

East Leeds Revival

“The Church of God doesn't so much have a mission, as the mission of God has a Church” Steve Bevan Newbigin Lecture 2018

The vision of the Diocese of Leeds is rooted in three interdependent parts:
Confident Christians, Growing Churches, Transforming Communities

In seeking to live out this vision the past 5 years strategic development funding has been invested in church planting, revival and renewal in Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield as part of our aim to share the Good News of Jesus Christ across the Diocese.

In the Leeds Episcopal Area we are now looking to further invest in the area of East Leeds, part of a Deanery of 24 churches, with a bid to the Strategic Mission and Ministry Board planned for 2025 under the heading of East Leeds Revival.

As part of our journey we have already begun with the appointment of 3 new interim posts, each for 3 years, covering 8 parishes in inner East Leeds, whose purpose will be to prepare the ground for the bid and for long term investment within the area.

The three interim posts serve:

- Halton, Bermontofts & Harehills - already appointed
- Gipton & Oakwood(LEP) – aim to be filled by early 2024
- Richmond Hill & Cross Green – aim to be filled by early 2024

In addition to serving and listening to the congregations in these parishes the priests in these roles will have a strategic input into the East Leeds Revival as they review the missional and financial strength of parishes, appropriateness of buildings and opportunities for service and growth. As part of the commitment to the East Leeds Revival funding of £100k has already been secured to work on a bid with this money being initially earmarked to support the work of interim priests and work on building appraisals and reviews

Central to the proposed way forward is a commitment to change the narrative of East Leeds from one of challenging context, problematic buildings and declining congregations to a context full of potential, buildings as community assets and growing congregations. To discern anew and afresh with fresh where God is at work amongst us already and where he is leading us in the future.

Key Outcomes of the East Leeds Revival are:

- **Confident Christians:** by identifying the impact our churches are already making in their community or have made in the past we can help to tell a new story of God at work through his church in East Leeds increasing our congregations confidence in their calling.
- **Growing Churches:** identifying areas of health and growth, now and in the future, sharing ideas and resources with one another and sharing the good news with those around us we hope to see growing thriving churches in East Leeds.
- **Transforming Communities:** The church is already involved in huge amounts of good work across the area addressing food poverty, loneliness, debt and financial advice, ESOL and much more. By telling our story with confidence and detail of the impact we make we aim to identify and secure external funding to make the transformation joined up, more effective and sustainable.

The work and witness of the churches in East Leeds is already underway and bearing fruit in particular areas with the growth of BME congregations, significant investment from national sources in Church buildings and the provision of foodbanks, warm spaces and widespread community engagement.

This work also includes partnership working amongst churches already working on plans for church planting in the area. In addition partnerships have been established with mission agencies and schools as part of supporting young people in the area. Active considerations which will form part of the funding bid include:

- New Church Plant in Seacroft Estate
- Church Army Centre of Mission working with Young Adults
- Mission Apprentices and Ministry Experience Volunteers
- Wellsprings Together Social Justice Hub

A key part of the East Leeds Revival will be working with existing church communities in developing plans so that the sense of ownership will be widespread rather than top down and will take seriously the voices and prayers of those in East Leeds as well as providing opportunities for other churches in the deanery to partner in mutual support with those undergoing change.

We are excited by the prospect of joining in with the mission of God in East Leeds and for both our churches and communities to lead a revival in this part of the Diocese.