The Diocese of Southwark

DS(25)25

Diocesan Synod

ANNUAL OBJECTIVES

Presentation by the Diocesan Secretary & Deputy Diocesan Secretary, and moved by the Bishop of Southwark that:

"THIS SYNOD endorses the Annual Objectives for 2026 as recommended by the Diocesan Council of Trustees."

Review of the 2025 Annual Objectives

1. The Annual Objectives for 2025, as endorsed by the Diocesan Synod at its meeting in November 2024, are shown below. The objectives sought to encompass and focus our efforts to achieve Southwark Vision and its objectives. The Annual Objectives for 2025 cover four themes: Implement Southwark Vision 2024-2035, Value all our Parishes, Enable Mission and Ministry and Outward-focused Governance centred on Christ. They also remained aligned with the major Synodical priorities for the triennium, which included include clergy well-being in times of change, environment (including net zero carbon), continuing implementation of the Anti-Racism Charter, and parish finances for growth in post-pandemic recovery.
2. Synod will receive a presentation and update on these Objectives at Synod.

Implement Southwark Vision 2024-35

- Diocesan Investment Programme: to begin effective implementation of the Programme including setting up appropriate governance, safeguarding, monitoring and tracking frameworks working with the national church, developing pilots and commissioning research for some of the strands and launching the first Hub and Resourcing churches

SVO 1-4, 6-9



- Racial Justice: working with Area Racial Justice Groups, continue to implement Anti-Racism Charter, develop and improve cultural diversity in vocations and ministry through carrying out research and acting on findings, and through the work of the Dean of Cultural Diversity and the Dean of Estates Ministry.

SVO 4



- To continue working with high CO_2 emitting churches, and develop work within the property strategy, to work Towards Net Zero in the Diocese.

SVO 5



Christ Centred
Outward Focused

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Value all our Parishes

- Serving and engaging with parishes, including Advice and Support for:
    - Volunteering
    - Giving
    - Parish conversations, listening, learning and sharing opportunities with parishes including representatives from departments such as Mission and safeguarding joining conversations to engage with parishes
    - Sharing good news and celebrating success in parishes, the Diocesan offices and wider church



Enable Mission and Ministry

- To continue to implement the developments in the provision of clergy well-being, especially the new programme of clergy well-being sessions ('9-in-12' reflecting 9 sessions in a 12 month period).



- To agree the outcomes of the Lay Council review and to manage their successful implementation.



- To continue to grow the resources available, in person and online, which encourage deepening discipleship for all, especially those resources which help people to live out their faith everyday.



- Implement the Property Strategy so we can continue to be able to resource Mission and Ministry, including close stewardship and effective use and management of Diocesan Property and finance resources.



- Church buildings: Using the post funded by the Church Commissioners, provide advice and support to churches to ensure their buildings are fit for mission.



Outward-focused governance centred on Christ[1]

- Ensuring that we have sound governance, robust financial systems, strong safeguarding practices, and the agility to respond to unexpected challenges.
- Review and update office infrastructure, including IT, to ensure effective working practices for all staff as we seek to implement Southwark Vision with a particular focus on staff health and wellbeing including access to training
- Good stewardship of assets, maintaining a balanced budget, encouraging generosity in giving (working towards more parishes fully covering their own ministry costs)



3. The Deputy Diocesan Secretary, Jackie Pontin, will give a

[1] Romans 12:4-8

presentation to Synod members, updating them on progress against the Objectives. These have also been reviewed by the Policy & Finance Committee, and the Diocesan Council of Trustees.

2026 Annual Objectives


Christ Centred | Outward Focused

Southwark Vision 2024-2035

4. From 2026 onwards, we are continuing to work to implement Southwark Vision 2024-2035, and the Annual Objectives reflect work to deliver the Vision for the Diocese. We aim for the objectives to be clear, achievable, yet challenging, and benefit the wider Diocese in difficult times at the same time as not to overburden the staff team. The objectives link where possible with the Levers of Southwark Vision's Shared Values, Priorities, and Outcomes. The Objectives do not seek to codify the day-to-day work of the Diocese, but rather are an opportunity to go above and beyond to ensure that our parishes and deaneries are supported in their mission of the Church.

5. Members of Synod will be acutely aware of the challenges that the diocese has faced, financially and in terms of workload and unexpected situations such as the APCS data breach and requests from the national church, and an increase in Subject Access Requests, administrative work for grants and other areas which are not within current roles. These among many other areas of change have been supported by our staff teams, mostly by goodwill and a willingness to work extra hours and weekends at their own discretion.

6. We are increasingly finding ourselves, as many in parishes will also feel, being asked to do more with less. The staff teams have been giving the highest levels of service that we can give in these circumstances, but '*keeping the show on the road*' and maintaining our statutory obligations is paramount. Much of this work goes unrecognised and forms, for the most part, staff teams' full role descriptions. Additional objectives and unexpected workloads are not included, and there is no additional capacity for these.

7. As such, we are proposing that aspirational objectives which compound the workload of our teams are not sustainable at the present time, and that focus must remain on ensuring that parishes are served and supported well, and that statutory obligations are maintained.

8. In addition, members will be aware of the need to conduct a full review of the diocesan finances, and create a sustainable financial plan to 2030 allowing time for the work of the Holy Spirit and the numerical and financial growth which we hope and pray will be delivered by the projects which form the Diocesan Investment Programme. This, with the understanding that 2026 will bring about a lot of changes (deanery and General Synod elections), INEQE safeguarding audits, safeguarding policy changes, to name a few, means we need to be able to carry out these necessary functions well without the

diversion of new initiatives. We also need to plan for growth, supporting our mission initiatives, training (clergy and lay), and fruitfulness that we pray for through the implementation of the Diocesan Investment Programme.

9. The Annual Objectives are formally for the Diocesan Board of Finance, in Charity terms, but seek to encompass a wider Diocesan context. They will be used in the Annual Report (2025) as future commitments and in the 2026 Annual Report for the commentary on achievements.

10. Several objectives carry through from 2025 where for various reasons they were not able to be achieved, form part of multi-year objectives, or are a continuation of partially achieved objectives. They have been discussed thoroughly by the Senior Management Team and Policy & Finance Committee and were approved by the Diocesan Council of Trustees to be endorsed by the Diocesan Synod.

11. You will see that each objective directly links to an area of Southwark Vision's Outcomes (SVO), and Priorities:



Finance & Giving

- Good stewardship of assets, maintaining a balanced budget, encouraging generosity in giving (working towards more parishes fully covering their own ministry costs)

SVO 1-9



- Review and propose a sustainable financial plan to 2030 to support Southwark Vision and beyond.

SVO 1-9



Value all our Parishes

- Serving and engaging with parishes, including Advice and Support for:
    - Continue Volunteering review
    - Giving
    - Parish conversations, listening, learning and sharing opportunities with those serving in our parishes
    - Sharing good news and celebrating success in parishes, the Diocesan offices and wider church

SVO 1, 2 & 3



Implement Southwark Vision 2024-35

- To continue scaling up the reach and impact of the Diocesan Investment Programme (DIP), delivering growth in key areas aligned with the Southwark Vision, delivering growing church attendance across DIP-funded churches, successfully sharing models developed within our Hub Churches and pilots and using them in new contexts, and supporting more churches to sustainably support themselves and

SVO 1-4, 6-9



their wider mission.

- Racial Justice: we will support our Area Racial Justice Groups to drive forward implementation of the Anti-Racism Charter, equipping these groups and our parishes with the resources, people, and networks to champion racial justice in their context. We will further embed cultural diversity into our mission, ministry, vocations, and practices, listening and acting on outcomes from our research, and working through our Deans of Cultural Diversity and Estates Ministry.

SVO 4



- To continue working with high CO_2 emitting churches, and develop work within the property strategy, to work Towards Net Zero in the Diocese.

SVO 5



Outward-focused governance centred on Christ[2]

- To continue to provide effective support for parishes and deaneries to enable their local mission in the places where they are, and to maintain the highest level of statutory provision.

SVO 2, 3, 4, 7



Wellbeing

- Ensure effective working practices for all diocesan staff as we seek to implement Southwark Vision with a particular focus on staff health and well-being including access to necessary training.
- To keep under review the work spaces for Trinity House, and the need for substantial works to the structure and fabric of the building.

SVO 2, 3, 4, 7



[2] Romans 12:4-8