

2026

Statement of Needs



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01. Introduction

“A new command I give you:
Love one another. As I have loved
you, so you must love one another.”

– John 13:34

Welcome from the Vacancy in See Committee

Loving Father,
by your grace,
we long to see more people knowing Jesus,
and more justice in your world.
Help us to live as your disciples,
in the power of the Spirit,
and to work to your praise and glory.

Amen.

This is a significant moment for our Diocese. It gives us an opportunity to reflect honestly on where we have come from, recognise the realities of our present context, and look ahead with hope. We do so with deep gratitude for all that has been faithfully built across our parishes, congregations, schools and communities, and with a clear awareness of the challenges we now face.

In recent years, the life of the Diocese has not been without difficulty. Periods of change, external scrutiny and the weight of complex issues have been felt across our communities, shaping both our experience and our perspective. These experiences have, at times, tested confidence, and resilience, and have underscored the importance of trust, clarity, and stability in leadership.

We are a Diocese that is at a key moment in that transition and change. We need to recover something of the identity of who we are as Christians, seeing where God is at work in the world around us, and joining in, by pointing to the hope found in Christ.

The Diocese of Liverpool has long been shaped by a clear sense of purpose. From our beginnings, there has been a strong emphasis on the calling of every Christian. Our first bishop, J. C. Ryle, spoke of the need for all God's people to become "active agents" in the life and mission of the Church. That calling still sits at the heart of who we are. We want to be a Diocese where people are not simply recipients of ministry, but participants in God's work.

Welcome from the Vacancy in See Committee

Across the Diocese, our vision is to be a bigger Church making a bigger difference, with more people knowing Jesus and more justice in the world. While our contexts and traditions vary, there is a strong desire to grow in faith, and to continue serving our communities with compassion.

We have listened carefully to voices from many contexts, making space for encouragement, concern, and honest reflection. Alongside this, we have been committed to prayer, trusting that this is part of our shared calling to seek God's direction for the future.

What follows is not a perfect picture, nor a finished one. It is an attempt to describe who we are, what we value, and the kind of leadership we believe we need in the years ahead. We have sought to write with clarity and honesty, while holding onto a sense of hope about what God may yet do in and through this Diocese. We are praying for the person God is calling to join us as our next bishop. We hope this document will help you to discern whether that calling may be yours.



Loving God,

guide the Diocese of Liverpool in this time of discernment. Grant wisdom, grace and patience to all who are involved in this process. Help us to listen well, speak honestly and seek your will for the future of this diocese. Prepare the heart of the one you are calling to serve as our next Bishop of Liverpool.

Amen.



02. Our Reality

“In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.”

– 2 Timothy 4:1-2

Trust, stability and leadership

Over the past eighteen months the Diocese has navigated a challenging and traumatic period following issues brought into the public domain, including the report broadcast by Channel 4 News in January 2025. This led to an enquiry and detailed engagement with the Charity Commission, resulting in the issuing of an official warning in January 2026.

Throughout this period the Diocese has been reviewing its safeguarding arrangements, governance and reporting, including resourcing, reporting and assurance mechanisms, and clarity of leadership and accountability. Several improvements have been made, and consideration is being given to who might be asked to undertake a more formal, independent review of governance structures.

We have now moved beyond the immediate response phase under the leadership of the Interim Bishop of Liverpool.

Our leadership has been strengthened by the recent appointment of a new Bishop of Warrington, and the Diocese is continuing the development and review of its structures, ensuring that safeguarding, governance and accountability are aligned, robust and sustainable in practice. The next Bishop of Liverpool will play a key role in this continuing work.

This work will continue to be informed by ongoing diocesan reflection, including material submitted nationally on governance and leadership culture following the Charity Commission's formal warning to the Liverpool Diocesan Board of Finance.

This has highlighted the importance of clear accountability, well-supported trustees, and robust reporting and assurance processes. Diocesan Synod has acknowledged the seriousness of these issues, reaffirmed its commitment to a safer church, and supported further work to strengthen safeguarding governance within the Diocesan Board of Finance.



Leading with clarity,

We are seeking a bishop who offers a steady and prayerful presence, able to lead with clarity, transparency and integrity. Trust is built not only through vision, but through consistent and transparent decision making, communicated and lived out over time.

There is a longing for leadership that is both relational and dependable: someone who will be visible, approachable and who can hold together the breadth of the Diocese with wisdom and care. Stability in leadership will enable parishes and deaneries to flourish with confidence, supporting clergy and lay leaders to focus on mission and ministry, knowing they are well-led and well-supported.

transparency and integrity.

Financial Stability

The Diocese of Liverpool serves communities with significant levels of deprivation whilst operating with comparatively limited historic resources and assets.

Unlike many Dioceses within the Church of England, Liverpool did not inherit substantial historic wealth and continues to function with one of the lowest levels of historic investment income nationally. This reality shapes much of diocesan life and requires difficult decisions, careful stewardship and a high degree of mutual support across the Diocese.

Financial pressures are felt at every level of diocesan life. Many parishes serve communities facing significant economic hardship, often with limited local capacity to sustain ministry financially, whilst clergy housing, parish buildings and operational costs continue to place considerable strain on resources. The Diocese is deeply aware of the pressures this creates for clergy, lay leaders and worshipping communities, particularly where there is a strong commitment to maintaining a visible and engaged church presence within challenging contexts.

Within this context, deaneries play a significant role in shaping local financial decisions, including the allocation of stipendiary posts and the distribution of Parish Share responsibilities. The Diocese does not have a policy to reduce stipendiary clergy numbers, recognising the vital role clergy continue to play in the mission, pastoral life and leadership of local churches and communities. This reflects a strong diocesan culture of mutual support, shared responsibility and reciprocal generosity, even amidst constraint.

National church funding has played a vital role in supporting major change and mission initiatives, including Fit for Mission and the current Diocesan Investment Programme. These programmes seek to develop churches that are both missionally healthy and financially sustainable, whilst continuing to serve the diverse needs of communities across the Diocese. Whilst experiences and perspectives on these changes vary, there remains a shared recognition that new models of ministry, collaboration and stewardship are necessary for the long-term flourishing of the Diocese.

Clergy Wellbeing and Recruitment

The wellbeing of our clergy is a significant concern and a shared priority across the Diocese.

The demands of ministry in a complex and changing landscape, alongside the realities of leading through uncertainty, have placed considerable pressure on many. We acknowledge that our income restraints have prevented us from providing some of the basics – such as adequate clergy housing – and are determined to remedy this. Looking after our clergy is critical, and we must do better. We are intentionally building a culture of flourishing and belonging, which is only possible if we tackle the practical realities as well as the pastoral.

Ordained ministry continues to form an important part of the Diocese's vision for leadership and mission. The Diocese currently has approximately 124 stipendiary clergy and 33 self-supporting ministers (SSMs), with around 20% of stipendiary clergy expected to retire by 2034. In response, the Diocese has set ambitious goals to increase the number entering ordained ministry, with a particular focus on younger vocations and broader representation.

There are currently 18 ordinands in training and 33 curates serving across the Diocese, alongside a growing number of people engaged in the discernment process. The Diocese is also supported by 159 retired clergy with Permission to Officiate (PTO). Around 56% of clergy are men and 44% are women.

Our next Bishop of Liverpool will need to prioritise the care and flourishing of clergy and lay leaders, recognising that healthy, supported ministers are essential for healthy and outward-looking churches. We need episcopal leadership that is visible, encouraging and attentive. We are seeking a Bishop who will help foster a culture where people feel valued and supported; collaboration reduces isolation, and clergy and lay leaders alike are equipped to minister with confidence, resilience and hope.

Safeguarding

Operationally, safeguarding has continued on an upward trajectory in the Diocese, with steady growth in the number of parishes using the safeguarding dashboards.

These dashboards have strengthened compliance with safeguarding policy and enabled Parish Safeguarding Officers and the Diocesan Safeguarding Team to monitor progress, identify areas for improvement, and target support where it is most needed.

However, safeguarding in the Diocese of Liverpool has been under significant scrutiny following allegations which led to the resignation of the former Bishop of Liverpool, alongside the subsequent regulatory investigation and Official Warning issued by the Charity Commission. We accepted the Commission's findings and publicly apologised for the shortcomings identified. Since then, we have taken steps to strengthen leadership, reporting and governance processes, and remain committed to ongoing learning, accountability and continuous improvement.

Senior leadership across the Diocese and Cathedral have articulated a renewed vision for safeguarding: that all those who encounter our churches are kept safe from abuse and harm through effective relationships, empathetic communication, and a culture in which safeguarding is understood as everyone's responsibility.

Alongside this, we are seeking to build a safeguarding culture in which the voices of children and young people are heard more readily, and where we are learning from and engaging more effectively with victims and survivors to shape and strengthen our practice.

In 2026, the Diocese and Cathedral participated in the national safeguarding audit process undertaken by INEQE Safeguarding Group as part of the Church of England's regular cycle of independent safeguarding audits. While the final report is still awaited, we are committed to engaging openly with its findings and recommendations, and to ensuring that the learning from the audit informs the next stage of our safeguarding development.

We want our next Bishop of Liverpool to champion a safeguarding culture that embodies this vision, and to be committed to ensuring that our churches offer safe and inclusive environments where concerns can be raised within a culture of accountability, transparency and compassion.

Human Sexuality

The Diocese continues to engage with the ongoing national Living in Love and Faith conversations.

Across the Diocese of Liverpool, there is a wide range of sincerely held views on matters of what it means to be human. These reflect different understandings of scripture, theology and mission. The understandings are often deeply rooted in personal experience and conviction.

We recognise that this is an area where there is real diversity of perspective, and at times, significant disagreement. For some, questions of human sexuality are central to faith and doctrine; for others, the full inclusion and affirmation of LGBTQIA+ people is understood as integral to the Gospel. Many hold positions at different points between these perspectives.

Like the wider Church of England, the Diocese continues to engage with the ongoing national Living in Love and Faith conversations. Views on these matters are deeply and sincerely held, and there is recognition across the Diocese that these conversations require real sensitivity.

We are also mindful that, on all sides of this conversation, there has been genuine hurt. Not all have experienced the Church as a place of welcome, and some have found it difficult to continue to belong or participate fully in its life.

The Need for a Unifying Presence

In this Diocese, differences are not theoretical; they are part of our everyday experience of ministry, leadership and belonging.

We are shaped by a wide range of church traditions, theological convictions and experiences of Anglican life, including those who hold differing views on matters such as the ministry of women, human sexuality and episcopal oversight. We remain committed to being a Diocese in which people can live and minister with integrity, conviction and mutual respect, even where agreement is not always possible.

Alongside this, the Diocese has also experienced a significant programme of change and transition in recent years. Fit for Mission has brought new opportunities for collaboration, sustainability and shared ministry, and many have experienced this positively and with hope. Others, however, have experienced uncertainty, loss, frustration or a weakening of trust. Experiences across the Diocese are varied, but we recognise them as real and valid. There is a strong desire for the next Bishop of Liverpool to be a unifying presence within the life of the Diocese: someone able

to build trust, strengthen relationships and create space for honest and generous conversation. We are seeking a Bishop who can enable people of differing views and experiences to remain committed to one another and to the mission we share. This includes ensuring that all parishes and deaneries feel valued and seen, regardless of size, tradition or context, and fostering a culture in which clergy and lay leaders alike can flourish with confidence and hope.

We are looking for leadership that is visible, relational and grounded in presence; leadership that can bridge divisions where they exist and help the Diocese move forward together with renewed trust and shared purpose. This will require a Bishop able to enable mutual flourishing across differing traditions and convictions, working constructively and generously across the breadth of Anglican life, and upholding the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests and its Five Guiding Principles in a way that supports and values every vocation.



03. Our Vision and Strategic Programmes

“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

– Micah 6:8

Making a bigger

The Diocese of Liverpool is asking God for a bigger Church to make a bigger difference: more people knowing Jesus and more justice in the world.

difference.

Our Missional Priorities

Working for justice

Deepening discipleship

Introducing people to Jesus

Developing Christian leaders

The vision is longstanding, and we recognise the need to update the language so that it better reflects our current context and realities. We are looking for our next bishop to lead us in a collaborative process of refreshing this vision to take the diocese forward and into the next decade.

We need episcopal leadership that can articulate a clear and compelling shared vision, hold together a Diocese marked by diverse perspectives, and enable that vision to be lived out with confidence, generosity and unity.

Fit for Mission

Fit for Mission provides a framework for reshaping how mission and ministry are resourced across the Diocese. A central feature has been the development of Larger Single Parishes (LSPs): groups of churches working together within a shared structure, leadership and governance, while maintaining a local presence in their communities. It provides a framework for collaboration, enabling churches to share resources, learning and leadership, while working together to establish new worshipping communities and strengthen existing ones.

Several LSPs are now established, typically bringing together six to twelve parishes. These are served by clergy teams working collaboratively, alongside local leadership in each church. The intention is to reduce clergy isolation, share responsibility and enable a more sustainable pattern of ministry.

Implementation is ongoing, with some areas further developed than others. The transition has involved significant change to patterns of leadership, governance and the use of buildings.

Investment Programme (DIP)

The programme is intended to strengthen local capacity and provide stability during a period of change.

The Diocese, in partnership with the National Church, has secured significant funding through the Diocesan Investment Programme to support growth and sustainability in every parish across the Diocese. This investment is enabling work in areas including children and youth ministry, church planting and revitalisation, and the development of support services to reduce administrative burden on parishes.

The programme is intended to strengthen local capacity and provide stability during a period of change. With funding currently in place until 2032, the Diocese has greater opportunity to plan sustainably and invest over the longer term. Funding is being deployed across the Diocese, with decisions shaped at local level and supported by diocesan structures.

As with Fit for Mission, this work is at various stages across the Diocese. While there are signs of increased capacity and new activity in some areas, financial sustainability and long-term impact remain key considerations.

Vocations

‘Lifecall’ is our overarching vocations and ministry strategy.

Through the process of discernment, formation and service, the Diocese seeks to nurture confident disciples, develop leaders and equip people of all ages and backgrounds to participate fully in the life and mission of the Church.

Supported through the Diocesan Investment Programme funding, the Diocese is undertaking significant investment in discipleship, vocation and ministry development after many years of limited capacity in these areas. This work seeks to strengthen collaboration across diocesan teams, parishes, chaplaincies and schools as we seek to introduce people to Jesus, deepen discipleship, develop leaders and work for justice.

Our Diocesan Rule of Life encourages all Christians, of whatever age, to engage in an inner and outer journey: the inner journey where we Pray, Read and Learn; the outer journey where we Tell, Serve and Give. There is much work to do to embed this fully in the life of the diocese. Alongside this is the creation of a new ‘Theology Collective’ offering accessible theological and biblical learning opportunities for lay and ordained people alike.

Lay ministry and leadership remain central to the life of the Diocese. The Diocese is seeking to deepen this culture of lay vocation through the development and commissioning of new lay ministries, greater support for volunteers and church officers, and continued encouragement of discipleship expressed through social action, evangelism, community engagement and work for justice.

Learning and development are areas of significant growth and investment. The Diocese is developing a flexible learning framework for both lay and ordained ministry. Alongside this, church planting, revitalisation and the development of new worshipping communities form a significant part of the Diocese’s wider mission strategy.

Alongside this ambition sits an increasing emphasis on wellbeing, safeguarding and healthy culture. The Diocese recognises the pressures experienced by clergy, lay leaders and volunteers, particularly within demanding contexts of ministry and change. There is therefore a growing commitment to strengthening wellbeing support and embedding safeguarding culture more deeply across diocesan life.

Children and Young People

Children and young people are a significant priority within the Diocese of Liverpool's understanding of discipleship, vocation and mission.

Children and young people are a significant priority within the Diocese of Liverpool's understanding of discipleship, vocation and mission. Through the Diocese's 'lifecall' strategy, there is a growing commitment to nurturing the faith and leadership of children and young people themselves, and developing those called to ministry amongst younger generations. The Diocese is driven by the Growing Faith agenda to put children, youth and families at the heart of mission and ministry.

The Diocese is seeking to develop youth hub strategies across deaneries through Larger Single Parishes (LSPs), with the ambition of significantly increasing the number of children and young people engaging with Christian faith, discipleship and leadership. This work reflects a desire not simply to create programmes or activities, but to build sustainable cultures in which younger generations are welcomed, disciplined and enabled to flourish within the life of the Church. Alongside this, the Diocese is investing in the training and support of volunteer leaders, whilst seeking to develop a stronger pipeline of professional youth and children's workers with a deep understanding of mission, ministry and discipleship.

The Diocese recognises both the opportunities and challenges of ministry with younger generations, particularly within communities experiencing social and economic pressure, changing patterns of engagement, and increasing complexity in the lives of young people and families.

Schools, colleges and universities also play an important role within the Diocese's understanding of mission and vocation. Through its network of Church schools, chaplaincies and wider partnerships, the Diocese is seeking to support children and young people in exploring questions of faith, calling and purpose at important stages of life and decision-making.

We have made a commitment to start 60 school-based worship communities. By partnering with Growing Faith's FLOURISH programme we work closely with schools and churches to support intergenerational communities of parents, pupils, school staff and church members gather around worship discipleship, community, leadership and mission.

Working for Justice

Working for justice is one of the four missional priorities of the Diocese of Liverpool and is understood as central to our calling and witness.

Working for justice is one of the four missional priorities of the Diocese of Liverpool and is understood as central to our calling and witness. Across the Diocese, churches are engaged in a wide range of social action, community support and advocacy, responding to the realities of poverty, inequality, exclusion and environmental challenge within our communities. This work is expressed through parish ministry, chaplaincy, schools, community partnerships, and wider civic engagement.

The Diocese seeks to approach social justice collaboratively, working ecumenically and alongside interfaith, charitable and community partners across the region. Areas of strategic focus in recent years have included racial justice, social inclusion, and the Diocese's commitment to Net Zero Carbon 2030.

Building on experience from recent and current projects the Diocese seeks to continue to approach social justice collaboratively, working ecumenically and alongside interfaith, charitable and community partners across the region. One such project being "Countering Hate, Cultivating Hope" delivered in partnership with Together Liverpool and the Diocese of Chelmsford, helping the Diocese contribute positively to community cohesion, understanding and resilience.

The Diocese is in a period of transition. Structural changes are still being embedded, and patterns of collaboration continue to develop.

Alongside this, there is a need to sustain clergy and lay leadership, particularly in contexts of wellbeing, deprivation and resourcing.

Looking Ahead

There is a range of experience and perspective across the Diocese. For some, recent changes have created new opportunities for shared ministry and mission; for others, they have brought uncertainty and challenge. Holding these together will be an important part of the Diocese's next chapter.

The appointment of a new Bishop of Liverpool comes at a time where change is underway but not complete. The Diocese seeks leadership that can work within this context; supporting what is taking shape, listening well across difference, and helping to build confidence, clarity and trust for the future.



04. Geography and Context

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism.”




– Ephesians 4:4-5

About the Diocese of Liverpool

Geographically, the Diocese stretches from the Irish Sea coast at Southport, through the city of Liverpool, to the industrial and residential areas of St Helens, Widnes, Wigan and Warrington. This is a region shaped by a strong sense of identity and a deep-rooted pride in place.



The Area of the Diocese

-  Knowsley and Sefton
-  St Helens and Warrington
-  Liverpool



On average 13,900 adults and 3,000 children attend churches each week within our Diocese.

1. Rising number of confirmations up 6%.
 2. Our worshipping community is made up of 18.4% 0-10 compared to 12.8% in CE (highest in the CE).
- (As per Statistics for Mission 2024)

Shaped by People

Across the Diocese, we serve a population of approximately 1.6 million people through 137 parishes including 10 larger single parishes created during the Fit for Mission programmes, which incorporate 61 previous single parishes. Our ministry is supported by around 275 licensed clergy, 149 Readers and 23 Local Missional Leaders.

Our Diocese is marked by a rich breadth of church traditions and theological understanding, lived out faithfully across our parishes and an integral part of our understanding of who we are as the people of God.

This theological diversity is both a gift and a responsibility. It brings a wide range of skills to our common mission, while requiring careful, attentive leadership. We need a bishop who can hold these different convictions with generosity and clarity, sustaining unity amid difference.

This will require sensitivity, understanding, and the ability to build trust. To listen well, and lead in a way that is confident, fair and pastorally grounded.

Above all, the Diocese of Liverpool is shaped by its people. Our communities are generous, honest, and deeply engaged with the realities of daily life. Faith here is practical - lived out tangibly: through foodbanks, schools, community projects, and partnerships that cross social and cultural boundaries.

This is a Diocese with a clear sense of purpose: to love God, serve our neighbours, and make Christ known. Where tradition and innovation sit alongside one another to work for justice, challenges are faced with honesty, and with a growing confidence to imagine a hopeful future.

St James' House / Bishops Lodge

The diocesan offices are based at St James' House, adjacent to Liverpool Cathedral, bringing together a range of core functions that support the life and mission of the Diocese. A team of staff serve under the leadership of the Diocesan Secretary and the Senior Leadership Team, and work alongside colleagues from the Archdeacons' offices, the Diocesan Board of Education, and the Cathedral.

Key support functions, including HR, Finance, Safeguarding, Communications and the office of the Diocesan Secretary, operate across both the Diocese and the Cathedral. This pattern of shared working has developed over time in response to practical and financial realities.

The Bishop of Liverpool is based at Bishop's Lodge in Woolton, approximately five miles from Liverpool city centre. The Lodge serves as both residence and a place of hospitality, prayer and diocesan gathering. The bishop is supported by a very experienced team, who work with colleagues at St James' House, the recently appointed Bishop of Warrington and other episcopal colleagues. This is a key demonstration of working towards the vision of shared episcopacy.

Together, St James' House, Liverpool Cathedral and Bishop's Lodge reflect the need to be collaborative, connected, responsive and aligned so that the Diocese can operate with confidence and coherence.



The Region We Serve

The Diocese of Liverpool serves one of the most distinctive and recognisable regions in England. Formed in 1880 from the Diocese of Chester during a period of rapid industrial growth, the Diocese developed in response to the expanding communities of Liverpool and the surrounding towns. Unlike many older Dioceses, Liverpool did not inherit significant historic wealth or assets and continues to operate with one of the lowest levels of historic investment income in the Church of England. This has shaped a diocesan culture marked by resilience, adaptability, and a willingness to innovate in mission and ministry.

Today, the Diocese serves communities across much of the Liverpool City Region, alongside parts of Cheshire and Greater Manchester including Warrington and Wigan. The Diocese encompasses the city of Liverpool itself, the boroughs of Knowsley, Sefton, Widnes and St Helens, together with surrounding towns, suburbs, coastal communities and rural villages.

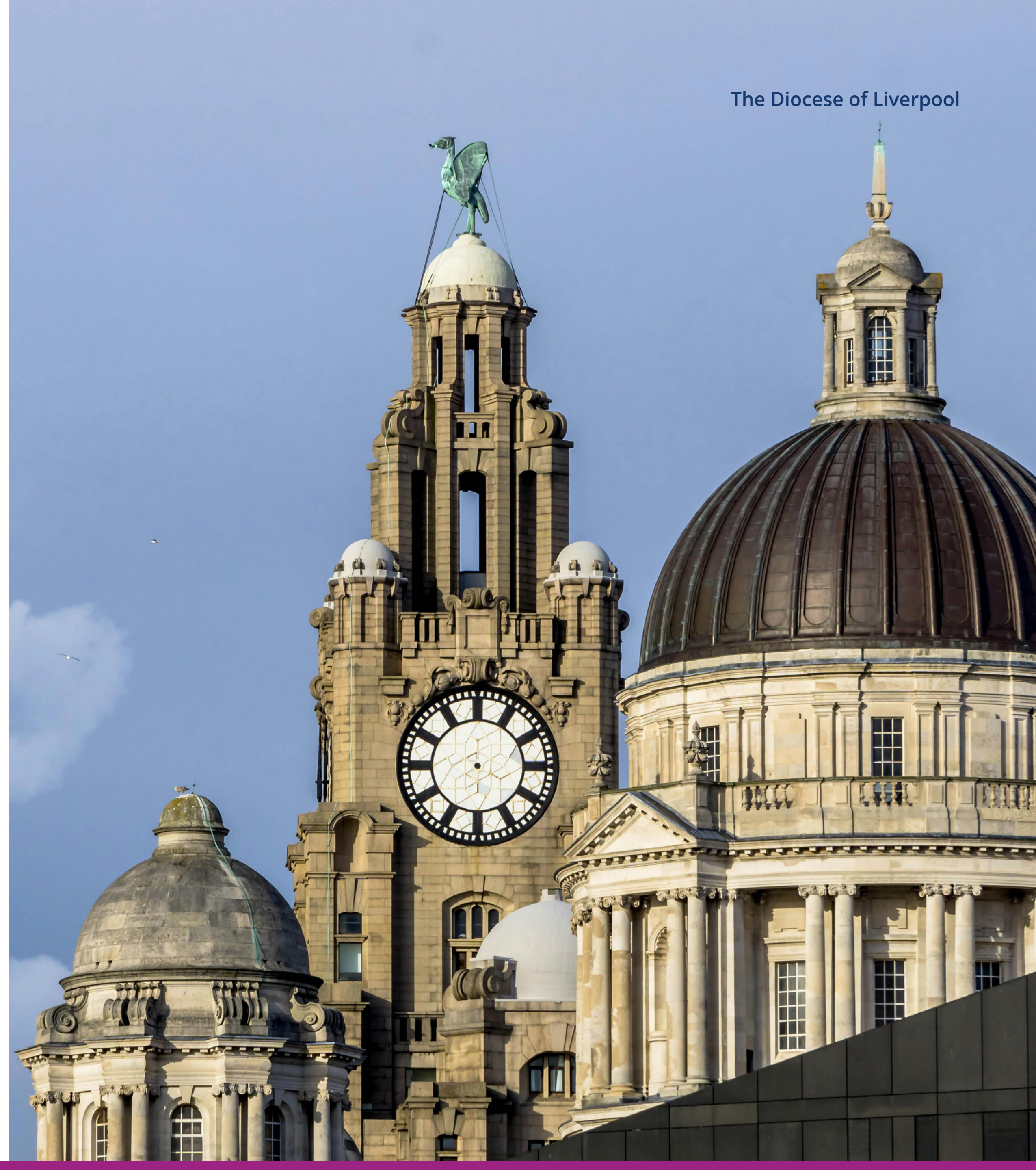
While these areas share strong historic and cultural connections, each retains its own character and challenges and, following the 2026 local elections, an increasingly varied political landscape reflecting wider national shifts.

Liverpool is a city with a strong international profile and a distinctive civic identity. Its history as a major port shaped the city through migration, trade and cultural exchange, creating communities with deep global connections and rich diversity. The city's story includes both great wealth and profound inequality, including historic links to the transatlantic slave trade, economic decline, and social hardship. Yet Liverpool is equally known for its creativity, humour, warmth, and resilience, alongside a strong tradition of community activism and social justice.

The Diocese ministers within communities experiencing both significant opportunity and significant challenge. Knowsley and parts of St Helens continue to navigate the legacy of industrial decline, whilst Sefton includes both areas of deprivation and coastal communities such as Southport with its strong visitor economy. Widnes combines industrial communities with significant scientific and logistical development, while Warrington and Wigan have experienced considerable economic and demographic growth in recent decades. Across the Diocese, churches minister in contexts ranging from densely populated inner-city neighbourhoods to suburban communities, market towns and rural villages. Here, churches play a key role within neighbourhood life, education, chaplaincy, social action and civic engagement.

Liverpool

The Archdeaconry of Liverpool covers the area within and around Liverpool city centre and is the most densely populated of the Diocese's three archdeaconries. Although geographically small, it encompasses a wide range of communities, traditions and contexts, reflecting the complexity and diversity of urban ministry across the city. Congregations increasingly reflect the rich ethnic diversity of the area, with many churches also hosting worshipping communities from other denominations and traditions, including services in languages other than English.



The Archdeaconry of Liverpool

The Archdeacon of Liverpool, Miranda Threlfall-Holmes, has served in the role since 2023. The archdeaconry is made up of four deaneries.

Liverpool North & Walton Deanery covers much of the north and west of the city and includes eighteen churches across eleven parishes. The deanery includes areas facing significant economic and social challenge and sustaining ordained ministry across the area remains an ongoing concern. It also has several landmark churches, including Liverpool Parish Church, which has a significant civic ministry at the heart of the city. Also key is the SDF-funded Next Generations Project in Everton, which seeks to grow new young disciples through an innovative hub-and-spoke model of mission and discipleship.

Liverpool South Deanery stretches from the inner-city areas around Wavertree to the southern suburbs of the city. The deanery includes several large and flourishing suburban churches, alongside smaller churches serving more economically challenged communities. There are fifteen churches within the deanery, including one of the earliest Local Ecumenical Partnerships in the country. Seven parishes are currently working towards becoming a new Larger Single Parish as part of Fit for Mission. The deanery is also home to Penny Lane, the Diocese's largest Resource Church.

West Derby Deanery was one of the deaneries that piloted Fit for Mission, with eight of its eleven parishes coming together to form a Larger Single Parish, one year ago. The deanery includes densely populated residential communities, alongside areas such as Croxteth Park and West Derby village. It is an area with a strong history of community engagement and social justice, and continues to reflect both the opportunities and challenges of urban ministry.

Toxteth & Wavertree Deanery is one of the Diocese's most diverse deaneries, encompassing a wide range of church traditions, communities and social contexts. It includes churches under alternative episcopal oversight, as well as the original Open Table LGBTQIA+ congregation. Housing and community contexts vary significantly across the deanery, from student accommodation and areas of multiple deprivation to more affluent residential neighbourhoods. The deanery includes fifteen churches across nine parishes, with six parishes currently working towards the formation of a new Larger Single Parish under Fit for Mission, while other churches are also exploring revitalisation and fostering closer partnerships.

Knowsley and Sefton

Covering the boroughs of Knowsley, Sefton and West Lancashire, the archdeaconry includes areas of significant urban deprivation, expanding suburban communities, coastal towns, rural villages and agricultural land. Across the archdeaconry there is a strong emphasis on partnership working, civic engagement and community presence. For example, the Archdeacon also chairs the Sefton Faith Forum, facilitated by Sefton CVS, which aims to bring together faith communities from across the borough of Sefton.



The Archdeaconry of Knowsley and Sefton

The Archdeacon of Knowsley and Sefton, Pete Spiers, has served in the role since 2015. The archdeaconry is made up of five deaneries.

Sefton South Deanery includes Bootle, Litherland, Netherton, Seaforth and Waterloo. The deanery contains some of the most economically challenged communities within the Diocese, alongside areas of housing growth and ongoing regeneration, particularly around Bootle town centre. Churches across the deanery are deeply engaged in their local communities and several parishes, together with neighbouring churches in Sefton North, are currently in the “acting as if” stage of Fit for Mission, exploring new models of collaboration and shared leadership.

Sefton North Deanery encompasses Crosby, Blundellsands, Formby, Hightown, Maghull, Melling and Aintree. Predominantly suburban in character, the deanery also includes areas of countryside and coastline, with communities shaped by both commuter life and longstanding local identity. The deanery includes some of the region’s most recognised coastal landscapes, including Crosby Beach.

North Meols Deanery includes Ainsdale, Birkdale and Southport. While often perceived as comparatively affluent, the deanery also contains areas experiencing significant deprivation and social need. The community was profoundly affected by the 2024 attack on a children’s dance class in Southport and the disorder that followed. In the aftermath of these events, churches played an important role in supporting the community, working alongside civic and faith partners in responding to grief, trauma and division. This has included the strengthening of interfaith relationships and the development of new opportunities for community partnership.

Ormskirk Deanery stretches from Aughton and Burscough across to Skelmersdale and Rainford, combining market towns, villages and more urban communities. The deanery includes Edge Hill University, which brings a significant student population and opportunities for engagement with younger generations. Ormskirk Parish Church is in the process of becoming a Resource Church, with a particular focus on mission, discipleship and younger adults within both the town and university community.

Huyton Deanery includes Knowsley Village, Huyton, Roby, Whiston, Kirkby and Prescot. Churches across the deanery have developed strong relationships with local communities, schools and civic partners, with Knowsley Council recognising the significant contribution churches make to local life. The deanery established the Deanery Academy, which provides training and development opportunities for lay leaders and church members across a wide range of areas, reflecting a strong commitment to equipping local leadership and deepening discipleship.

St Helens and Warrington

The Archdeaconry of St Helens & Warrington stretches across the eastern side of the Diocese and comprises the deaneries of Widnes, St Helens, Warrington, Winwick and Wigan. It is a geographically wide and socially diverse archdeaconry, encompassing industrial towns, former mining and manufacturing communities, suburban estates, commuter neighbourhoods, villages and semi-rural areas.



The Archdeaconry of St Helens and Warrington

The Ven. Simon Fisher has served as Archdeacon of St Helens and Warrington since 2020. The archdeaconry is made up of five deaneries.

Winwick Deanery is a geographically broad and varied deanery, encompassing towns, villages and former industrial communities including Newton-le-Willows, Culcheth, Croft, Burtonwood, Lowton, Golborne and Haydock. While parts of the deanery retain a more rural character, it also includes areas facing significant economic and social challenge. Many churches are historic and well-loved within their communities, bringing both opportunities for mission and ongoing pressures associated with maintaining large buildings. Much of the deanery has recently entered the “acting as if” stage of Fit for Mission, with churches beginning to work more collaboratively across parish boundaries.

Warrington Deanery is centred on a large and rapidly growing town with significant demographic change and a substantial commuter population. The deanery includes older industrial neighbourhoods, new-town estates, expanding housing developments and major retail and business areas, alongside communities experiencing both affluence and considerable deprivation. Covering the borough north of the River Mersey, the deanery has recently taken a significant step within Fit for Mission, with twelve churches coming together to form the new Parish of Warrington in 2026.

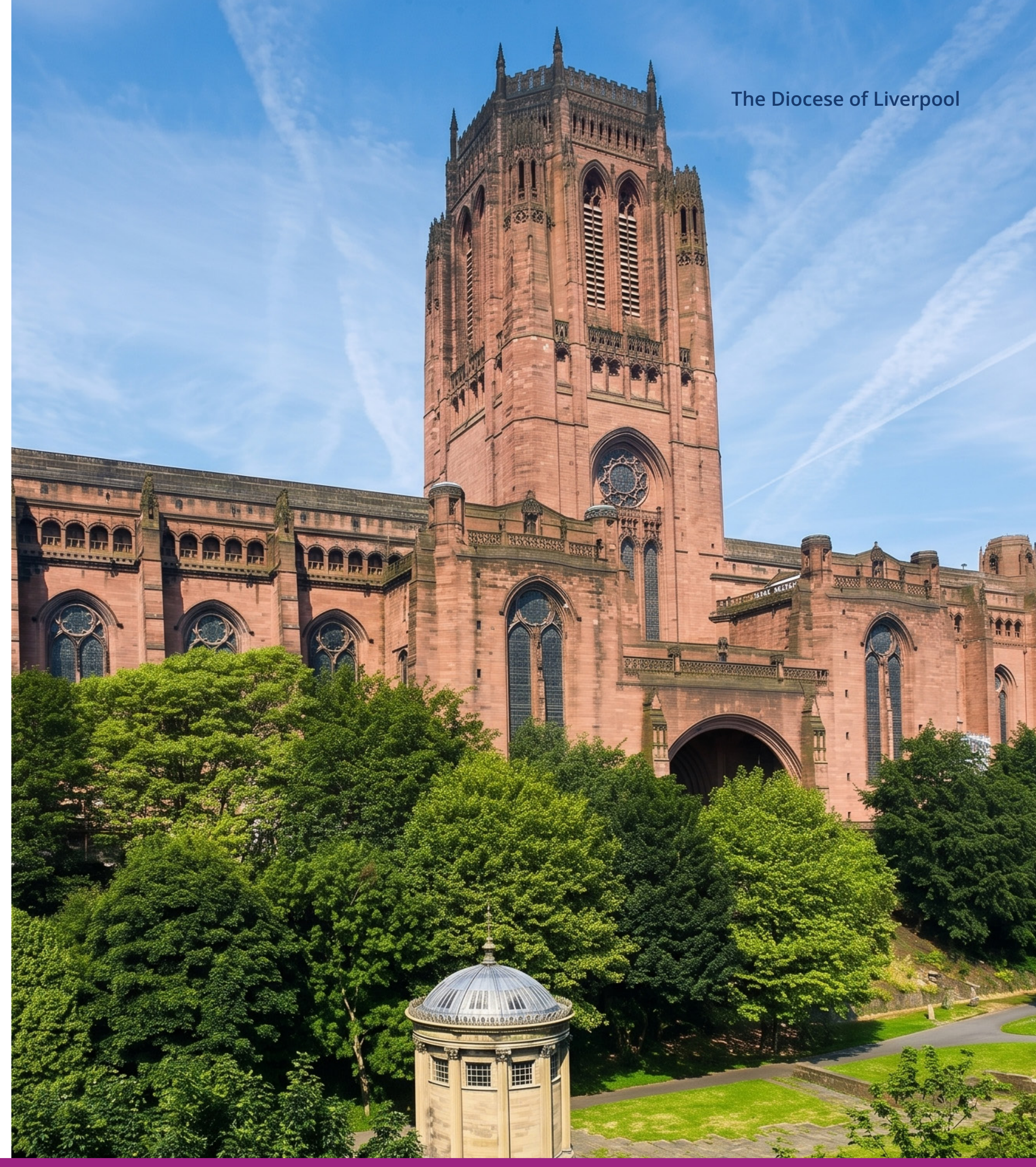
St Helens Deanery was among the first deaneries to pilot the Fit for Mission approach. Church St Helens became one of the Diocese’s earliest Larger Single Parishes, bringing together 11 of its 18 churches around a shared vision for mission and renewal, while the wider deanery also includes several single-parish churches. The town itself has been shaped by industries including glassmaking, coal mining and railways, alongside a strong sporting and civic identity.

Wigan Deanery occupies a distinctive place within the Diocese. As the only substantial part of the Diocese within Greater Manchester, it combines a strong civic identity with deep industrial roots and a long tradition of resilience and community life. The Transforming Wigan programme, established in 2014, became a significant forerunner to the Diocese’s wider Fit for Mission approach. Today, Church Wigan operates as a single team ministry across the deanery and has become an important example of collaborative leadership, church planting and the development of new worshipping communities.

Widnes Deanery is the smallest deanery in the Diocese, comprising six parishes within a compact but distinctive town historically shaped by the chemical industry and its position on the River Mersey crossing into Runcorn. The deanery forms the northern half of the borough of Halton, with Runcorn situated within the Diocese of Chester. Discernment around Fit for Mission has developed differently here than in some neighbouring deaneries, with varying levels of engagement across churches. This has highlighted the importance of locally shaped approaches to collaboration, mission and future sustainability.

Liverpool Cathedral

Liverpool Cathedral is a vibrant place of worship and service, and the mother church of the Diocese. It occupies an iconic place in the city landscape and is one of the most recognisable landmarks in the region.



Last year alone, over
750,000 people visited
Liverpool Cathedral.

Shaped by Six Key Strands

The Cathedral aims to be a place of encounter, and we hope and pray that people will encounter:

Inspiring Christian worship

A safe and generous place in times of joy and sorrow

A breath-taking experience

A dynamic community of staff and volunteers

A community committed to justice and mercy

A God who knows you and loves you

Playing a Vital Role

At its heart is a pattern of worship shaped by daily prayer and a strong choral tradition. Sunday worship reflects a diverse and growing community, including traditional choral services, new worshipping communities, and an established Persian congregation worshipping weekly in Farsi. The Cathedral has a strong ecumenical partnership with the Metropolitan Cathedral at the other end of Hope Street. Thousands of people each year join services held between the two cathedrals.

The Cathedral also plays a vital role in the public life of the city and region, hosting civic services, diocesan gatherings, and national moments of remembrance and celebration. It is both a spiritual home for the Diocese and a place of welcome for the wider community, as well as a major visitor destination and an important part of the region's cultural and tourism life.

Through an extensive cultural and creative programme, the Cathedral creates opportunities for dialogue between faith, art and contemporary society, enabling new audiences to encounter the Christian story in accessible and engaging ways. Its work with schools and young people, including through its musical ministry and Schools Singing Programme, provides pathways for participation and strengthens links between schools, parishes and the Cathedral.

The Cathedral is also committed to serving those on the margins, including through its partnership with Micah Liverpool, reflecting its wider calling to justice, mercy and compassion.

Alongside these strengths, the Cathedral faces significant and ongoing challenges in financial sustainability. Like many cathedrals, it operates with a structural deficit and limited financial resilience and is increasingly vulnerable to rising fixed costs and pressures on staffing. In addition, the Cathedral faces substantial capital and restoration needs, currently estimated in excess of £14 million, placing further strain on already limited reserves.

Education across the Diocese

Our schools are located across all deaneries and span eight local authority areas. The Diocese has a mixed economy of maintained schools and academies, with just under half of our schools now part of academy structures. Nine Multi Academy Trusts operate within the Diocese, all with a clear Church of England rooted ethos, and some including community schools.

A distinctive feature of our educational landscape is the strength of ecumenical partnership. Six schools are held in joint foundation with the Catholic Archdiocese, two with the Methodist Church, and one with the United Reformed Church.

The team works closely with schools to build strong, trusted relationships, offering high-quality and consistent support. A comprehensive programme of training and development is offered, supporting areas such as governance, religious education, Christian distinctiveness and academy conversion.

This work is strengthened through close collaboration with neighbouring Dioceses, including the well-established Christian Leadership Course delivered across the North-West, which equips and inspires current and emerging leaders in Church schools.

The changing educational landscape, including increasing academisation and the complexity of trust structures, continues to reshape how the Diocese relates to and supports its schools. This brings both opportunity and challenge, particularly in sustaining strong relationships, Christian distinctiveness and a shared sense of diocesan identity.

We require leadership that can champion the role of Church schools within our wider mission, while navigating an evolving and increasingly complex system.



The Diocesan Board of Education, oversees a network of 119 schools and academies, serving nearly 35,000 pupils across the Diocese.

This includes 10 secondary schools, with the majority being primary schools, reflecting the Church's presence in local communities. The The Diocesan Board of Education is chaired by the Bishop of Warrington.

The effectiveness of this close collaboration is reflected in outcomes, with 94% of schools judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted.



05. Partnerships and Wider Relationships

The Diocese of Liverpool is shaped by a **strong commitment to partnership**, both within the Church and across the wider civic and voluntary landscape.

Relationships with ecumenical partners, civic institutions, charities and grassroots organisations enable the Diocese to respond more effectively to the needs of the region, speak with a united voice where it matters, and model a hopeful and outward-facing expression of faith.



Churches Together in Merseyside (CTMR)

Brings together Christian leaders from across six denominations in a spirit of trust, mutual support and shared witness.

The Bishop of Liverpool plays a key leadership role within CTMR, working closely with other Church leaders to discern common priorities and to respond collectively to the opportunities and challenges facing the region.

CTMR also provides a framework for shared initiatives and public witness, including joint acts of worship, [coordinated responses to social need](#), and long-standing traditions such as the Pentecost witness. Together, these expressions of unity reflect a deeply rooted ecumenical culture within the Diocese, one that values collaboration over competition and seeks the flourishing of the whole community.

In 2025, forty years after the Faith in the City Report the Church Leaders signed a Manifesto for Hope. The Manifesto brings together church leaders, civic partners and community organisations in a shared commitment to tackling poverty, inequality and injustice across the Liverpool City Region, calling for renewed action, hope and partnership in some of the country's most disadvantaged communities.

[You can read the Manifesto for Hope here.](#)





Liverpool City Region Faith Leaders Network

The Diocese is committed to strong and constructive relationships with faith communities across the region.

Through the Liverpool City Region Faith Leaders Network, Christian leaders work alongside Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh and Baha'i communities in a spirit of partnership, mutual respect and shared civic responsibility.

The network provides a forum for consultation, collaboration and collective action, particularly in response to issues affecting community cohesion, social justice and public life.

These relationships have become an important expression of the Diocese's commitment to peacebuilding, dialogue and the common good across the region.

Liverpool Hope University

A university with a Christian foundation, one of Liverpool Hope's core values is to "take faith seriously, being fully Anglican, fully Catholic, fully ecumenical, fully open to those of all faiths and beliefs."

The Bishop of Liverpool serves as Co-President of Liverpool Hope University alongside the Archbishop of Liverpool, reflecting a strong and distinctive ecumenical partnership in the region.

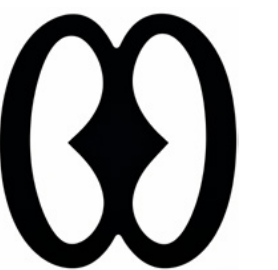


Triangle of Hope

Committed to addressing the legacy and continuing impact of transatlantic slavery through repentance, reconciliation and shared mission.

Triangle of Hope is a long-standing international partnership and covenantal community between the Dioceses of Kumasi (Ghana), Liverpool (UK) and Virginia (USA).

Within the Diocese of Liverpool, this is expressed through a range of initiatives including youth pilgrimages, intentional community living through Tsedaqah House, and ongoing work to deepen understanding of slavery's historic and present-day impact. Together, these form part of a wider commitment to racial justice, truth-telling and reconciliation at both a local and global level.



Good Funeral Company

The Good Funeral Company is a diocesan-supported social enterprise offering distinctive, personal and dignified funerals alongside compassionate bereavement care.

In 2024 and 2025, the organisation supported more than 470 funeral services, alongside a number of annual memorial services serving approximately 1,000 people each year. Working closely with parishes and local communities, it reflects the Diocese's commitment to accompanying people through grief and loss with care, prayer and professionalism, while also engaging those who may otherwise have little or no connection with the Church.

The organisation also supports Liverpool University's body donor programme, offering pastoral care to staff, students and the families of those who donate their bodies to medical science. Through this work, it provides a visible and practical expression of the Church's ministry of presence, remembrance and hope.

Liverpool Diocesan Council for Social Aid (LDCSA)

Support for vulnerable women
through Adelaide House.

Through the Liverpool Diocesan Council for Social Aid (LDCSA), the Diocese also maintains longstanding involvement in restorative justice and support for vulnerable women through Adelaide House, one of only six women's Approved Premises in the country, supporting women leaving prison through resettlement, community reintegration, and practical support.

Micah

Micah Liverpool is a joint social justice initiative of Liverpool Cathedral, Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral and St Bride's Church, working to address poverty and social exclusion across the city region.

Rooted in Christian faith and inspired by Micah 6:8, it combines practical support, including food provision and employability programmes, with advocacy and partnership working. Micah has become an important expression of the Church's civic and ecumenical presence within Liverpool, demonstrating a shared commitment to justice, dignity and serving local communities.

Faiths4Change

Faiths4Change is an independent interfaith environmental charity.

Faiths4Change works across the Liverpool City Region and is supported by the Diocese. Consequently, many churches are engaged with its Eco Church programme and have achieved bronze, silver or gold awards.



Faiths4Change



Together Liverpool

Together Liverpool is a significant partnership bringing together churches, charities and community organisations across the Liverpool City Region to address social need and advocate for justice.

It provides a framework for sustained collaboration, enabling local and regional responses to issues such as poverty, isolation, housing and inequality, while also strengthening the voice of faith communities in the public square.

Through this network, the Diocese is able to work alongside others in a coordinated and strategic way, supporting both grassroots initiatives and wider system-level engagement. Together Liverpool reflects a commitment not only to meeting immediate need, but to addressing underlying causes, fostering long-term change and contributing to the flourishing of communities across the region.

**TOGETHER
LIVERPOOL** ⊕

Network of
Kindness

Together for the Harvest

Together for the Harvest is a network of churches and leaders from across the Liverpool City Region and beyond.

This network works together to encourage evangelism, discipleship, church planting and leadership development. Evangelical in ethos and evangelistic in expression, the network seeks to support churches in sharing the Christian faith confidently and collaboratively within their local communities.



Open Table

Open Table is a nationally recognised worshipping community with roots in Liverpool, born out of the need for inclusion, particularly for LGBTQIA+ Christians and their allies.

Grounded in prayer, worship, hospitality and community, Open Table seeks to provide a space of belonging and spiritual support for those who have not always experienced the Church as welcoming or affirming. Its continued presence within the Diocese reflects the breadth of traditions, experiences and perspectives that shape the common life of the Church in Liverpool.





06. What We Heard

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.”

– 1 John 3:1

These voices paint a picture of a Diocese that is hopeful and rooted whilst navigating change and difference.

Listening to Our Community

We have spent time listening carefully across the Diocese, hearing from people of all ages, backgrounds and church traditions.

What has been shared reflects both a deep commitment to the life of the Church and an honest account of the challenges we face.

There is a strong sense of love for the Church and its place in local communities, and a desire to see it grow, deepen and become more confident. There are clear concerns around trust, the pace and direction of change, and the realities of sustaining ministry in a demanding, complex context. These tensions sit alongside one another, reflecting a Diocese that is engaged, thoughtful and not afraid to speak honestly.

More than 800 people from across the Diocese responded to the public consultation survey. The themes on the next page reflect some of the most consistent priorities, concerns and aspirations.

Over 18 Public Survey Results

Drawn from the responses of more than 550 individuals who took part in the over 18 survey, key words and ideas which appeared frequently in submissions relating to the future life and leadership of the Diocese are highlighted here.

Themes including faith, community, trust, leadership, unity and change appeared regularly throughout the responses, reflecting both the hopes and the tensions present across the Diocese at this time.



(The prominence of particular terms does not indicate complete agreement or a single shared perspective; rather, it highlights the themes most frequently raised by respondents, whether through encouragement, aspiration, concern or personal experience.)

Under 18 Public Survey Results

Drawn from the responses of more than 240 children and young people who took part in the under-18 listening process, key responses included kindness, listening, community, welcome, hope and support featured prominently throughout.

These sat alongside references to fairness, inclusion, faith and young people. Together, the responses reflect a strong desire for a Church that is welcoming, attentive, supportive and rooted in community.



(The prominence of particular terms does not indicate complete agreement or a single shared perspective; rather, it highlights the themes most frequently raised by respondents, whether through encouragement, aspiration, concern or personal experience.)



07. The Bishop We Seek

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free.”

– Luke 4:18

Bishops are called to be stewards of the mystery of God, principal ministers of word and sacrament. (Extract from The Ordinal for Bishops)

We Seek a Bishop Who is..

Humble, honest and trustworthy

Collaborative in leadership and encouraging of others

Visible and relational across the whole Diocese

Approachable, compassionate and pastorally attentive

Committed to justice, inclusion and the dignity of all people

A confident communicator and teacher of the Christian faith

Deeply rooted in prayer, faith and the life of the Gospel

Courageous, resilient and able to lead through complexity

Able to hold together differing traditions and convictions with generosity and wisdom

We seek a Bishop who is hopeful, authentic and grounded in the realities of everyday life across our communities.

We Seek a Bishop Who Will..

Encourage growth in mission,
evangelism and discipleship

Provide visible, relational
and non-anxious leadership

Champion safeguarding, accountability
and healthy culture

Lead the Diocese through change
with clarity, courage and sensitivity

Support clergy, lay leaders and local
churches with care and encouragement

Prioritise children, young people
and emerging generations

Hold together a diverse Diocese
in a spirit of mutual flourishing

Engage confidently in civic, ecumenical
and public life across the region

Rebuild trust and strengthen
relationships across the Diocese

We seek a Bishop who will help the Diocese move forward with renewed confidence, stability and hope.

Ordination of Women

The ministry of women is warmly accepted across much of the Diocese. There are broadly equal numbers of women and men being ordained, and more women than men commissioned as Local Missional Leaders. We are seeing women emerge as leaders of our larger churches.

At the same time, we recognise a diversity of theological conviction on this matter. Seven parishes have requested arrangements under the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests: five receive episcopal oversight from the Bishop of Beverley and two from the Bishop of Ebbsfleet. These parishes continue to play a full part in the life of the Diocese.

We would wish to continue to have a diocesan bishop who ordains both women and men to all orders of ministry.

Bishops are called to be stewards of the mystery of God, principal ministers of word and sacrament. (Extract from The Ordinal for Bishops)

We are committed to
enabling all to flourish.

We are committed to sustaining a generous and respectful culture in which those of differing convictions can remain within the diocesan family. This requires ongoing attention, sensitivity, and trust.



08. Conclusion

Entering Our Next Season

The Diocese of Liverpool enters this next season with honesty about the challenges we face, but with deep hope in the faithfulness of God and the calling that continues to shape our common life.

We know ourselves to be imperfect, still learning, and still being shaped by the opportunities and tensions of this moment. Yet across our churches, schools and communities there remains a deep commitment to the Gospel, a love for this place and its people, and a longing to see lives transformed through the hope of Christ.

We are conscious that the next Bishop of Liverpool will join a Diocese marked both by diversity and affection for the communities we serve.

We seek a Bishop who will help us grow in faith, confidence and generosity; who will encourage us in mission, strengthen trust and relationships, and help us hold together with grace across difference.

Above all, we pray for a Bishop who will love this Diocese well and lead us faithfully in the way of Christ; someone who will walk alongside us with humility and courage, and help us to move forward together with renewed trust, compassion and hope for the future.

Loving Father,

by your grace,
we long to see more people knowing Jesus,
and more justice in your world.
Help us to live as your disciples
in the power of the Spirit
and to work to your praise and glory.

Amen.

2026

Statement of Needs



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