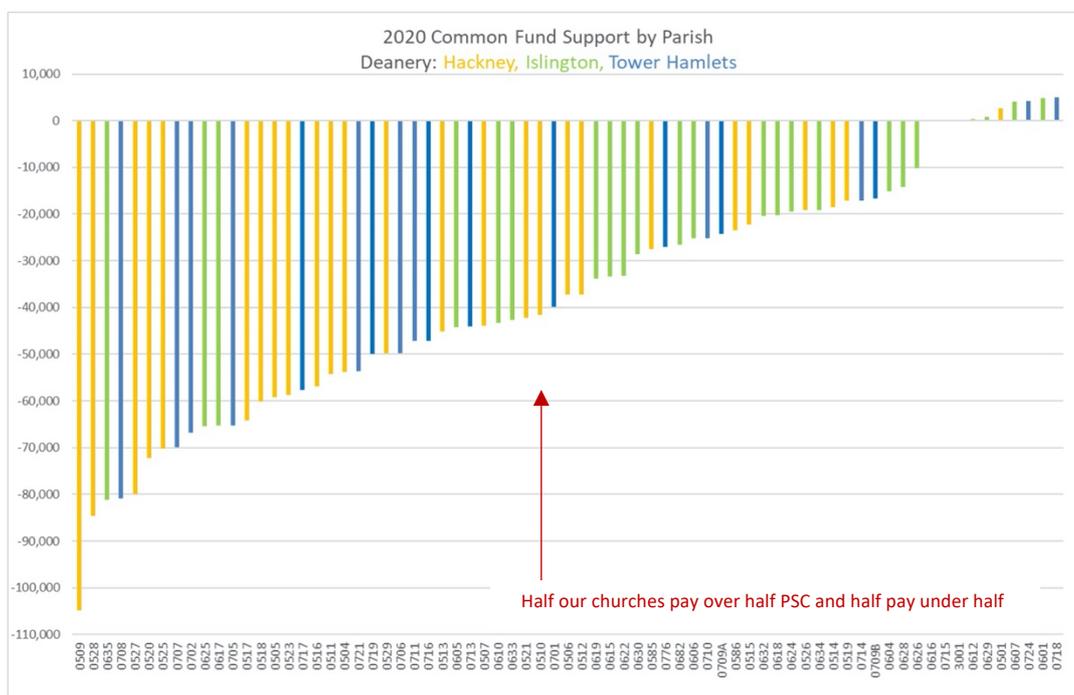
The Financial Picture

Although many people give generously, there are not enough people giving, or giving at a high enough rate, for churches to cover their costs. Stepney churches which are larger and/or have people who are able to give at a higher rate are generously supporting other churches through the Common Fund.

The Diocese of London has supported Stepney churches over many years. It is the call of the church to be one body, rich and poor, as set out in Acts 2.44-45. But it may soon be that some churches cannot continue to over give CF because by so doing they will jeopardize their own growth. *We have to address declining numbers and giving.*

Stepney has benefitted from a one clergy one parish policy over the last two decades. We have 66 stipendiary parish posts and a diocesan allocation of eight stipendiary curacies spread over three years. Our Common Fund contributions alone, would pay for just 35 stipendiary posts.

We benefit from generous additional support from the Diocese and a good number of locally supported stipendiary ministers and some self-supporting ordained ministers. Whilst half our churches receive more than 50% support.



The impact of Covid-19

...is yet to be fully reckoned with, we have seen a significant shift towards digital church life which will not disappear even when people meet in person again. Many churches have seen their income fall due to some members moving away and because of a loss of hall and other rentals. Meanwhile our churches have often been in the vanguard responding to the increased need for food banks and other kinds of community support.

We are setting our hearts towards 2030,
working and praying to be ever more aware of the Kingdom of God among us,
and for our church communities to flourish and bless the next generation.

Ambition 1

Go and make disciples of all nations.¹ Jesus: Matthew 28.19

Confident Disciples

Growing and developing confident disciples who can share their faith in the world.

A. We will invest in our own personal discipleship as leaders

- Area Team **by**
 - Will review and run MDR so that it fans personal discipleship, wellbeing and vision delivery 2022
 - Plan clergy days, seminars and the Area conference to promote personal discipleship 2021-30
 - Discuss and share our own discipleship journeys 2022
 - Identify two discipleship champions Spring 2022
- Deaneries
 - Ensure some chapter meetings and events explore personal discipleship 2022
- Church Leadership teams
 - Each member to have a spiritual director & a small support and accountability group 2023
 - Clergy are asked to fully engage with MDR in order to grow as disciples 2022

B. We will commit to growing the disciples in our church into greater confidence

- Area team
 - will tell stories of discipleship (*Stepney at Prayer / Stepney Lives*) 2021-30
 - Will work with the diocese to find and promote discipleship tools and training 2021
- Church Leadership teams
 - Ensure Church family training in discipleship and faith sharing 2022

C. We will commit to making and seeing new disciples joining our churches

- Area team
 - will offer models, consultation, training and the sharing of best practise 2023
- Church Leadership teams
 - adopt or create an experience for enquirers that draws them further into the church 2022
 - develop a pathway for enquirers to become disciples* 2022
 - *develop a record or database that tracks those engaging and staying 2023

D. We will grow the numbers of all those in leadership, including many more self-supporting lay and ordained ministers.

- Area Team
 - to explore and promote new models of ministry: ordained and lay, paid and unpaid 2022/3
 - to promote and explore new training pathways for a variety of ministries 2023
 - to develop the Intern scheme to promote diversity of ministries and participants 2022
- Church leadership teams
 - to increasingly discern and promote a variety of vocations and ministries (clergy and lay, paid and unpaid, within and beyond the church) 2022-30
 - Local Church leaders to seek out and promote vocation amongst all cultural groups 2022 >

Ambition 2

'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Jesus: Luke 10.27

Compassionate communities

developing churches who reach out in compassion to those around them

and speak out on their behalf.

We will support every church to formulate its own response to the Diocese of London's six 'compassionate communities' pillars:

- climate crisis
- modern day slavery
- mental health
- loneliness, and wellbeing
- debt and financial wellbeing
- serious youth violence, and homelessness

A. In order to support every church to formulate its own response to the Diocese of London's six 'compassionate communities' pillars

Area Team

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| • We will seek to appoint a champion/ambassador for each of the six pillars | by
2022 |
| • We will be a prophetic voice supporting local initiatives to address the focus areas. | 2024 |
| • We will with the Diocesan Team map what Churches are doing, and create live lists of project leads so as to share best practice forge partnerships and federations to seek economies of scale and offer group training | ongoing |
| • Will share stories on social media and the website to promote good news | 2022 |

B. We want every church to sign up to the Church of England's carbon reduction targets via the ECO Church movement, Energy Footprint Tool or similar network.

Area Team

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| • Webinar | 2021 |
| • Area Champion appointed Rev John MacKenzie | 2021 |
| • COP26 encouragement | 2021 |
| • We will commit promoting the wellbeing of ourselves and our environment across the vision | 2022 |

Ambition 3

'I will build my church.' Jesus: Matthew 16

Creative growth:

growing churches in depth, impact, and number, to be increasingly innovative, healthy, and committed to working well in partnership with others.

A. We will support every church, of every tradition, to grow in order, to double our total worshipping community (TWC) figures over the next ten years.

- Train all clergy (and their teams ideally) to explore and understand church growth dynamics **by** 2023/4
- Encourage church planting by those with capacity and opportunity ongoing
- Work with the Islington CCX team to identify and fan the flames of growth ongoing
- Annually (with Diocesan help) measure and monitor church growth across the Area 2022/3

B. We will nurture and develop vocation, training, models of ministry, evangelism, planting, revitalisation, and digital ways of being church.

Area Team

- Constantly reviewing what we offer by way of discernment and training pathways ongoing
- Explore and develop new models of ministry that are sustainable and healthy 2022
- Appoint interns and curates to parishes with a track record of growth ongoing
- Appoint an ADVO to expand our work with those from less traditional backgrounds 2022/3

Church Leadership Teams

- Raise up vocations to ordained and other ministries amongst diverse groups of people 2023
- Learn from the "pandemic enforced" digital church development and build on it. 2021/2

C. We will position the Area Staff team and its work to support mission and growth.

- Appoint various champions and advisors to help with vision delivery 2022
- Keeping strategic development on the agenda of each Bishops staff meeting ongoing
- Build the staff team around unity and commitment to the vision 2021
- Appoint staff members to the team who are committed to the strategy 2021/2
- Allocate each strategic task to an individual staff member and call to account 2022
- Develop a pattern of deep review around each incumbent vacancy to build for growth 2021/2

D. We will seek to equip every disciple to share their faith to see new people coming to faith.

The Area and the Church Leadership teams

- Appoint an evangelist champion or two to help deliver the below 2022
- Will encourage the identification of evangelists and those with faith sharing gifts in each church and nurture them through a 'school for evangelism' 2022/3
- Release those above to model, train and nurture other church members in faith sharing 2023

E. We will prioritise growing and planting churches which appeal to young people.

- We will pursue SDF funding to enable this to push ahead beyond our resources 2022
- We will work with the Stepney Dean of Younger people to pursue this stream of church growth 2022/3

Our priorities

Priority 1

'Let the children come to me' Jesus Mat 19.14

Younger:

*enabling the needs of diverse young people under 25 to be seen, their voices heard,
and their leadership to be at the heart of the church.*

Growing the Church younger

- We want all church leaders to do some training in working with young people
- We will appoint a dean of young people and find creative ways to listen to young people
- We will prioritize growing and planting churches which appeal to diverse young people
- We will invest in children's, parent, and family discipleship ministries.
- And explore ways (incl digital tools) to disciple and set young people free to lead

And reaching beyond the church

- We will work imaginatively with the LDBS and our schools to make them places of missional life
- We will work with those engaged in student ministry
- We will engage with initiatives that are making an impact to stem the tide of youth violence

Priority 2

'Love your neighbour as yourself' Jesus Lk 10.2

Safer:

*with strong safeguarding policies, robust responses, and a culture of care and attention
to all safer church matters.*

We will operate and grow our churches in a safe framework

- Fully adopting diocesan policies and procedures
- Review our premises where safeguarding is complicated
- Listening to churches who struggling with compliance issues
- Responding to current and historic concerns and seeking to support those affected

Priority 3

'I bow my knee before the Father, from whom every family in heaven & earth derives its name' Eph 3.14-15

Striving for racial justice:

*we will be committed to the full and just representation and empowerment of Black, Asian and
other people of colour within our church structures and beyond.*

We will commit to developing a theological discourse that fully reflects the heritage of all the communities we serve

- We will be committed to the full representation and empowerment of Black, Asian and other people of colour within our church structures.
- We will seek to audit our actions and decisions in recent years
- We will create safe spaces for leaders to learn about diverse theology and racial justice
- Awareness training will be an ongoing part of our life together
- We respectfully believe the diocese should appoint two FTE appointments of a clergy and lay person with lived experience to oversee this priority across the diocese.

Our resources

PEOPLE *we have 100's of amazing people in our churches who we hope will share this vision.*

We want to create a culture of missional, collaborative and visionary leadership amongst clergy, lay leaders and church members who reflect the diversity of our neighbourhoods and aspire to reach young and wide in the proclamation of Jesus and his kingdom.

- To meet our vision we will raise up younger leaders from diverse backgrounds
- Recruitment, selection and appointment to all leadership roles will be in line with our vision
- Review, support, development and retention needs to reflect our vision
- New models of ministry will be needed that do not rely on housed stipendiary incumbents
- New models of ministry will be needed that see increasing church collaboration & partnership

BUILDINGS *we have lots of buildings, not all our fit for purpose in the 21st Century.*

- Some church buildings are in the wrong place, others are very costly to maintain, we need to review our true needs and may need to take brave decisions.
- Many of our parsonages are oversized and costly to both maintain and live in, we want to work with the diocese to better house our clergy and release resources
- Many of our ancillary spaces (halls etc.) are not currently serving the mission of the church or bringing in revenue at a level we can afford long term- advice & new initiatives will be needed
- The internet (especially during and post covid) has proved to be a key 'place' for mission and ministry and this needs to be part of each church's ongoing strategy.

FINANCE *we've received finance from others & the past, we each need to give to this vision.*

- Our common fund giving is too far adrift from our area parish and clergy costs -giving needs to be considered a key part of our approach to making confident disciples
- To grow from where we are, we will seek funding such as SDF to help us deliver this vision
- We will support churches as they; budget, manage finance and grow their income base
- We will explore models of ministry that reduce costs and increase effectiveness
- We want to create our own Mission Fund to support new 'Vision 2030' initiatives

And everything will be underpinned by **PRAYER**

We are asking every church community in Stepney Area to play a part in the Stepney strategy, praying together that we will develop confident disciples, serve our communities with compassion, and see our churches grow creatively.

1. Stepney at Prayer is our termly Stepney wide prayer meeting for everyone to join, we will pray for our churches, their local communities and mission across Stepney.
2. Morning Prayer Wednesdays at 8am is for all clergy to join the Bishop in prayer
3. We will pray at each meeting across the area inviting God to guide our discussion and decisions in line with the vision we believe he has given us in London

"After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly." (Acts 4.31)

END