

DIOCESAN CHURCH BUILDINGS STRATEGY

*A progress report by the
Church Building Strategy Group*

Diocesan Synod
November 2025

What is the Church Buildings Strategy Group for?

The purpose of the Group is to:

- Understand the long-term sustainability of our church buildings
- Make recommendations to increase the effectiveness of the support offered to the clergy and PCCs caring for these buildings

How have we approached that?

The Group's work began by looking at the following questions:

- What are the factors which make churches unsustainable?
- How common are they in Coventry Diocese?
- What are we already doing to support PCCs with their church buildings and what more could we potentially do to help?
- How can we most effectively use the resources we have?
- How do we support churches discussing the possibility of closure?

How have we approached that?

To answer those questions, we:

- Carried out research with two deaneries in this diocese and reviewed work done nationally
- Created a framework which used data we already had to look at sustainability
 - Condition of each building; Number of individuals holding PCC roles; average attendance; and estimated average age of congregation
- Held meetings with people from each deanery, where one of the questions was whether the picture the figures painted was accurate.

Picture in Coventry Diocese

The outcome of that work was:

- The picture of the sustainability of churches was fair
- Some adjustments were made by the deaneries, largely to say some churches were more vulnerable than the data suggested
- After those conversations:
 - 12 churches at 'significant risk' of closure were identified
 - A further 30 churches were identified as particularly struggling
- Closing church buildings has a negative financial impact on the DBF.

Themes from conversations with Deaneries

With the deaneries we also discussed two other questions:

- What are the challenges the churches here are experiencing?
- What initiatives would make a positive difference?

The overall themes were:

- Volunteer and governance challenges are widespread
- Administration is a burden
- The financial cost of repairs and major projects is steep
- Early intervention for churches not yet in crisis could be helpful

How are we responding?

- Appointment of Church Buildings Support Officer funded by the national church
- Proposal for a Major Projects Officer in 2026
- Further initiatives being developed
- Guidance for churches considering closure (draft)

Any questions?