

Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane



**Review of
Diocesan Policy and Action Plan
January 2012**



Next Review: January 2015

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Introduction by the Bishop

Over the past three years, we have been on a journey in mission and growth. Casting the Net has become the way in which we speak about that journey and the movement which shapes it.

When the first Policy and Action Plan for Casting the Net was approved by Diocesan Synod in September 2008, we were committing ourselves to the hope that we might move from decline to growth. At the start, a commitment of this kind is always aspirational. It was born out of the Diocesan Review which identified among our clergy and people concern about the present state of our church and hope for its future. During those three years we have learned much about what we need to do in order to begin to turn that hope into a reality. It has not always been easy. But we have also found that, as we attempt to respond faithfully to the challenges, God leads us, teaches us and nurtures us; people grow and change; unlooked-for resources become available.

We have been greatly encouraged to see other dioceses undertaking similar initiatives under the leadership of their bishops. *The Whole Church Mission and Ministry Policy*, which was approved by General Synod in 2011, recognises this strong movement within the life of the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC). The focus of missional energy in the SEC is now in the dioceses and their congregations. It becomes the task of the church on a provincial level to bring coherence and focus to those diocesan movements and to support them.

The choice of the 'Casting the Net' story of the miraculous catch of fish from John 21 has helped to root us scripturally and to remind us that our primary task is not the organisation of the church but the call to be disciples who respond to Jesus. The story is full of patterns and values which remind us of that calling. The disciples have been working hard all night but without result. They have been faithful to their task. Jesus does not announce his presence. In their tiredness, the disciples have to decide whether or not to respond to his suggestion that they should fish on the other side of the boat. When they obey, they find themselves caught up in a miracle of grace. The net has done its task of almost randomly, indiscriminately and generously drawing in the fish. It is then – in retrospect – that they recognise the presence of Jesus among them.

Our congregations are sustained by the faithfulness and constancy of people and their clergy. In a secular society which is characterised by indifference to the church and what it stands for, our congregations are, in a way which is characteristic of the Scottish Episcopal Church, both tenacious and precarious. There are many things which we might wish for – but the Diocesan Review identified this vision of the kind of church which we would like to become:

'Our Diocese comprises a thriving group of hopeful, caring and committed congregations whose shared life, worship and effective engagement with people and issues in their communities attracts growing numbers of people from diverse backgrounds to share the values and work of our Church.'

In this revision of the Casting the Net Policy and Action Plan, we shall set out what we believe are the next stages of the journey. Two aspects remain central to this:

The Nine Marks of Mission

At an early stage, we decided to use the Nine Marks of Mission as a guide or reference point through which we could see more clearly the life of the Diocese and our congregations. The Anglican Communion has adopted Five Marks of Mission. We felt that, as a resource for missional development, the Nine Marks provided a more focused way of looking at every aspect of congregational life. This is not a 'tick-in-the-box' exercise – each of the Nine Marks of Mission invites exploration, discussion and prayer.

In the Mission Action Planning process, which is central to the work of our Congregational Development Group, we have found that the Nine Marks of Mission provide a way in which members of a congregation can be involved in talking together hopefully and positively about the future life of their congregation, having what we call 'holy conversations'. It broadens the agenda so that we talk, not just about the challenges which face our church, but about the opportunities and possibilities which open up for us in the context in which we live.

We have also explored other ways in which the Nine Marks of Mission can challenge and shape our life. In each year, we have identified one of the Nine Marks and used it as a theme which runs through many aspects of our life. The forthcoming revision of our website will focus on the Nine Marks in a new and exciting way.

In short, the Nine Marks have become a set of values for us. They are the language through which we talk about mission in Diocese and congregations. They help us to see this as a journey of faith – we find ourselves increasingly speaking of vocation. They ensure that we do not begin to over-emphasise function and process.

Holistic Vision

Casting the Net recognises that the movement from decline to growth will involve every aspect of the life of our congregations. There is no single 'big idea' – other than that of faithfulness to the call of Christ. Nor is there a desire to promote a 'one size fits all' vision of congregational life.

As we have moved forwards, we have become ever more convinced that much of the creative energy is to be found at the points at which various aspects of the work inter-connect. The Coordinating Group has from the beginning been there to ensure that Casting the Net does not become a number of un-related projects – rather that the whole is more than the sum of the parts. The Coordinating Group is the meeting place for our six Policy and Action Groups. Each group will set out later in this document what has been achieved and the next challenges along the way.

This is a brief statement of the purpose of each of the Policy and Action Groups:

The **Congregational Development Group** has developed the work of Mission Action Planning and seeks to embed the Nine Marks of Mission in all congregations across the Diocese. Congregations together prayerfully shape a new future in mission and call on the resources of their people and the Diocese to respond. Casting the Net Liaison Officers in each church have become a thoughtful and energising network, passionate about mission.

The **Ministry and Education Group** seeks to respond to the desire of people to 'learn more about their faith'. That process of learning itself engenders faith and a desire to serve in ministry of all kinds – the Group intends to provide training for a wide variety of lay ministries

The **Children, Parents and Young People Group** recognises that every age group should be represented in a healthy congregation and looks at how we can encourage children and young people to be active members of our congregations

The **Clergy Development Group** recognises that, in a period of change and challenge, the capacity of clergy to provide leadership for their congregations is vitally important.

The **Charges and Groupings Group** invites us to look strategically at the way in which our congregations are distributed across the diocese and at the way in which our clergy resources are deployed.

The **Administration Group** represents our view that administration of the highest quality is vitally important to the life of the church

In the life of our Diocese, we have also been determined to prioritise mission. When our Standing Committee meets, issues of mission and the development of Casting the Net take priority on the agenda. It would be hard to over-emphasise the positive impact which the experience of being part of Casting the Net has had on the lives and the faith of many of our clergy and lay people. As well as those who have been involved in the Policy and Action Groups, there are many who have fulfilled vitally important ministry roles as Casting the Net Liaison Officers in their congregations and as facilitators. For many this has been a transformative experience and our diocese is enriched by the presence of deeply-committed lay people at every level.

In this initial overview of Casting the Net, there is one further 'piece of the picture' which should be mentioned. It has become clear during the past few years that the Scottish Episcopal Church is itself a church in transition. In its recent history, the SEC's 'minority status' offered a form of stability – we knew where we were. But the picture is changing and the SEC is becoming more 'mainstream'. Our clergy are finding that their ministry can be exercised on a wider basis – clergy and congregations are welcoming the opportunity of becoming involved in partnership and sharing in ministry with other denominations. Those changes themselves involve the need for our church to become less pre-occupied with itself and, in partnership with others, to engage in mission and service to the whole community. Changes of that kind happen slowly and often are more obvious in retrospect than they are at the time. But Casting the Net provides a narrative – a way of thinking – for a church which seeks to engage with its surroundings in mission and in service.

+David

January 2012

Aims 2012 – 2015

Our experience in the last three years enables us to start 2012 with a clear agenda, which will be coordinated and supported by the new Casting the Net (CTN) Coordinator. This includes a stronger and more focused programme of events, better communication throughout the Casting the Net network and the proactive sharing of resources across dioceses.

The Coordinating Group has agreed a set of common aims for the work of the Diocese in the next three years, which will shape the work of each Policy and Action Group:

- Working creatively and supportively to develop mission-shaped communities of faith
- Education, training and support to build confidence and encourage growth
- Building dynamic and loving relationships through which we share our faith and serve others

These three aims are central to our journey in the next three years towards becoming 'a thriving group of hopeful, caring and committed congregations'.

Coordinating Group Members

Bishop David

Dr Karen Gaskell

Convenor: Congregational Development Group

Revd Anne Haselhurst

Convenor: Children, Parents and Young People Group

Revd Andrew Frearson

Convenor: Mission and Education Group

Revd Paddy Allen

Convenor: Clergy Development Group

Very Revd Kenny Rathband

Convenor: Charges and Groupings Group

Dr John Ferguson-Smith

Convenor: Administration Group

Ms Caroline King

CTN Coordinator

Mrs Sue White

Children, Parents and Young People Officer

Congregational Development Group

What were we going to do?

Central to the vision for the Diocese to focus on 'mission and growth' was the realisation that congregations need to be supported if they are to face outwards in mission. This support would be vital if we were to 'grow communities of faith' that could thrive on a sustained basis. To do this, we needed to develop a clear process that would help congregations recognise mission as their organizing principle, the centre of all they do and their reason for being.

How is it flowing?

The Congregational Development Group reviewed mission planning activities in the Anglican Communion around the world. We adapted their work to create our own Mission Action Planning (MAP) process, in the context of our (generally) small town and rural churches.

Our Mission Action Planning process was developed with the help of four pilot congregations. We trained an enthusiastic and committed group of facilitators to take the process across the Diocese. Pairs of facilitators (lay and clergy) work with a congregation. They are supported by the Convenor and Casting the Net Coordinator to ensure that the Mission Action Planning process in each congregation is responsive to the needs and life of that congregation. As envisaged in the Diocesan Policy and Action Plan, it is a strategic planning process in a spiritual context that is underpinned by 'holy conversations'.

Alongside this, communications and networking opportunities have been created for all congregations in the Diocese. We seek to embed the Casting the Net mission ethos and the Nine Marks of Mission as principles to help our churches become healthy and thriving.

What have we learned?

Through this process we have seen a growing hunger for spiritual nurture and a desire to discuss questions of faith in today's society. We have been able to clarify our message that 'mission' is about being sent by God to proclaim the Gospel; that we are inspired and supported in this by the Holy Spirit; that when we understand mission in this way we are able to create sustainable relationships that bring people to God and transform lives.

It has become clear that there is a need to create space for congregations to discuss matters of faith among themselves, so that they can confidently go out and share their faith. Developing the Mission Action Plans has allowed this and created a common sense of purpose for the congregation.

We have recognised that Casting the Net is about 'growth' in four dimensions:

- Up to God
- Together as a congregation
- Out into the community
- In numbers.

We have seen such growth in our congregations:

- Facilitators developing new skills and providing new capacity for our congregations
- Members of congregations who are energised with new ideas for Actions in Mission and who want to meet with others to discuss mission and its possibilities
- Clergy who are becoming confident leaders who can develop spiritual nurture in their congregations and encourage creative change
- New members joining our churches.

However, we also know that some churches still say 'we are not doing Casting the Net' and that the confusion between the specific process of Mission Action Planning and the wider ethos of Casting the Net as our vision for mission and growth is still misunderstood. We have stalwart Casting the Net Liaison Officers who struggle to convey the message that Casting the Net is central to our 'being' as a church and they need more support. This requires cultural change and is a long-term activity. Our objectives for the coming years are the next steps on the journey to grow faith communities. We are seeking to nurture people to deepen their knowledge of God, have confidence to share their faith about the Good News of Jesus Christ and in doing so transform lives in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Achievements 2008-2011

- Casting the Net launch services held in every congregation in Pentecost 2009
- Four churches completed Mission Action Planning pilots
- Processes, documents and key messages for Mission Action Planning established, tested and refined for 2010-11 roll-out
- Five churches and one linkage undertaking Mission Action Planning in 2010-11 with four Mission Action Plans launched from this cohort in 2011
- Mission Action Planning process revised to take account of lessons learned in 2010-2011
- Enthusiastic and talented set of facilitators trained to lead the Mission Action Planning process
- Casting the Net Liaison Officer (CTNLO) established in every congregation as a point of contact for regular communications about mission, with annual networking meeting
- Nine Marks of Mission promoted throughout the Diocese via bookmarks, newsletters, CTNLO network, etc.
- Congregational Development Group has regular, formal meetings with agendas, papers and actions to review progress and continually improve processes
- Two Casting the Net Gatherings held and valued by many.

Aims 2012-2015

Working creatively and supportively to develop mission-shaped communities of faith

- Undertake Mission Action Planning with at least four new congregations per year
- Work with Rectors undertaking Mission Action Planning to discuss issues related to cultural change in congregational life
- Create a developmental activity for Vestries of churches doing Mission Action Planning, to explore their role in mission and governance in times of change
- Develop a process for review of Mission Action Plans
- Promote Mission Action Plans that have been recently launched to other areas
- Communicate stories of how Casting the Net is making a difference.

Education, training and support to build confidence and encourage growth

- Continue to develop training for Mission Action Planning facilitators to deepen their understanding of mission, responses to change and encourage reflective practice
- Ensure that the diocesan website provides Casting the Net resources for all churches in the Diocese
- Work with the Ministry and Education Group to provide tools for the Nine Marks of Mission
- Draw Casting the Net into the prayer life of the Diocese
- Seek ways to demonstrate benefits in terms of outcomes (spiritual and numerical growth).

Building dynamic and loving relationships through which we share our faith and serve others

- Develop the Casting the Net Liaison Officers' (CTNLO) network to ensure there is a lay representative in all churches, encourage mutual support in Areas and provide a forum for discussions about mission and discipleship
- Develop networking opportunities in localities (Area Councils) to enable sharing stories of mission and build voluntary capacity
- Encourage better local communications about Casting the Net and creative approaches to embedding the Nine Marks of Mission
- Network with those taking a lead in mission action planning in other dioceses and denominations
- Work with all other Policy and Action Groups to support the overall vision of Casting the Net.

Children, Parents and Young People Group

What were we going to do?

Our role was “to enable congregations to welcome children, young people and their families and to include them in church life”. This was essentially about helping churches to become ‘child-friendly’ by building good relationships with young people and including them in worship. The focus was primarily on children and parents. There was a recognition that, due to often small numbers of children in church, “something much more holistic and integrated than traditional Sunday provision on its own” needed to be developed.

How is it flowing?

Developing the Child Friendly Church Charter has been a key achievement of the Group. The values underpinning the charter are at the heart of what we do. Our most pressing aim is to make these central to the life of each and every congregation in the Diocese. We are in the process of finalising the accreditation process so that congregations will be able to apply to become members of the ‘Child Friendly Network’.

The Children, Parents and Young People Officer, Sue White, has been working with Young Church leaders across the Diocese to provide training and support. This has included the development of Cluster Groups of Young Church leaders, which have been a valuable place of support and friendship for many.

Training days have also been arranged with the help of Godly Play Scotland. Many churches showed keen interest and five now routinely use Godly Play methods with their young people. There are also a range of very active under-five groups across the Diocese, including “Butterflies” in St Andrews St Andrews and “Little Fishes” in Coupar Angus, enjoying messy times and food together!

What have we learned?

In our preparation work, we have identified three main areas that need to be addressed by a comprehensive strategy for approaching the inclusion of children, parents and young people:

How do congregations work with children and parents?

In this area, we need to consider how to work with families who bring their children for baptism and confirmation, as these are important opportunities of contact for congregations and clergy. We need to develop patterns of continuing contact with these families and to uphold our promise as a congregation to nurture children baptised in our churches. We understand that the traditional model of Sunday School has limited relevance to our small congregations with limited numbers of children. We need to develop alternative models which are appropriate for our situation.

How do we support volunteers who work with children and young people?

The work of those who work with children in the church community needs to be valued and affirmed. Appropriate training and support need to be provided by the Diocese. To this end, we will develop our existing Cluster Groups so that they become more structured, regular and focused on training.

How do we support young adults?

There is a strong desire across the Diocese to work with our teenagers, which we need to explore further. A number of young people across the diocese are already involved in congregational life as sacristans, acolytes and choir members. This is an excellent model that is a particular strength of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Congregations need to be encouraged to replicate this, to enable teenagers to share in the life of the congregation and to provide opportunities for them to explore questions of life and faith. We intend to hold an event to bring our young people together and encourage them more proactively to attend the Glenalmond Youth Week in August of each year.

Achievements 2008-2011

- Set up training days in “Godly Play” and “Messy Church”, which were well attended and encouraged churches to explore these methods. Some churches now use these methods on a regular basis.
- One social gathering, “Bubbleology”; bubbles, prayer and story led by Rev. Canon Philip Noble.
- Established local Area Council Cluster Groups to allow Young Church leaders to meet, enjoy fellowship, support each other with prayer and exchange good practice.
- Formulated a “Child Friendly Church Charter” which was presented to “The Gathering” in May.
- Resources gathered and made available for our Young Church leaders.

Aims 2012-2015

Working creatively and supportively to develop mission-shaped communities of faith

- Keep in close contact with congregations undertaking Mission Action Planning to make sure the Christian nurture of families and young people remains a high priority
- Encourage congregations to share with each other the work being done to involve families in congregations and to develop the spirituality of young people
- Advertise the Child Friendly Church accreditation process, encourage churches to apply and support them in gaining accreditation
- Ensure that all churches are aware of the resources and personnel available for the support of Young Church Leaders, Rectors and congregations
- Effectively advertise the Provincial Youth Camp held at Glenalmond in early August each year and encourage teenagers to attend
- Keep in touch with congregations to make sure the list of Young Church Leaders is up to date and new leaders are not missed
- Draw all the Young Church Leaders into the prayer life of the Diocese.

Education, training and support to build confidence and encourage growth

- Continue to develop the Young Church cluster groups to validate and support the work already being undertaken with our children and young people
- Work with the Ministry and Education Group to provide training and 'tools' for Young Church leaders as and when required
- Facilitate training in innovative methods of children's Christian Education as and when required
- Continue to build up a portfolio of resources and make them available on the new diocesan website
- Work with the Clergy Development Group to develop training for Rectors on including children and young people in worship and church life.

Building dynamic and loving relationships through which we share our faith and serve others

- Organise events for teenagers in the Diocese in the hope of encouraging friendships across congregations, creating space for questioning and development of faith
- Encourage local churches to work together and advertise exciting events to encourage the wider community to join them, e.g. Summer Activity Weeks and Holiday Clubs
- Build up good networks with those taking a lead in the Christian Nurture of young people in other dioceses and denominations
- Encourage better communication within the Children, Parents and Young People network in order to embed the fourth Mark of Mission
- Work with all other Policy and Action Groups to support the overall vision of Casting the Net.

Ministry and Education Group

What were we going to do?

The vision for mission and growth in this Diocese clearly identified the nurture of longstanding Christians within our tradition and of those new to faith or to the life of the Scottish Episcopal Church as a high priority. We recognised that Christians need to be able to articulate their faith as they grow in discipleship and face challenging questions about life and its meaning. The aim was to provide a wide range of resources that would help churches offer opportunities for people to grow together, facing difficult questions with honesty and faith.

In 2008, our remit, as part of the larger Ministry Group, was to “provide more proactive and systematic recruitment, training and support of lay ministers”. This would include building up resources and developing training modules that would “encourage congregations to realise and use their resources for growth – i.e. themselves”.

How is it flowing?

Numerous congregations through their MAPs have asked for resources and ideas to develop, not only knowledge of Christian faith, but knowledge of who we are as Scottish Episcopalians. Slowly but surely people recognize the need to grow inwardly and to reflect more deeply together to strengthen them in their Christian life.

All of us are on a learning journey as we are challenged and formed by the vision and teaching of Jesus the Christ and by the community of faith. New Christians need to become familiar with the Bible and explore with others how Christian faith and attitudes affect who we are and what we do. Older Christians likewise are developed by meeting and talking with other Christians and by learning, studying and praying together.

Through the Ministry and Education Group, the Diocese seeks to encourage and enhance all Christian adult learning opportunities. These may be short courses on specific topics, recommended reading for small group study or diocesan learning events with speakers. There are also Lay Ministry training events available or recommended in areas such as leading prayers in church or pastoral care.

Everything that is offered is open to “making it your own” as people and places in the diocese are very varied. Ministry and Education is a living dialogue.

What have we learned?

Casting the Net has engendered and uncovered a hunger for learning among our people. We now recognise in a new way the scale of the task in providing opportunities for that learning and in training for a range of lay ministries. The Diocese has therefore taken the decision to move the work of supporting and developing clergy into a separate Policy and Action Group.

We are called to live soulfully and spiritually as followers of Christ in a secular age. The need for baptized Christians to articulate and live their faith journey is ever more pressing. If we are in touch with and can share the hope that is in us, others may come to desire that hope for themselves.

Achievements 2008-2011

- Studies on the year's Gospel in the Revised Common Lectionary held in various locations around the Diocese
- Two Casting the Net Gatherings held in 2010 and 2011; they have especially struck a chord with many people, who are enthusiastically seeking more ways to encourage their fellow church members to learn more about their faith
- Study guide on "Mission-Shaped Church" used by many congregations when beginning the Mission Action Planning Process
- The "Compass" study course, developed by Canon Alison Peden, used by many congregations to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and the Scottish Episcopal Church
- Resources and ideas provided for all congregations developing Mission Action Plans for their chosen Marks of Mission

Aims 2012-2015

Working creatively and supportively to develop mission-shaped communities of faith

- Develop a culture of Christian nurture and create a market for Christian adult education and discipleship
- Support and show appreciation for the work of those involved in Lay Ministry, confirming a wide range of vocations
- Continue to support those congregations going through Mission Action Planning by providing resources and ideas.
- Be responsive to congregations where there is a request for new ideas and encourage innovative approaches to adult Christian education.

Education, training and support to build confidence and encourage growth

- Build up a bank of resources for each Mark of Mission and make these available for all congregations on the diocesan website
- Recruit and train a team of facilitators for adult Christian Education courses and lay ministry training
- Pilot a two-part Christianity course in 2012, evaluate feedback, adapt as necessary and offer the programme across the diocese
- Develop training for those involved in lay ministry. In 2012 this will consist of three training days focusing on: reading and intercessions; assisting at the Eucharist; ministry in the local community.

- Work with the Clergy Development Group and Administration Group to develop training for Vestries and Rectors.

Building dynamic and loving relationships through which we share our faith and serve others

- Learn from and share resources with other dioceses, building on the good relationships we have already begun to establish; in particular with the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway
- Create a sense of fellowship among those involved in Lay Ministry
- Help people to begin to understand their place as disciples within a living community of faith by providing them with opportunities to learn about their faith
- Work with all other Policy and Action Groups to support the overall vision of Casting the Net.

Clergy Development Group

What were we going to do?

Clergy are a key resource for the life and mission of the church. We therefore decided to establish a Clergy Development Group in 2011 in order to channel the energy and resources needed for the support and development of our clergy. Clergy development was originally the responsibility of the Ministry and Education Group, but it became clear that the resulting remit was too large for a single group.

This movement is in line with *The Whole Church Mission and Ministry Policy*, which was presented to General Synod in 2011. This emphasises the key questions of clergy supply and 'the continuing support, training and development of clergy as they seek to become managers of transformation and catalysts for change'. The Policy further identified the need to equip clergy to become part of the diocesan vision and strategy for mission and growth.

The Clergy Development Group draws together and expands work which was already underway in diocesan life. As well as looking at development needs for clergy it is important to consider issues such as: the role of the Rector in the Mission Action Planning process in a congregation; the expectations, understandings and issues in the relationship between Vestries and Rectors. There is also a need for continuing discussion about the role and ministry of the Bishop, particularly in the relationship with clergy.

How is it flowing?

The Group has met throughout 2011 to establish a comprehensive pattern for clergy support and development. This has been tested with clergy at the Clergy Conference at the beginning of January 2012. Their feedback is vital for developing this further.

What have we learned?

We understand more clearly that in work with clergy there is a tension between theological and spiritual development and professional skills training. It is important to recognise and honour both the professional and spiritual aspects of clergy life.

We now see the main strands of clergy development as:

1. Theological, Spiritual and Personal Enrichment
Theological lectures and seminars; annual Clergy Retreat; social gatherings
2. Professional Skills Development
Training in management and leadership skills; the Rector's role in Mission Action Planning; courses in pastoral care, recognising vocation in others, etc.
3. Vocational and Professional Support
Mentoring Scheme for new clergy in the Diocese, Action Learning Sets for peer appraisal, Ministerial Review

Achievements in 2011

- Organised and delivered events for clergy, including the annual Clergy Conference.
- Built up good relationships with neighbouring dioceses, most particularly the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway, and have begun the process of sharing resources and ideas in the area of clergy development.
- Devised a scheme for peer supervision and appraisal, based on the concept of Action Learning Sets. This will be piloted in 2012.

Aims 2012 – 2015

Working creatively and supportively to develop mission-shaped communities of faith

- Study of responses to clergy development questionnaire in order to devise a coherent programme for clergy development which has the support of clergy
- Explore how better to support and encourage Rectors to discern vocation within their congregations as part of congregational mission strategy.
- Explore training needs for Rectors supporting members of their congregations who are considering their own vocations in lay or ordained ministry.

Education, training and support to build confidence and encourage growth

- Provide training in the professional function of clergy as congregational leaders, including: working with the Ministry and Education Group and Administration Group to develop training for Vestries and Rectors; working with the Children, Parents and Young People Group to provide training for Rectors on helping the congregation to draw in children and their parents; sourcing training opportunities for essential pastoral skills
- Organise and effectively advertise the annual Clergy Retreat; Quiet Days; lectures; biblical and theological seminars
- Provide mentoring for newcomers in the Diocese through a “buddy” scheme
- Explore events for specific stages of ministry, e.g. mid-ministry, preparing for retirement
- Establish a directory of contact information of people able and willing to act as spiritual directors/ supervisors.

Building dynamic and loving relationships through which we share our faith and serve others

- Encourage participation and a sense of ownership by clergy
- Pilot a programme for small groups engaged in ministerial reflection

- Continue to work in collaboration with other dioceses who are engaged in the same work, including more consistent and structured sharing of resources and provision of training in basic management issues
- Develop the Bishop's role in clergy support and Ministerial Review
- Work with all other Policy and Action Groups to support the overall vision of Casting the Net.

Charges and Groupings Group

What were we going to do?

The Charges and Groupings Group was set up to help congregations pursue and share in the diocesan vision and strategy for mission and growth.

The Group was invited to develop a strategic plan for the organisation of charges and groupings within the Diocese. Such a plan would also take into account the deployment of clergy, both stipendiary and non-stipendiary.

The Group was tasked to do this by seeking to maximise opportunities for growth and minimise decline, supporting such actions by a clear and agreed rationale.

The Group was to establish a way of making decisions which were:

- Focused on growth
- Based on shared vision and strategy
- Consistent and accountable
- Devolved from the Bishop.

How is it flowing?

The Group conducts a continuing review of the Diocese, its groupings and deployment of clergy. The Group pays particular attention to the need to maximise any potential for growth. It has worked closely with the Congregational Development Group to ensure that Mission Action Plans take account of retiring clergy and so create clear visions of mission for the future.

Membership of the Group includes the Dean and representatives of clergy and laity.

The Group operates in consultation with the Bishop and reports to the Diocesan Standing Committee.

The Group seeks to operate within the framework provided by the Code of Canons and the Diocesan Policy and Action Plan.

Achievements 2008-2011

Much of the work of the Group has been focused on dealing with vacancies as they have arisen throughout the Diocese. Representatives of the Group have visited and consulted with members of Vestries, focusing on the strategic needs of the Charge concerned. In consideration of future development along the A9, there was extensive consultation with all of the Vestries involved.

Such consultations have sought to ensure that any appointment made is financially sustainable and part of a well-considered development plan for growth that meets the needs of the individual congregation and the long term health of the Diocese as a whole.

Aims 2012-2015

Working creatively and supportively to develop mission-shaped communities of faith

- Identify areas of the Diocese which need strategic review and approach these prayerfully, in consultation with the Bishop and Standing Committee
- Formulate clearly agreed processes for reviews to take place, making mission a central focus.

Education, training and support to build confidence and encourage growth

- Implement such processes with the charges concerned, providing support and encouragement to the congregations involved.

Building dynamic and loving relationships through which we share our faith and serve others

- Work with all other Policy and Action Groups to support the overall vision of Casting the Net.

Administration Group

What were we going to do?

The Administration Group aimed to develop an understanding of its work in the context of a growth-orientated diocese; and to develop further the administration and accountability processes to support this aim.

In developing a strategic view of financial and administrative needs, the Group would provide enhanced reporting methods to ensure accounting and budgetary information was available in an understandable, transparent and timely way.

The Group would promote and deliver efficient administrative support to the Bishop and to all parts of the Diocese, including staff and technical resources.

Through its Buildings Committee, the Group would review and revise practice in the oversight of diocesan buildings to deliver helpful advice and support while ensuring all statutory and canonical responsibilities are met.

How is it flowing?

The Group has developed, in partnership with our accountants and auditors, a comprehensive continuous reporting system of financial performance and tracking against budget, allowing greater efficiency in detailed forward planning. Updated information is available to the Administration Group on a monthly basis.

In staff management, subsequent to changes in posts and personnel, a more structured team approach is being adopted.

The Buildings Committee has enhanced its practices and pathways of consultation, and the spectrum of its expertise.

The Administration Group reports to the Standing Committee, and works in partnership with the other Policy and Action Groups.

What have we learned?

We have learned how better to integrate all aspects of administration into every part of diocesan endeavour, and to lose any impression of a 'parallel' activity. We also recognise more clearly that good administration and efficient processes are not just helpful; they are key building blocks of mission and growth.

Achievements 2008-2011

- A consistent and transparent reporting of financial and administrative requirements and performance
- The introduction of a 'self-assessment' model for Diocesan Quota
- A planned team approach to the management of, and consultation with, diocesan staff
- An improved IT infrastructure.

Aims 2012-2015

Working creatively and supportively to develop mission-shaped communities of faith

- Further focus of budgeting to parallel developing areas of diocesan activity so that: each Policy and Action Group is aware of its resources and can plan accordingly; good budgeting is seen as an important part of effective and careful planning for mission
- Continue to assess and monitor administrative processes to ensure optimal efficiency in a developing church environment.

Education, training and support to build confidence and encourage growth

- Explore options for training of church treasurers
- Work with the Ministry and Education Group and Clergy Development Group on Vestry Training.

Building dynamic and loving relationships through which we share our faith and serve others

- Continue to build up good working relationships with diocesan staff and develop effective management structures
- Work with all other Policy and Action Groups to support the overall vision of Casting the Net.

Appendix 1

The Nine Marks of Mission

The Diocese has agreed the following Nine Marks of Mission, which are our principles for a healthy church:

1. Worship that renews and inspires, *embracing the rich variety of our traditions*
2. Transformed lives and communities, *through receiving the Good News of Jesus Christ*
3. Lifelong Christian nurture: *deepening the knowledge of God in our lives*
4. Reaching out to children and young people, *because mission-shaped churches seek to engage with children and young people*
5. Rooted in prayer, word and sacrament: *experiencing God and his will for us*
6. Welcome of newcomers & celebration of life events: *helping newcomers become part of the life of the church and making the most of special occasions*
7. Sharing faith by confident and sensitive evangelism, *witnessing to God's presence and power*
8. Serving the community in practical ways, *reaching out to others, especially those in need*
9. Ready to seek growth *and Cast the Net.*

Appendix 2

Child Friendly Church Charter

Everyone is made welcome in our church.

We believe that our church community is enriched by the presence of children and families.

We are a community where children are nurtured in the Christian faith.

We reach out to children, parents and young people.

We seek to involve children and young people in our life and worship.

We provide space and materials for faith-based play.

We uphold best practice in methods of Christian education.

We provide a safe environment in our church.

We uphold the current Protection of Vulnerable Groups Policy of the Scottish Episcopal Church.