LOCAL MISSION PLAN

Basingstoke Pastoral Area

Emerging Parish of Our Lady, Queen of Peace

Version 2.0 September 2026

"Take heart. Get up. He is calling you." Mark 10:49

Mission Plan Development

Context

Much has changed since our previous Local Mission Plan. The Basingstoke Pastoral Area is moving from four canonical parishes towards one parish serving the five church communities of St Bede's, St Joseph's, St Michael's, Sacred Heart and St Oswald's.

Our direction remains rooted in the Diocese of Portsmouth Mission Plan, You Will Be My Witnesses, and its purpose of bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church. It asks us to become a Christ-centred Church, missionary communities and prudent stewards of Christ's Church.

Locally, we have increasingly asked a deeper question than how to amalgamate parishes: what kind of parish is Christ calling us to become?

The story of Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46-52 has become our Guiding Star. Bartimaeus hears Jesus passing by. He cries out. The crowd first tries to silence him and then, when Jesus calls, becomes the very people who encourage him: "Take heart. Get up. He is calling you." Bartimaeus throws aside his cloak, comes to Jesus, receives new sight and follows Him on the way.

As one parish, we answer Christ's call with openness and trust, helping one another encounter Him, letting go of what holds us back, receiving His healing and new sight, and following Jesus together as missionary disciples.

The cloak has become a useful image for us. It can represent fear, habit, comfort, old structures or simply the way things have always been done. Renewal is not about discarding our inheritance. It is about discerning what should be treasured, what should be renewed and what may now need to be laid aside.

Alongside Bartimaeus we have developed **B.E.C.O.M.E.**, a simple acronym for the journey from spiritual curiosity towards missionary discipleship: **B**elong in Community, **E**ncounter Christ, **C**ommit to Growth, **O**ngoing Renewal, **M**issionary Led and **E**vangelising Witness. It gives us a simple pastoral question: what is the next step for this person?

Our communications work expresses the same journey practically as Street, Door, Home, Sent. People first see something of parish life, find a door which is easy to enter, become known and cared for, and eventually discover how they themselves are called to serve and witness.

Our renewal also draws on Divine Renovation, particularly its emphasis on dependence on the Holy Spirit, the primacy of evangelisation and the best of leadership. We do not see this as a separate programme, but as one useful source of learning as we develop our own local response to You Will Be My Witnesses.

The Missional Prayer is now used regularly at Mass. This is a simple but important sign that renewal and mission are becoming part of our common prayer, rather than remaining the work of a leadership group.

The Leadership Team has begun turning this vision into practical action through a staged set of priorities: what we need to do now, what follows over the next 6 to 12 months, and what we hope to have in place within 12 to 24 months. Evangelisation, volunteering and communications are the areas where planning is furthest advanced. Governance and amalgamation are progressing. Finance, property, pastoral care, liturgy and youth ministry require further development.

There are already encouraging signs across the emerging parish. When leaders from different church communities work together, there is often a noticeable energy and sense of possibility. The emerging parish is beginning to feel less like an administrative exercise and more like a family learning to walk together.

For now we are using a temporary Our Lady, Queen of Peace emblem to give the emerging parish a shared identity. This is not intended to be the final word. We will continue to develop the parish iconography and will invite parishioners and our schools to take part in a further vote.

The forthcoming parish-wide consultation will be important. Every community will be heard as part of that process, and we need to listen carefully before making significant long-term decisions, particularly about pastoral provision and property. This plan therefore sets out

where we genuinely are, the direction already agreed and the next steps we can presently see.

1.1 Uplifting and devotional liturgy through music and prayer

Where we are now

Our five church communities bring a rich variety of liturgical and prayer traditions. We have different choirs and music styles, children's liturgy, Eucharistic Adoration, Rosary, Reconciliation and established prayer groups. The Missional Prayer is used regularly at Mass across the Pastoral Area, giving our communities a shared prayer for renewal and mission.

The Eucharist remains at the heart of parish life, but there is variation between our communities in music, hospitality, participation and the experience of newcomers. Becoming one parish gives us an opportunity to learn from one another without losing the character of each church.

What we plan to do

Over the next two years we will use the diocesan maturity work to look honestly at liturgy, prayer, preaching, music and welcome across our churches. Our first task is to identify what is already particularly life-giving in each community and share that learning.

We want existing opportunities for prayer to be easier to discover, and we want people who are new, returning or unfamiliar with the Mass to feel able to participate. As the parish develops, we will strengthen formation for liturgical ministries and deepen the connection between worship and mission. The aim is not uniformity. It is a parish in which worship increasingly helps people encounter Christ and follow Him.

Resources and support required

We would welcome continuing diocesan support for liturgical formation and for the development of readers, extraordinary ministers, musicians and welcomers. We do not yet have a complete parish-wide liturgy and prayer strategy, and the maturity matrices give us a useful starting point for developing one.

1.2 Ongoing formation in faith for all, both clergy and lay

Where we are now

Formation has developed considerably. Alpha has become one of the clearest ways in which people can encounter Christ, ask questions and begin or renew a journey of faith. RCIA continues. First Holy Communion and Confirmation bring us into contact with many families. Baptism preparation for parents is another important point of contact and has led some adults to explore RCIA. Adult formation and Called & Gifted have also played an important part.

The challenge is increasingly what happens next. Too often somebody completes a course or receives a Sacrament and is then left to work out the next stage alone. B.E.C.O.M.E. is helping us think differently. Formation is not a collection of programmes. It is a lifelong journey of belonging, encounter, growth, renewal, service and witness.

What we plan to do

We will develop B.E.C.O.M.E. into a clearer parish pathway. In the near term that means improving follow-up after Alpha and identifying the obvious gaps between existing ministries and formation opportunities.

Over the following year we want stronger post-Alpha pathways, renewed use of Called & Gifted, better catechist formation and clearer ways for sacramental families, newcomers and returning Catholics to continue their journey. Our longer-term aim is a parish in which Alpha, RCIA, small groups, prayer, sacramental life, volunteering and leadership increasingly connect with one another, and in which mature disciples begin accompanying others.

Resources and support required

ChurchSuite is important to this. We want to use it not simply as an administrative database, but as a pastoral tool which helps us support someone moving from spiritual curiosity towards missionary discipleship. Relationships, prayer, discernment and the work of the Holy Spirit remain central; the system should simply help us ensure that people are known, followed up appropriately and offered a meaningful next step.

We therefore ask the Diocese for encouragement, practical support and sufficient freedom to configure ChurchSuite around our B.E.C.O.M.E. pathways while fully respecting safeguarding, data protection and diocesan governance. If there is understandable caution about this degree of local adaptation, we would be willing for Our Lady, Queen of Peace to act as a supervised pilot parish, working within agreed boundaries and sharing the learning with the wider Diocese.

1.3 Locally-led evangelisation

Where we are now

Evangelisation is one of the most developed areas of our renewal. Alpha is operating at St Joseph's and St Bede's, and we are increasingly recognising that evangelisation cannot simply belong to an evangelisation team. We want personal invitation to become part of normal parish culture.

Testimony is also becoming more important. People are often moved more deeply by hearing what Jesus has done in another person's life than by hearing an explanation of a programme. Our current planning makes an important connection between Alpha, volunteering and leadership: people who encounter Christ should increasingly be helped to discover how they themselves are called to serve and witness.

What we plan to do

We will continue Alpha at St Joseph's and St Bede's and work towards a third location. Over the next year we intend to strengthen the parish-wide evangelisation team, use testimony more deliberately, develop the 16+ group and explore accessible ways of reaching people who are not regular churchgoers.

Over the following two years we want a regular Alpha rhythm across the parish which produces not simply participants, but disciples, volunteers and new leaders. We will continue to lean into Divine Renovation learning where it helps us deepen a culture of prayer, evangelisation and leadership.

Resources and support required

We would welcome continued diocesan support for evangelisation and the wider aims of You Will Be My Witnesses. Alpha, Divine Renovation learning, our communications work and ChurchSuite will support the local pathways and follow-up.

2.1 Leadership focused on mission and service

Where we are now

The Leadership Team has become an important part of the renewal journey. Its work has gradually moved from discussing amalgamation and individual projects towards discerning the kind of parish we are trying to become.

The adoption of Bartimaeus as our Guiding Star was significant because it gives us a shared spiritual reference point. The formation of the new Parish Pastoral Council is another

important step. Our own experience is also showing that collaboration itself can bear fruit. When leaders from different churches work together, relationships grow and people discover gifts and experience in another community which can help their own.

What we plan to do

Our immediate priority is to establish the PPC in accordance with diocesan requirements.

Beyond that, we want to create a broader leadership culture. Alpha, Called & Gifted and volunteering should increasingly become places where new leaders are discovered and supported. Our aim is not simply to fill positions. It is to form servant leaders who help others hear and respond to Christ's call.

Resources and support required

We would welcome diocesan support with governance and leadership formation. We will also continue to draw directly on the leadership learning available through Divine Renovation and other proven sources.

2.2 Our young Church nurtured and inspired

Where we are now

Large numbers of children and young people are connected with our churches through our Catholic schools, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, altar serving, music and other activities. The weakness remains what happens afterwards. Too many young people experience sacramental preparation as a finishing point rather than another stage in discipleship.

Our current priorities include a 16+ group and, over time, a thriving Basingstoke Youth Ministry as one of the fruits we hope to see.

What we plan to do

Our first task is to listen more carefully to young people themselves. We will begin forming the 16+ community and create more opportunities for young people to participate in real parish life through music, storytelling, volunteering, outreach and leadership.

Over time we want clearer pathways beyond First Holy Communion and Confirmation and stronger relationships between parish, schools and families. Our longer-term hope is a recognisable youth ministry across the new parish, moving gradually from ministry provided for young people towards mission increasingly shaped with them.

Resources and support required

We will need youth ministry leadership, strong school and chaplaincy collaboration, adult volunteers and appropriate safeguarding support. This remains an area where our local strategy needs further development.

2.3 Church beyond walls

Where we are now

There is already considerable service beyond our church buildings. Parishioners support CAFOD, Caritas, SVP, food banks, vulnerable people, the sick and housebound, bereavement work, ecumenical initiatives and other forms of outreach.

The difficulty is that much of this good work remains disconnected and sometimes almost invisible. One church may know relatively little about what another is doing. Someone willing to help may simply not know where to begin.

What we plan to do

The developing Volunteer Hub will help us understand the activity already taking place and connect people more easily with opportunities to serve. Over the next year we will map this activity, strengthen links with OneChurchBasingstoke and other partners, and identify particular local needs where the new parish might make a sustained difference.

We also want service to become more accessible to young people and families, and to develop a clearer parish response to Laudato Si' and care for our common home.

Resources and support required

We will continue to draw on Caritas, CAFOD, SVP, ecumenical partners and the experience already present within our own communities. The parish volunteering strategy will help connect outreach, safeguarding, communications and opportunities to serve.

3.1 Reshaped structures

Where we are now

We are moving towards becoming one canonical parish serving five church communities. The emerging name Our Lady, Queen of Peace is beginning to give that parish a shared identity.

The purpose of amalgamation is not simply administrative efficiency. You Will Be My Witnesses is clear that structures should release people and resources for mission. There are already signs of what might become possible: leaders from different communities are working together more often, relationships are growing across previous parish boundaries, and a sense of shared ownership is beginning to emerge.

What we plan to do

The next major step is the parish-wide consultation. We want every church community to be heard before significant long-term decisions are made. The consultation will help inform pastoral structures, worship provision and future thinking about property.

Alongside this we will continue the canonical process, establish the PPC and begin aligning records, safeguarding and essential parish processes. The goal is not to make all five churches identical. It is to become one parish with strong local communities and a shared mission.

Resources and support required

We will need continuing diocesan support with the canonical process, governance, finance, property, HR and safeguarding.

3.2 Prudent stewardship of our resources

Where we are now

Stewardship is about more than finance. It includes the time, gifts, charisms and experience of our people, alongside giving and the resources entrusted to the parish.

It is the combination of generous giving, flourishing volunteers and wise management of our resources that will enable us to sustain mission and provide for the long-term needs of the emerging parish.

Parishioners are not simply recipients of the Mission Plan. Through their gifts, volunteering, service and generosity, they are active participants in shaping and carrying forward our shared mission. Good communication and listening across all five church communities will help people feel heard, valued and encouraged to take part.

Volunteering is one of the areas where we now have a clear strategy. The Volunteering Development Plan 2026-2030 begins by understanding and valuing what already exists. There is a great deal of volunteering, but it is mostly organised locally, roles are not fully mapped and recruitment can be reactive. Financial planning is less developed and still needs to mature alongside the emerging parish.

What we plan to do

During 2026 and 2027 we will map volunteers and ministries across all five churches, identify local contacts, improve communication and build a parish-wide volunteer network. The following stage will focus on recruitment, training and greater involvement of young people and families.

By 2029 and 2030 the aim is a collaborative culture in which volunteers share skills across the parish, are properly supported and safeguarded, and are genuinely valued. Called & Gifted and B.E.C.O.M.E. should increasingly connect discipleship with service.

Alongside this, we need to develop a single parish budget, better forecasting, longer-term financial planning and a clearer understanding of how our giving and resources support mission.

The aim is to bring people, generosity and resources together so that we can sustain mission now and build a healthy foundation for the future.

Resources and support required

The Volunteer Hub will require good ChurchSuite support, safeguarding advice and close collaboration with existing ministries. The Finance Committee will need appropriate diocesan support as the parish moves towards a single financial picture.

3.3 Investing for the future

Where we are now

The emerging parish has inherited a substantial estate of churches, halls, presbyteries and other property. We know that an estate strategy will be needed, but we do not believe major strategic conclusions about individual churches or other property should be reached before the parish-wide consultation.

The future role of each community should be considered fairly and in the round, taking account of mission, pastoral need, participation, growth potential, finances and the wider needs of the emerging parish.

Investing for the future also means investing in people and systems. Our communications work is already developing around the journey from Street to Door to Home to Sent, with the parish website as an accessible front door and ChurchSuite supporting belonging, formation, volunteering and service.

What we plan to do

We will complete the parish-wide consultation before developing the long-term estate strategy. At the same time, we will continue developing one parish communications identity, one parish website, one calendar and a more connected communications platform.

ChurchSuite will increasingly support real pastoral pathways around Alpha, newcomers, volunteers, sacramental families, small groups and ministries. We want significant moments such as Baptism, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, weddings and funerals to become possible beginnings of a deeper relationship with the parish rather than isolated transactions.

Our longer-term investment decisions, whether in buildings, people or technology, should increasingly be tested against one question: does this help us bring people closer to Jesus Christ and support them in following Him?

Resources and support required

We will need diocesan support with estates, finance and ChurchSuite implementation. In ChurchSuite particularly, we hope for enough local freedom to explore how the diocesan platform can support B.E.C.O.M.E. and the actual pastoral journey. If helpful, we are willing to act as a supervised pilot and share the learning with the wider Diocese.

How we will know whether we are making progress

We do not want to measure parish renewal simply by activity. The maturity matrices will help us look at culture as well as programmes, while our staged priorities give us practical milestones. At parish level we propose keeping the scorecard deliberately small.

Fruit	**What we will watch**
Encounter with Christ	Alpha, RCIA and testimony
Growing worshipping community	Sunday Mass attendance
Continuing discipleship	B.E.C.O.M.E. next steps
Young Church	Participation beyond sacramental programmes
Gifts released for mission	Volunteers and emerging leaders
Becoming one parish	Cross-church teams and initiatives
Church beyond walls	Outreach participation and local impact
Sustainable mission	Giving, budgets and investment in mission
People are not lost	Newcomer, Alpha, sacramental and volunteer follow-up

Numbers matter, but they are not the whole story. Some of the most important fruit may be a person returning to Mass, a young person beginning to pray, an Alpha guest choosing to follow Christ, a volunteer discovering a gift they did not know they had, or one church community helping another to flourish.

Our next step

This Local Mission Plan is intended to remain a living pastoral plan. The parish-wide consultation will help us listen and discern. Our agreed priorities will help us act. The scorecard and maturity matrices will help us learn. B.E.C.O.M.E. will keep our attention on the journey of each person.

And Bartimaeus will keep bringing us back to Jesus.

Someone is sitting by the roadside. Christ is passing. The crowd can silence them or encourage them. Jesus calls. The cloak is thrown aside. New sight is given. And the journey continues.

“Take heart. Get up. He is calling you.”