

# Revitalising Redditch

## A proposed new mission area partnership for the churches of Redditch and the surrounding villages

### Initial Local Discussions - Summary

Over the past year, retired Archdeacon Andy Piggott, together with Paul Lawlor (Area Dean) and Kashmir Garton (Deanery Lay Chair), met with representatives from all the Redditch churches in a wide-ranging consultation on how to make churches across the wider Redditch area healthy and sustainable. The following points were consistently raised:



- smaller and often elderly congregations are unable to offer a wide range of activities
- post Covid weariness is a real issue, impacting volunteers especially
- few children and young people in most churches
- no shared vision across the area for growth, discipleship or evangelism
- little understanding of life in other churches, though people are aware that they meet different needs and could have different specialisms
- while different traditions are valued, they do bring complexity
- current teams are not working well or adding value – a larger grouping could be more effective
- a Redditch-wide approach is needed to reach the 98% who don't go to any church, and to reach areas of new housing
- the local church is vital, but a central hub for organisation might help local churches to flourish
- change is needed – maintaining the status quo is not an option

### Emerging Proposal

Following on from this, ideas are emerging for a new **mission area**. This would group parishes from across Redditch together:

- to better serve the greater Redditch community
- to enable churches to grow in health and sustainability,
- to help each local church to discover its vocation afresh and fulfil its calling across a rich and diverse range of traditions
- to share people and financial resources and work together collaboratively, including eventually in allocating Ministry Share
- to explore partnering for mission and community outreach with other denominations and organisations
- to enable clergy to specialise in ways that make best use of their gifts, overseeing and supporting ministry across the mission area, whilst still having special responsibility for one or more churches
- to facilitate a 'mixed ecology' of congregations, with at least one new congregation forming for young adults and their families in St Stephen's, and other Fresh Expressions in due course
- **to pray for the revitalisation of Redditch**

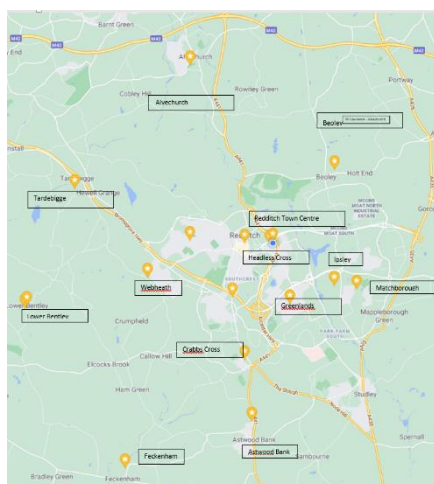


## Structure and Governance

The mission area would initially be launched by a Bishop's Mission Order (BMO), which would give special permission for a period in which new ideas can be tried before formal consultations on pastoral schemes take place. This could begin as early as Easter 2022 if parishes are willing to engage with a degree of flexibility, trust and faith.

The following churches to be included:

- St Stephen, Redditch (central hub/minster/resourcing base)
- St Leonard, Beoley
- St Philip, Webheath
- St Bartholomew, Tardebigge with St Mary's, Lower Bentley
- St Laurence, Alvechurch
- St Peter, Ipsley
- Christchurch, Matchborough
- St John, Greenlands
- St Matthias & St George, Astwood Bank
- The Bridge (at St Luke's), Headless Cross
- St Peter, Crabbs Cross
- St John the Baptist Feckenham



Clergy and other ministers in the mission area to be:

- Richard Clark
- Ian Evans (SSM part/time)
- Paul Lawlor (as Area Dean, being Mission Area Leader)
- Garth Nathaniel
- Glenn Reading
- Gail Rogers
- Curates Victoria Barlow and Francis Moloney (until 2022/23)
- Pioneer Curate Sarah Hewitt (from 2022)
- Retired clergy Paul Taylor and David Lingwood serving St Peter's, and Barbara Wheatley continuing as a training resource
- Community Missioner Matchborough
- Readers/LLMs and ALMs

There will be a strong emphasis on training and equipping lay people for shared leadership roles.

## Next Steps

Archdeacon Nikki, Paul and Kashmir are meeting with all DCCs or PCCS over the coming weeks to share the vision for **Revitalising Redditch** and take questions and comments. In early 2022 some open meetings will be held to consult more widely across the congregations, to which everyone will be invited. We really want to hear your thoughts and ideas on this emerging way forward, and ask that you would pray for wisdom and grace as we discern how to best grow as kingdom people in healthy and sustainable churches, sharing hope and transforming the community of Redditch as we worship God and make disciples.

Nikki Groarke, Paul Lawlor and Kashmir Garton

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