
Evaluation of Joshua Centre: Multiplying Congregations

integras consulting 
RESEARCH & EVALUATION

Kate Hutton
Andrew Humphreys

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 THE CHURCH
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Acronyms

BAME	Black, Asian and minority ethnic
CC	Church Commissioners
FFM	Fit for Mission
FGD	Focus group discussion
JC	Joshua Centre
IMD	Index of multiple deprivation
KII	Key informant interview
LML	Local Missional Leaders
PCC	Parochial church council
SDF	Strategic Development Funding
STF	Strategic Transformation Funding

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Church of England continues to experience a decline in attendance figures, as well as in the income it receives through people giving financially. Between 2014 and 2019, in the Diocese of Liverpool average weekly attendance amongst adults dropped by 14.1% and amongst children by 15.9%.¹ In 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, average weekly attendance was 57% lower than in 2019.² In 2019, the largest source of income across the Church of England was parish giving, which (along with tax recovered) accounted for £610 million. In 2020, giving income fell by 7.6%, a reduction of £39 million compared with 2019.

Against this backdrop, the Diocese of Liverpool has been keen to pioneer lay-led congregations and was successful in submitting a bid to the Church Commissioners to establish the Joshua Centre: Multiplying Congregations Project (JC), a joint initiative between the Cathedral and the Diocese. The focus of the bid was to reach 900 'new disciples', establish 30 new lay-led congregations and train 30 lay leaders. Each new congregation would receive a start-up grant of £20,000 over a five-year period and would be supported by a small team of experienced practitioners. The five-year project was funded by the Church Commissioners' Strategic Development Funding (SDF) Programme with £1 million from 2017 to 2022.

Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide an independent evidenced-based assessment of the five-year project, which closed in June 2022. This report provides the results of an evaluation conducted in April–June 2022. The focus of the evaluation was to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project, and identify key lessons and recommendations for future projects.

The evaluation was mainly qualitative in nature. It collected primary data through 17 interviews and three focus group discussions with stakeholders, clergy and lay leaders; visits to five new congregations; and discussion with congregation attendees. The research was supplemented with an online survey completed by 16 lay leaders. The quantitative survey data was matched against JC project data to generate additional insight. Secondary data included application forms, quarterly reviews, and a project- and grant-monitoring spreadsheet.

Findings

Relevance

To redress the decline in church attendance, the JC project sought to increase numbers by 900 new disciples through establishing 30 new congregations across the Diocese of Liverpool, specifically targeting low-income areas, different ecclesiologies, children and young adults, and Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups. The new congregations would be led by 30 lay leaders. Support was provided to each new congregation through a small team led by Director of the JC, based at St James House, the Diocese head office in Liverpool, a grant of £20,000 and training to lay leaders.

The overall project design was adhered to, although a few changes were implemented: (1) the Director of the JC became Director of Multiplying Congregations when the lead person from the Cathedral left his position; (2) the goal of reaching *900 disciples* was changed to *900 attendees*; (3) rather than training an individual leader for each congregation, the focus moved to training a team of leaders; (4) the Local

¹ www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/2019StatisticsForMission.pdf

² www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/statistics-mission-2020

Missional Leaders (LML) training model was not adopted and alternative training materials were used; (5) due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, a leadership coach was recruited for two days a week and the Church Commissioners agreed to a two-year no-cost extension to ensure grants were delivered and agreements fulfilled.

The project was well promoted across the Diocese through various meetings, literature, online resources and promotional materials. The JC established 29 new congregations across a wide geographic area and was successful in targeting children and young people, family groups, refugees and asylum seekers, and low-income areas. It was less effective in targeting established BAME communities and different ecclesiologies.

There was a clear training structure and training was delivered in-house. By the end of June 2022, over 70 lay leaders had participated in training delivered by the JC; 62% of those surveyed found the training very or extremely useful. However, it took the first two years of the project to identify the most appropriate training materials. The training was not formally evaluated and relied on informal feedback. Training was initially delivered in person, with refreshments provided; but from April 2020, when restrictions were imposed as a result of Covid-19, JC adapted and delivered training online, which received a mixed response.

Effectiveness

Applying to establish a new congregation was a two-stage process, with an initial ideas form followed by a more comprehensive plan. The JC Steering Group reviewed each application, providing appropriate scrutiny and accountability for the SDF grant. Indeed, some applications were turned down.

JC staff supported in helping with applications or solidifying ideas and overall vision. As well as training and ongoing support, quarterly reviews were implemented with lay leaders and parish clergy (though not all clergy attended). The JC also supported clergy who were struggling with convincing their established congregations, who did not see the need for new congregations or felt threatened by them. Some 94% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed they had been excellently supported by the JC. The evaluation established that there was a positive relationship between the extent to which leaders felt excellently supported and average attendance figures. One of the key elements of the training lay leaders highlighted was peer support from fellow leaders, with 94% of survey respondents stating that meeting with other project leaders was the most important element that should be taken forward.

The JC was reliant on buy-in from and the support of the parish clergy. Therefore, congregations were established in parishes where there was support for lay-led congregations. This was referred to by one stakeholder as a 'coalition of the willing'. Due to the scope of the evaluation it was not possible to establish why clergy in other parishes did not participate. Clergy who participated in the evaluation said that the JC helped to focus their energies on mission work, and whilst there was work associated with supporting lay leaders, it was a positive and productive use of their time. However, one of the key challenges was identifying lay leaders and future lay leaders. This was particularly evident in areas of deprivation.

There was good oversight of the JC project through regular meetings with the Steering Group and JC Board members. Although, the lack of a communication strategy, was reflected in the ad hoc nature of collecting case studies, writing blogs and promoting the project, perhaps limiting the reach and impact of the project with a wider audience.

Efficiency

Overall, the funding was allocated as outlined in the SDF bid, with congregations receiving £20,000. However, due to Covid-19 there was an underspend. After the Church Commissioners agreed to a no-cost extension, new congregations received a reduced amount of £12,000. From September 2020, a leadership coach was also appointed for two days a week. Grants were paid annually and administered

by individual parochial church council PCCs. There was an annual spending review for each new congregation, with the authority of the JC to retract the grant if it was not being spent as planned, which occurred with at least two projects.

No data was formally collated on how grants were spent and leaders had autonomy how to spend them. However, during the application process there was a general plan for how grants would be allocated. Survey respondents identified that the highest proportion of funding was spent on employing a leader, with 42.5% allocated to leaders' pay, followed by equipment (35.1%) and room/hall hire and utilities (11.8%). In addition to the JC grant, seven survey respondents received a total of £35,750 in additional grants and donations. Some 94% of survey respondents said they could not have established a new congregation without the grant; however, the clergy's response was more mixed.

There was an expectation in the SDF bid that congregations would become financially self-sustaining. It was evident from speaking to both clergy and lay leaders that they were reluctant to ask for money; this was particularly the case in areas of deprivation. However, attendees did give their time and contributed towards meals; in some congregations there was fundraising for charity, though these examples were in more affluent areas.

Impact

Overall, 44 new congregations were recruited and initially funded, 29 of which before March 2020. During the pandemic, six congregations closed. To date 29 new congregations are ongoing.

The pandemic significantly impacted attendance rates, at their lowest level falling to 50%, which ultimately affected reaching the target of 900 attendees. By the end of March 2022, average weekly attendance was 632. However, an extrapolation of growth demonstrated this figure could have reached 1,273 attendees if Covid-19 had not interrupted the project. Attendees were made up of people moving from other churches, who had previously gone to church and stopped going, and those who were new to attending church.

Congregations that were particularly affected by Covid-19 were those working with children and young people. Maintaining contact with this cohort was challenging: (1) as it was difficult to remain in contact via remote means; (2) there were issues related to safeguarding; and (3) not having access to schools or after-school groups for 18+ months.

Lay leaders, clergy and attendees reported a positive impact from taking part in the project. Some lay leaders specifically said that it had increased their faith and confidence. Clergy were encouraged by reaching new communities, which they would not have had time to do themselves, and attendees felt they had found a sense of community through the new congregation. Lay leaders and new congregations engaged with local communities and businesses, raised funds, piloted a farmer's market, and supported people with mental health issues and learning disabilities.

The majority of new congregations met in church buildings. Therefore there is no learning on how to develop new congregations using community areas or buildings. To date no projects have been replicated, though one does have plans to replicate in the near future.

Sustainability

Some 60% of survey respondents identified the key source of support they need as being able to meet with other leaders, followed by 47% through mentoring support (external to the parish), ongoing training and ongoing financial support. The SDF bid outlined initial plans to mainstream the JC project; however, there was no specific exit strategy. In the final year of the project, the Steering Group undertook sustainability planning.

Fit for Mission (FFM) is a Diocese-wide project for a locally delivered change programme, funded through the Church Commissioners' Strategic Transformation Fund. FFM also has a focus on developing new

congregations. Initial learning from JC informed the FFM bid. No JC staff have been mainstreamed into the Diocese or FFM. The only post remaining is the leadership coach, who is employed for one day a week. There is no specific support for new congregations established by the JC, apart from the newest congregations, which will get support from the leadership coach.

There was no specific guidance from the JC on how new congregations would sit within the parish structure, either in terms of oversight or financial support. Congregations that have recruited paid leaders may find it difficult to fund posts once the grant monies have finished, particularly in areas of deprivation, if this has not been built into annual PCC budgets.

Conclusion

At a time when the Church of England is experiencing a decline in numbers, the JC has successfully demonstrated that it is possible to reverse this trend by establishing new congregations with trained lay leaders. Having an individual or small team providing targeted one-to-one training and funding was key to its success. It is likely that many more new congregations would have closed during Covid-19 without the ongoing support of the JC team. If the Diocese wishes to continue to establish new lay-led congregations at scale, suitable centralised support needs to be identified.

The application process enabled clergy and lay leaders to hone their vision and plan, and quarterly reviews helped lay leaders keep on track. The training was beneficial to some more than others; in part, this was due to volunteers' personal commitments, which limited their ability to attend training. Therefore, for some, remote access to training was a useful compromise. Future training may need to consider time limitations, and targeted training rather than a blanket training programme. Evaluating training would elicit greater understanding of training needs. The overriding message in feedback from lay leaders was the need for ongoing sharing, learning and support from their peers.

Providing a grant opened up possibilities for lay leaders and clergy and provided a sense of kudos for their efforts. Having identified that funding is necessary, particularly in areas of deprivation, the amount of funding needs further discussion. However, becoming financially sustainable will take longer than five years. Support for clergy was essential to the success of the new congregations, without which they would not have started, or would certainly have struggled to thrive. Further research is necessary to understand the barriers to lack of clergy participation.

The more established congregations now have to understand how they fit within the parish. Each new congregation does not work in isolation and needs oversight, ongoing funding and support. However, there appears to have been little discussion on how maturing groups fit within the mixed ecology of the Church. Whilst FFM will support establishing new congregations, it is unclear how JC congregations will be supported, if at all. Lack of clarity on how JC fits within FFM inadvertently gives the message that the JC project has closed and another project is starting, with no dovetailing between them.

Overall the JC project has been well managed and implemented. It was able to negotiate the challenges of Covid-19 and succeeded in recruiting and training lay leaders to establish new congregations. The success of the project is due not just the commitment of lay leaders and clergy, but also the structured support and encouragement provided by the JC team.

Key recommendations

- Appoint a lead person to provide support, advice and monitoring in establishing new congregations, especially at scale.
- Implement an application process and quarterly reviews in FFM and projects to establish new congregations.
- Evaluate targeted training of lay leaders.
- Establish a forum to enable peer support and learning between lay leaders.

- Conduct a learning exercise review with key stakeholders, clergy, FFM, lay leaders and the leadership coach.
- Identify funding sources and grants, in addition to the parish share, to support establishing new congregations in areas of deprivation.
- Provide clarity and feedback to JC congregations on how they fit within FFM.

1. Background

The Church of England continues to see a decline in people attending church. In 2019, prior to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, Church of England statistics showed that attendance was down 2% compared with the previous year. In the Diocese of Liverpool, between 2014 and 2019 average weekly attendance amongst adults had dropped by 14.1% and amongst children by 15.9%.³ In 2020, due to the pandemic, average weekly attendance was 57% lower than in 2019.⁴ In 2019, the largest source of income across the Church of England was parish giving, which (along with tax recovered) accounted for £610 million.⁵ In 2020, giving income fell by 7.6%, a reduction of £39 million compared with 2019.⁶

Research surmised that religious decline in Britain is generational, with children tending to be less religious than their parents, and on average their children's children even less religious than they are.⁷ To address the declining numbers, the vision of the Diocese of Liverpool is for *a bigger church to make a bigger difference*,⁸ to be accomplished through:

- 100 new congregations
- 1,000 new leaders
- 10,000 'new disciples'.

Liverpool Cathedral's *Strategic Plan 2014–2024* has two ambitious goals: (1) to double the number of those attending worship communities each week by making new disciples; and (2) to raise £24 million for urgent repairs and new initiatives. One of the six mission activities was 'Multiplying Congregations'.⁹ Against this backdrop, the Joshua Centre: Multiplying Congregations Project (JC) project was a joint initiative between the Cathedral and the Diocese. The five-year project was funded by the Church Commissioners' SDF programme, with £1 million from 2017 to 2022, to support major change projects 'which lead to a significant difference in dioceses' mission and financial strength'.¹⁰

1.1 Joshua Centre Project: Multiplying Congregations Project

The focus of the Joshua Centre was on 'Multiplying Congregations', which reflected the Diocesan headline for 'a Bigger Church to make a Bigger Difference, more people knowing Jesus and more justice in the world'.¹¹ Outlining how to achieve this Bishop Paul said, 'I am convinced that the royal road to church growth, across the Church of England, is the multiplication of Congregations within our neighbourhoods and networks'.¹² The JC sought to achieve the Diocese's priorities by reaching 900 people to become new disciples through the support of 30 well-trained and excellently supported leaders of new congregations. Among the 30 new leaders, it was anticipated ten new ordinands would be identified. Leader development and congregational multiplication were supported through a new resource hub, which included a small team based at St James House, the Diocese head office, and experienced practitioners. As well as leadership support, new congregations were offered start-up grants, which could be used to employ lay leaders, pay for room hire, equipment, etc. Table 1 shows the timeline of activities.

³ www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/2019StatisticsForMission.pdf

⁴ www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/statistics-mission-2020

⁵ *Parish Finance Statistics 2019* www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/Parish%20Finance%20Statistics%202019.pdf

⁶ *Parish Finance Statistics 2020* www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/Parish%20Finance%20Statistics%202020.pdf

⁷ *British Social Attitudes Survey* www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39293/1_bsa36_religion.pdf

⁸ <https://liverpool.anglican.org/about-us/liverpool-dbf/vision/>

⁹ https://issuu.com/liverpoolcathedral/docs/a5_strategic_plan_summary_feb14_web

¹⁰ www.churchofengland.org/about/renewal-reform/funding-mission-and-growth/strategic-development-funding

¹¹ <https://liverpool.anglican.org/making-it-easier-parishes/how-to-make-a-bigger-difference/>

¹² <https://joshuacentre.org.uk/>

Table 1: Timeline of Joshua Centre activities¹³

Year	Activity	Description
2017	Project staff recruited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director for Multiplying Congregations, Administrator, Resources Officer - Set-up of Project Management Group and Steering Committee - Staff induction
	Mapping activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diocesan missional activities and identifying gaps - Vision-casting strategy mapped
	Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Office and equipment set up
	Congregations identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimum of 3 identified - Initial conversations started
2018–2022	Identifying and supporting remaining congregations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying remaining 27 congregations - Training and ongoing support

2 Overview

2.1 Objective

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the implementation of the JC project, to provide an evidence-based analysis of how the project has contributed to developing a realistic, replicable, sustainable and scalable model for launching new congregations, fully embedding a diocesan strategy for the ongoing multiplication of congregations. The JC Terms of Reference seek to evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project, identifying key lessons and recommendations to inform future initiatives.

The primary audience for this report comprises the Church Commissioners, bishops, archbishops and relevant Diocese staff. The deliverables were developed with a view to providing information beyond the main audience, including Fit for Mission (FFM) and wider Church of England initiatives on establishing new lay-led congregations. It is anticipated that the report will be made public so that others may learn from the intervention.

2.2 Assessment questions

The main assessment questions aimed to draw out findings regarding the effectiveness of the intervention in multiplying congregations within the Diocese of Liverpool. New congregation leaders, JC project staff and relevant stakeholders were interviewed as part of the evaluation. Table 2 summarises the evaluation questions.

¹³ *Multiplying Congregations Bid Document.*

Table 2: Evaluation questions

Question area ¹⁴	Suggested questions	Sub-questions
Relevance and appropriateness	Did the project effectively address the Diocesan vision to multiply congregations?	What, if any, were the changes to the original project design? How were new congregations identified?
	How did the project design serve the needs of the new congregations?	How were lay leaders recruited and supported? Did the project support geographic and ecclesiological mix and specific commitments to young people and Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities?
Effectiveness	To what extent were the project’s specific objectives achieved?	Were leaders of new congregations enabled and supported to develop their community? How effective was the project in connecting with people outside of the Church of England network?
		What feedback mechanisms were put in place and/or strengthened?
Impact	Did the project achieve the intended results?	What were the project’s actual vs intended results? What were the unintended results?
		How have the main challenges with delivering the project been addressed, particularly as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic?
Efficiency	To what extent did the project represent value for money?	Did the project provide value for money compared to traditional church plants? How did cost drivers lead to project outcomes being met?
		What external contributions did the project benefit from (financial and non-financial)?
Sustainability	How sustainable are the results of the project?	How did the project help to build the capacity of lay leaders and new communities?

¹⁴ Definitions from www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

		What was done to build and mainstream the JC project within the Diocese of Liverpool?
		What was done to build and maintain institutional memory within the Diocese of Liverpool?
		What activities are likely to continue and why?
		To what extent was an exit strategy developed and implemented?

2.3 Approach and methodology

The scope of the evaluation was to collect primary data from those involved with the JC project. The primary data would then be supplemented with secondary data collected through the JC project such as application forms, quarterly reviews, and a project- and grant-monitoring spreadsheet. The evaluation selected a representative sample of stakeholders, including JC staff, Diocese staff, clergy and lay leaders. A survey was sent to all lay leaders. Five new congregations were also visited. Representatives of new congregations that subsequently closed were invited to participate in the evaluation, but with a limited response from two clergy only. Key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted by Zoom, and recorded and transcribed using Grain. Learning was also part of the review.

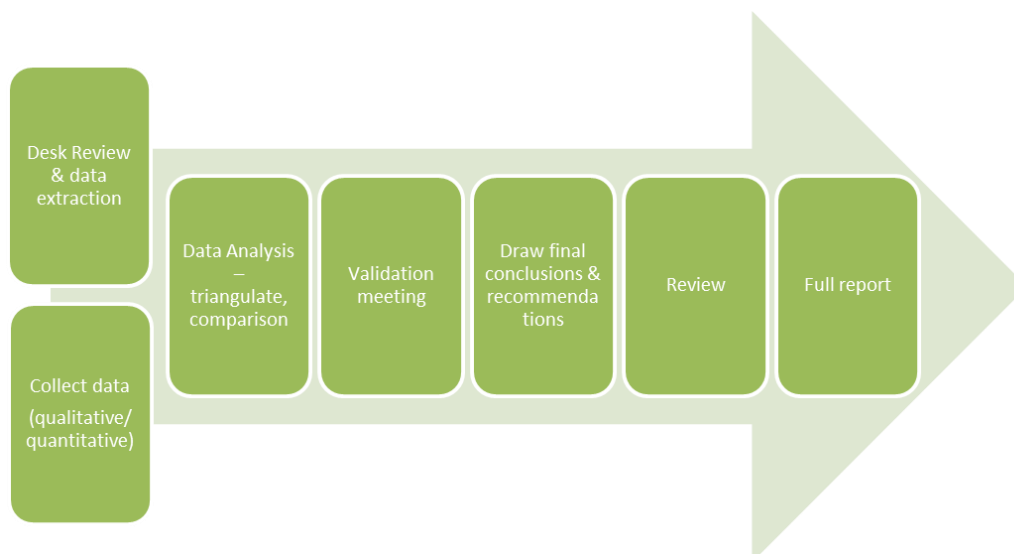
Before conducting the primary research, a systematic desk review of the available literature was undertaken. The insight gained from this was used to identify information gaps and focus areas for stakeholder-based data collection. Qualitative data was obtained through semi-structured KIIs, FGDs, survey responses, visits to new congregations and a JC project celebration event. Quantitative survey data was matched against JC project data to generate additional insight. Data collection methods are listed in Table 3. The evaluation was conducted during May–June 2022.

Table 3: Summary of data collection methods and tools

Activity	Completed	Data collection tools
Document review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All relevant project documents - External evaluations and reports 	Key findings template
KIIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 17 interviews conducted via Zoom 	Semi-structured interview guidelines
FGDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 FGDs (10 participants) 	Focus group guidelines
New congregation visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 new congregations - Attended JC project celebration 	Observations and conversations with lay leaders and attendees
Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 lay leaders 	Structured questions, using Alchemer survey software

2.4 Analysis and reporting

Figure 1: Integras Consulting evaluation process



Standardised KII and FGD guides were developed to capture data systematically. A survey was sent to all 'live' congregations. An overall analysis framework was populated for each question to support triangulation of data from different sources. Findings were presented to and validated by the representatives of the JC Steering Group and Board at the end of the data collection.

2.5 Limitations

The evaluation was primarily qualitative, collecting information on the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Limitations of the evaluation included:

- Although we asked to we were unable to speak to lay leaders who had been involved with new congregations that had started but were no longer running.
- The total population of church plants within the evaluation (44) and the number of survey responses received (16) is smaller than would normally be analysed with the statistical methods used in this evaluation. The findings from the quantitative analysis should therefore be considered indicative.
- Survey responses were only received from congregations that continued beyond Q1 2022. This means that the evaluation has been unable to assess the impact of some factors on the extent to which congregations were successful and sustainable, such as the usefulness of training; how well supported leaders felt; how grant money was spent; the level of support to new congregations provided by paid and volunteer leaders; and how necessary JC grant funding was perceived to be.
- Some attendance data was missing, which left gaps of one or two quarters, but data for the subsequent and preceding quarters. In these cases, estimated data was substituted for these gaps using a linear trend between the quarters before and after the gap, except where this substitution created a maximum attendance for the calendar year above any reported data, in which case the maximum reported average weekly attendance in the same calendar year was used as the upper limit.
- The experiences of new congregations started prior to the pandemic, which may potentially have led to recall bias.
- Clergy in other parishes not involved with the project were not interviewed, as this was not part of the scope of the evaluation

3 Research Findings

3.1 Relevance

Project design

The JC project was well designed. The five-year project aimed to establish 30 new congregations across the Diocese, led by 30 trained lay leaders. Each new congregation would be allocated £20,000 over a five-year period, working from a grant of £6,000 in year one, decreasing year on year to receive £2,000 in year five, with the aim of becoming financially self-sustaining by the end of the JC project. The leaders of new congregations were to be supported by a small team at St James House to provide an ‘ethos [which] is intensely relational; one of high accountability and low control’.¹⁵

The project was a joint bid submitted by the Diocese of Liverpool and Liverpool Cathedral. Canon Richard White, a keen pioneer of new congregations, was already in post and employed by Liverpool Cathedral. A new individual, was recruited for the Director of Multiplying Congregations role through a formal recruitment process. However, when the Director of the JC left early on in the project, the roles of Director of the JC and Director of Multiplying Congregations were subsumed into one role as Director of the JC. There were two administrators during the lifetime of the project. In September 2020, a leadership coach was recruited for two days a week, to provide additional support to the Director of the JC and the new congregations. A resource officer was not recruited, and work was temporarily outsourced to a consultant to develop the JC website.

Due to the impact of Covid-19, the JC project was granted a two year no-cost extension until June 2024. New congregations recruited from March 2022 were allocated a reduced grant of £12,000 and supported by the leadership coach, whose hours were reduced to one day a week starting in July 2022. By the end of June 2022, the leadership coach was the only remaining member of staff employed by the JC project.

Table 4 identifies the key project objectives outlined in the initial SDF bid, which have been followed overall. There were a few design changes, most notably changing references to the target of reaching 900 *new disciples* to *new attendees*. The project then also collected data on new disciples, referring to people who were previously walking away from Jesus, but who were now walking towards Jesus. Other changes were (1) the training of a team, rather than one individual per new congregation; and (2) adopting an alternative training programme to the LML model.

Table 4: Changes in project design

Original project objectives:	Changes and why they occurred
900 new disciples	- Wording of ‘new disciples’ was ambiguous and it was unclear how this would be measured – the Steering Group and Board agreed to count <i>new attendees</i> as both unchurched and churched
30 trained leaders	- Expanded to train a team, rather than just one individual leader
Training using Local Missional Leaders (LML) model	- LML framework not used; other training used instead, firstly Cultivate a lay leaders course and then Godsend training materials

¹⁵ *Multiplying Congregations SDF Bid Stage 2.*

Director of the JC Director of Multiplying Congregations Resource officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due to staff changes, the roles of Director of the JC and Director of Multiplying Congregations became one - Website development contracted out to web designer - Leadership coach appointed on part-time basis from September 2020
30 new congregations, 10 ordinands Creation of a resource hub administrator post	- No change
Funding allocation	- Allocation of funding changed from £20,000 per congregation to £12,000 from March 2022 near the project close date
Project end (June 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2-year no-cost extension until June 2024 <p>Although the JC project has formally ended and will not be recruiting any new congregations, the extension continues to employ a leadership coach for one day a week to oversee the newer congregations recruited before the end of June 2022, ensuring grants are delivered and grant agreements fulfilled</p>

Promoting the JC project, appointing lay leaders and recruiting new congregations

The JC was promoted through various meetings with the synod, area deans and PCCs, and through the JC website and promotional materials such as pens and postcards. In general, potential lay leaders were identified by local parish clergy. Clergy then applied or encouraged lay leaders to apply to the JC for help to establish the new congregation.

Developing congregations within particular demographics and particular constituencies

The project proposal was keen to understand how to develop and multiply congregations within particular demographics and constituencies. These were low-income areas, Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) populations, children and young adults, and different ecclesiologies.

Although the JC project was promoted widely across the Diocese, it was very much reliant on (1) the willingness of ordinands to nurture new congregations; and (2) having lay leaders available to lead them. As a result, the new congregations were developed organically within the parish. **Overall, there was a good geographical spread across the Diocese, which did target low-income areas.** In practice, the parishes that were involved tended to be from a more evangelical tradition. New congregations for children and young adults were recruited, but in the main these were affected by Covid-19, and therefore many were not sustained. **The JC project was successful in establishing new congregations amongst refugees and asylum seekers within Liverpool city,** although more established BAME groups such as African, Caribbean and Chinese communities were not represented.

Table 5: Extent to which JC project was able to target groups identified in the SDF bid

Target groups	JC in practice
Low-income areas	- Good geographical spread across the Diocese, which included low-income areas
Different ecclesiologies	- Favoured more evangelical and charismatic traditions
Children and young adults	- New congregations were recruited, but not sustained

BAME

- Focus on refugees and asylum seekers.
- Established BAME groups not represented



Layleaders and volunteers at Faith Cafe

Training of lay leaders

Training of leaders focused on building a team, rather than on training individuals. There was an expectation by the JC project leaders that lay leaders who chose to be part of the team to establish a new congregation would participate in the training. At the time of the evaluation, over 70 leaders had been recruited and trained as part of the project. The SDF bid originally identified that the LML model for nurturing lay leaders would be followed. It appears that there was no specific decision not to use the LML model other than that the lead for LML within the Diocese left for another role and that focus of LMLs was on training an individual rather than the training of of a team.¹⁶

Consequently, the project adopted Cultivate, a lay leaders training course which was in the process of being developed through Transforming Wigan, another SDF project. The decision was subsequently made to use Godsend materials, which were developed by a Church of England support hub for establishing and supporting new congregations.¹⁷ The training followed the schedule shown in Table 6.

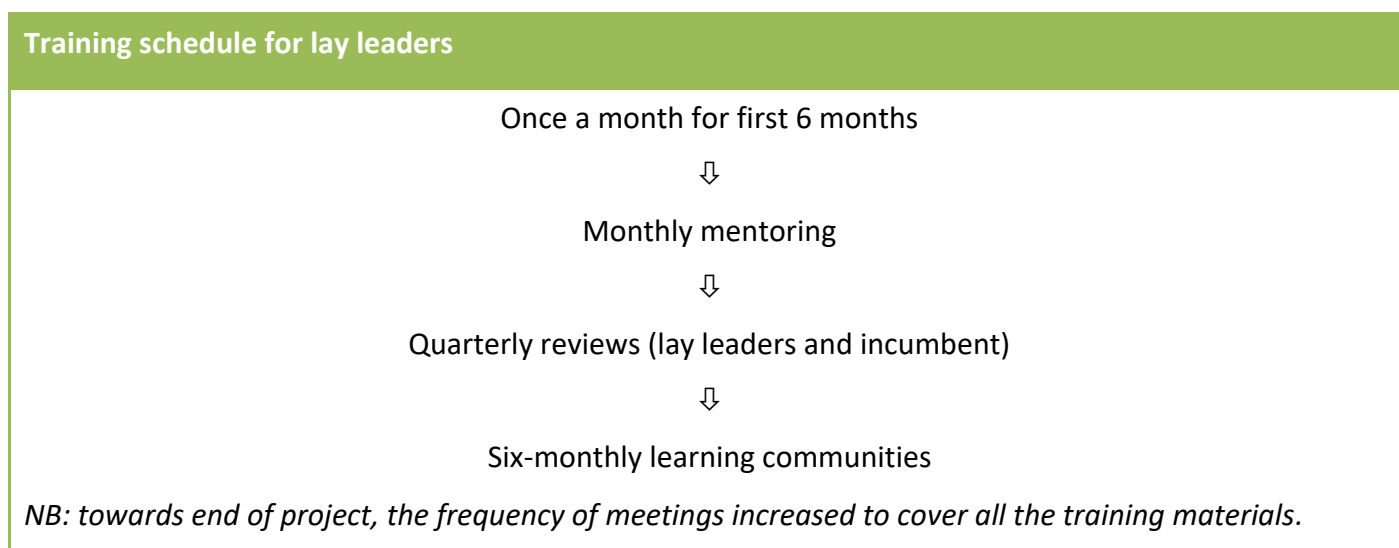
¹⁶ Interviews with stakeholders.

¹⁷ <https://churchsupporthub.org/fxgreenhouse/new-to-godsend/>

The training was delivered in-house by the Director of the JC and from September 2020 onwards the leadership coach, also.

*The training I attended both in person and on Zoom was motivating, interesting, useful and relevant.*¹⁸

Table 6: Outline of training schedule



Pre-pandemic, training was held in-person and included a meal and refreshments, giving leaders an opportunity to talk with other leaders, swap experiences and learn from each other. Delivery of training moved onto Zoom once Covid-19 restrictions were implemented. During the pandemic, additional one-off motivational talks were also organised with outside speakers. There was mixed feedback from lay leaders and clergy about the training delivered via Zoom: some found it helpful as it saved on travel time and was supportive when people could not meet in person; whereas others found it was something to be endured.

*Zoom was necessary for the time. It was not enjoyable. Prayer by Zoom we could cope with.*¹⁹

Attendance at training varied according to different teams. Some lay leaders found that meetings clashed with work and family commitments, or that there was difficulty with transport.²⁰ One incumbent also stated that problems with access to training was a Diocese-wide issue and not specific to the JC project.

*Unfortunately, I was only able to attend one of the in person training sessions due to weekend, family commitments. The most useful thing about this event was getting to meet somebody else running a similar ministry. It was always great to get together to pray for each other's projects on Zoom.*²¹

The training was not systematically evaluated, relying on verbal feedback and lay leaders completing quarterly reports. Just under two thirds (62%) of all survey respondents found the training very or extremely useful, with 38% finding it slightly or moderately useful. No survey respondents found it not useful at all.

¹⁸ Lay leader, survey response.

¹⁹ Lay leader, survey.

²⁰ FGD feedback with lay leaders and clergy, survey with lay leaders

²¹ Lay leader.

It took about 2.5 years for the centre to find a good rhythm of training and development. It changed a lot at first, partly due to personnel changes and just working out what worked and what didn't. I also just couldn't get anyone from our leadership team to any of the training because they all had full-time jobs and families and going on my own definitely limited the benefits of some of the training.²²

3.2 Effectiveness

Supporting lay leaders to establish new congregations

The authors of the SDF bid for 'Multiplying Congregations' had developed a clear pathway for establishing new congregations, which had a two-stage application process (see Appendix 2). Each stage was reviewed by the JC Steering Group. If the Steering Group perceived that an application was 'chasing the money' or 'lacked vision', the application would be turned down.²³

If a new lay leader or incumbent was keen and had vision, but needed help with planning and detail, then the JC staff would provide additional support and advice in helping devise a suitable plan to complete the application. If successful, lay leaders would be expected to attend training and quarterly review meetings, along with the responsible clergy from the parish. Feedback from **clergy and lay leaders who participated in the evaluation stated that they found the structure of the application process and quarterly reviews helpful** as it held them to account and helped them to maintain focus on the outcome.

JC staff provided formal and informal support throughout the application process, training and quarterly reviews, sharing learning from other new congregations, as well as being available by phone. Some 94% of survey respondents (Figure 2) agreed or strongly agreed that they had been excellently supported by the centre. **Lay leaders noted how important meeting with JC staff was, particularly during the pandemic, to keep leaders motivated and congregations going.**

Dan was really good in the application process; he came to us, and spoke with me and the curate at the time. He talked it all through with us. We were actually going to put two applications in at the same time, but talking with Dan we worked out it was best just to put one in. So that was insightful... When we started doing quarterly reviews, Ant had requested if he could meet with us over Zoom, which was great, because he was a youth worker before and he was just really encouraging. He's a good guy. He's a great listener, really wise and really chilled. Because at the time I was chatting to him it was during the pandemic and lockdown. And I was like, how do you do youth work? He was very calming and he chatted it through with you so you could come to the conclusion as to what would be best for this congregation. So, yeah, they were really good.²⁴

I thought the quarterly meetings were good. It focused us, particularly as this was a project lay people ran along side of me. It meant there was a good system that's built up and is transferred into a supervision structure for us. So having a routine catch-up... we're talking the same language, I think it has been really helpful for us.²⁵

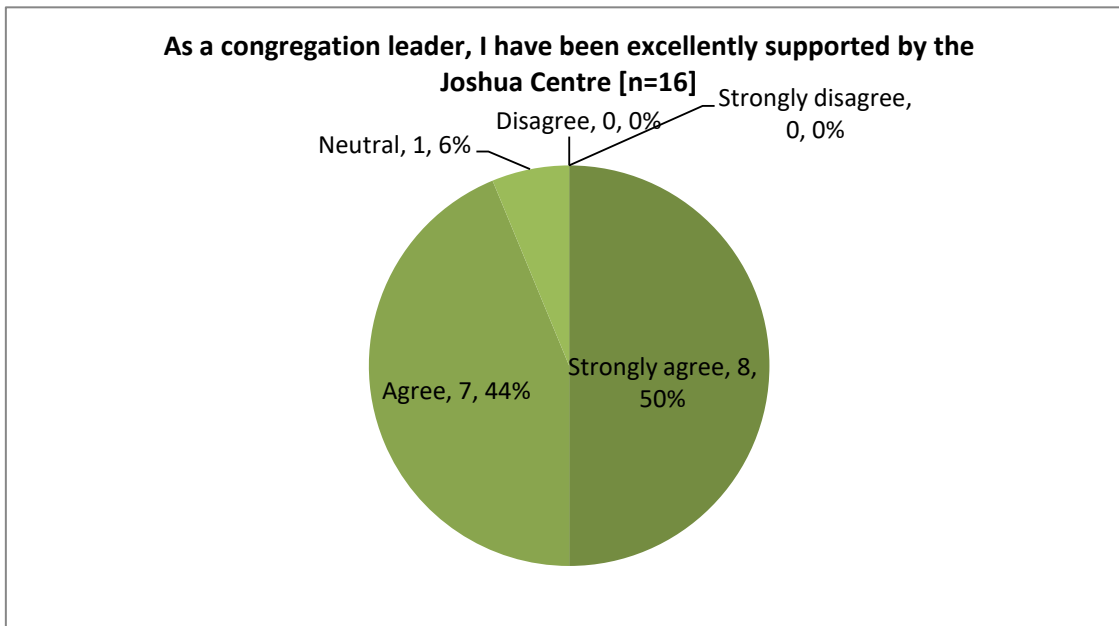
²² *Ibid.*

²³ Stakeholder interviews.

²⁴ Lay leader, FGD.

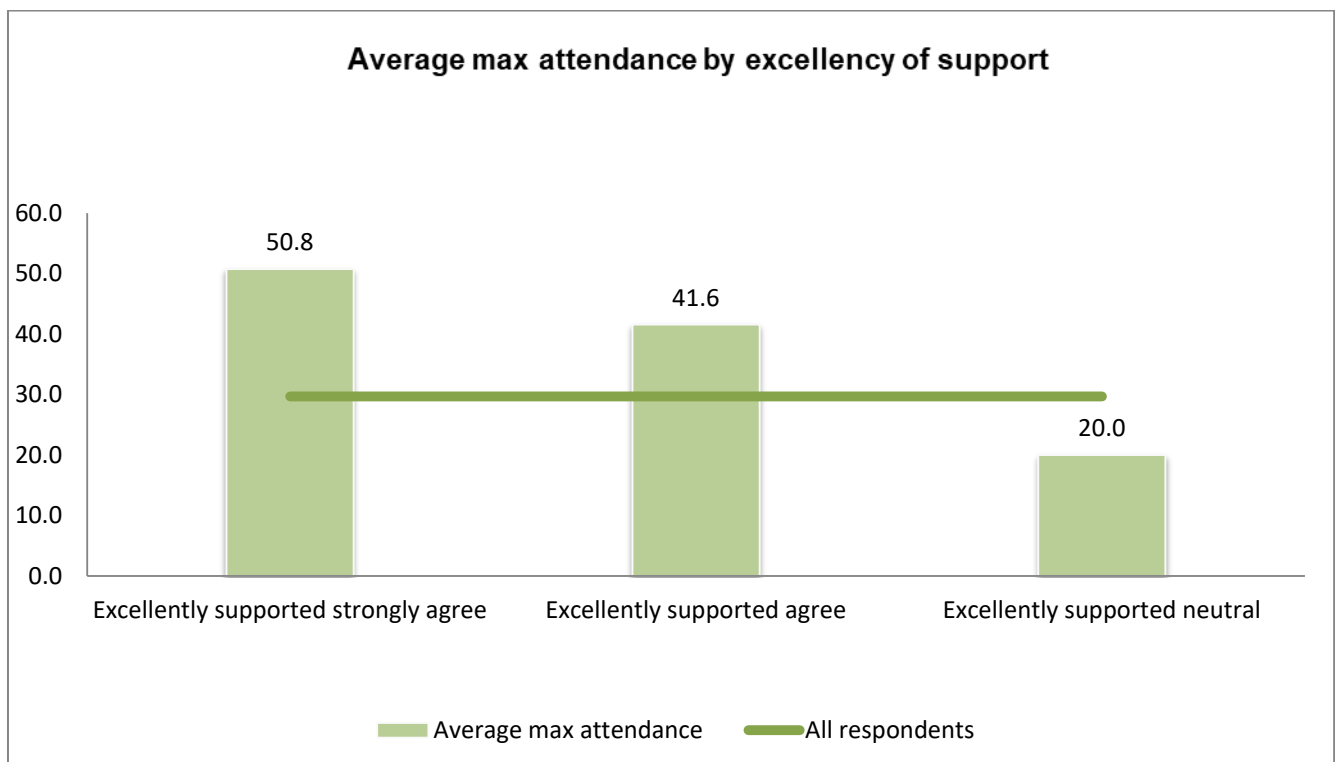
²⁵ Incumbent, FGD.

Figure 2: Excellence of support provided to lay leaders by the Joshua Centre



There was a positive relationship between the extent to which lay leaders thought they had been excellently supported and average attendance figures (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Average max. attendance by excellency of JC support



Some established congregations struggled to understand the need for new congregations. They felt threatened by the idea or there was an expectation that new congregations would then act as a conduit

to feed new attendees into the established congregation.²⁶ The Director of the JC was able to speak to the PCC and ‘open up the culture’ of starting new congregations.²⁷

One lay leader had tried to establish a new congregation prior to applying to the JC project, but had found it difficult and isolating due to lack of support from the established church. However, subsequent support from the project had helped develop the new congregation and the team.²⁸

Training

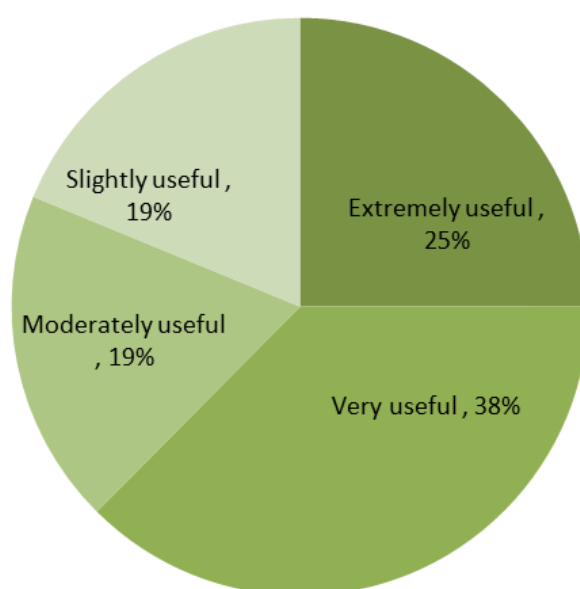
All survey respondents found the training useful to some degree. Just under two thirds (62%) found the training very or extremely useful, with 38% finding it slightly or moderately useful. No respondents selected ‘not at all useful’ (Figure 4).

The training I attended both in person and on Zoom was both motivating, interesting, useful and relevant. The prayer meetings were helpful as was the reassurance of being able to contact any of the JC team for help, advice or a chat.²⁹

Training was good but the sessions were too full and rushed.³⁰

Figure 4: Usefulness of training for lay leaders

How useful was the training you attended for the new congregation? (n=16)



A key element of the training that the survey responses highlighted was how useful lay leaders found being able to share their experiences, difficulties and learning, as well as being able to encourage one another. Interviews and survey responses from lay leaders emphasised that they considered that learning and sharing with other congregation leaders was vital as well as being part of something bigger. Figure 5 shows 94% agreeing that meeting with other project leaders was the most important element of training, which should be taken forward in the future. This was followed by in-person training (75%),

²⁶ Incumbent, FGD. Lay leaders, FGD.

²⁷ Incumbent.

²⁸ Visit to new congregation.

²⁹ Lay leader, survey response.

³⁰ Ibid.

quarterly reviews (64%), training via Zoom (56%) and meeting other project leaders via Zoom (50%). There was more support for the Cultivate materials (44%) compared to the Godsend materials (25%).

*It was really good to connect with other people doing similar things and to have the head-space as a team to reflect on what we were doing and what we needed to change. The material provided was a useful starting point for reflection, but it was the space created to reflect with others that was most useful.*³¹

Figure 5: Future training for lay leaders

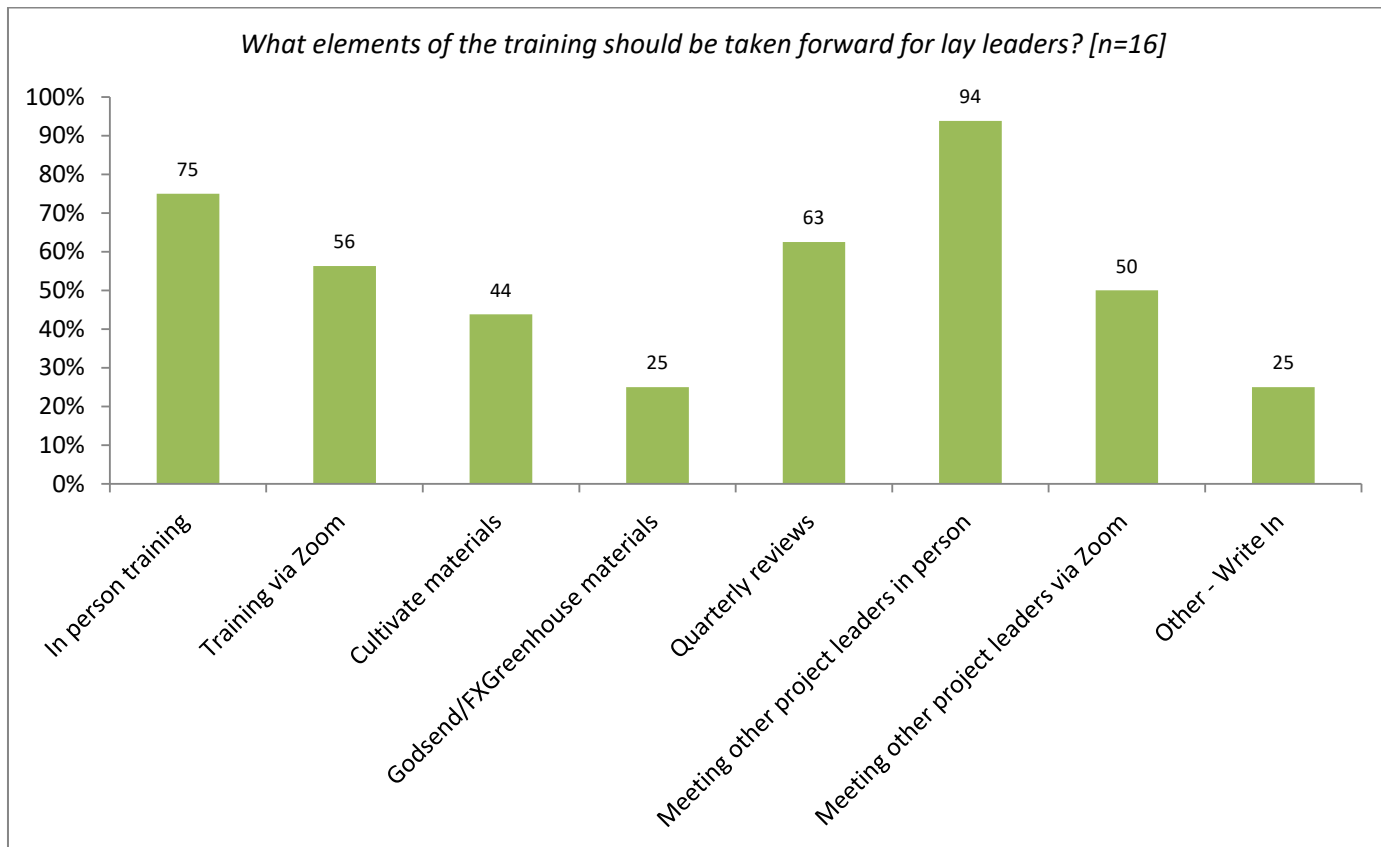
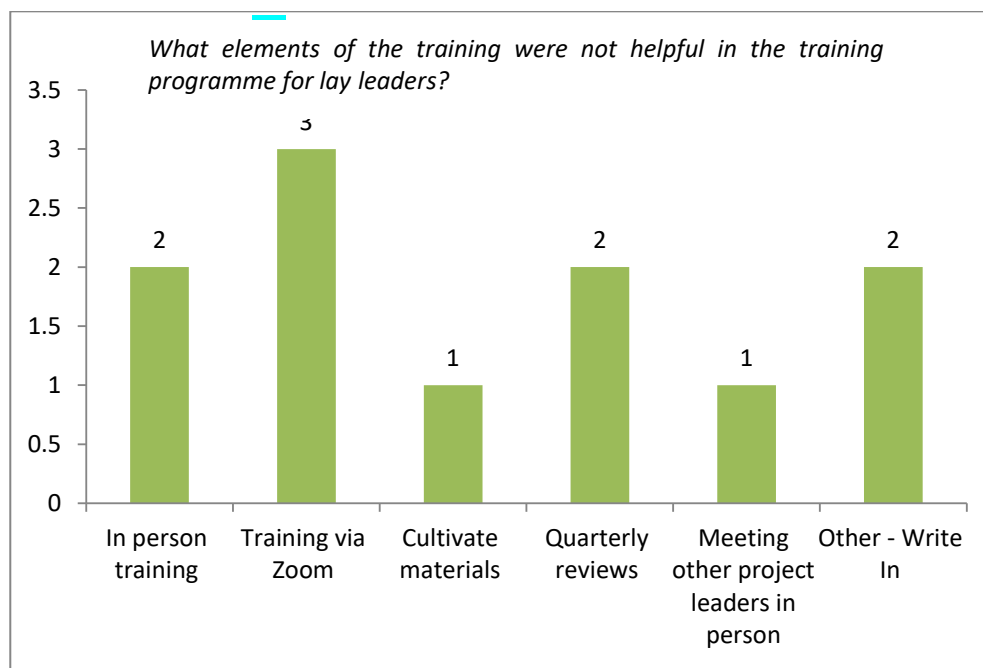


Figure 6 shows a few survey respondents identified certain areas of training as not being helpful: training via Zoom (3), in-person training (2), quarterly reports (2), as there was ‘no consistency’ and another said ‘[quarterly] forms ask all the wrong questions’.

³¹ Ibid.

Figure 6: Elements of training that layleaders did not find helpful



Parish clergy

The JC project was based on the assumption that there would be support for establishing new congregations from clergy within the parish. As a consequence, if a potential lay leader sought to establish a new congregation without the support of their clergy, the JC project would not progress the application any further. One stakeholder described the incumbents' involvement as a 'coalition of the willing'.³² The type of support incumbents provided lay leaders varied: some supported from a distance, whereas others were engaged and regularly participated in the quarterly reviews.

Feedback from FGDs with clergy found that the JC project gave them an opportunity to focus on developing lay leaders and new congregations:

Now for us, it [the quarterly review] really helped facilitate, and I think it pushed us further... every three months when it was time for a review, we would groan and, go, oh, no, we've got to do the three months review, but it was actually always, really pretty, very productive. We always felt really encouraged afterwards. I think Dan helped to see things we hadn't noticed, you know, just things that we'd sort of taken for granted or haven't recognized. So, it was a really good tool to help facilitate what we were doing. And in some ways it gave us a language to use.³³

Some incumbents were keen to establish new congregations but did not have identified lay leaders, though in a few cases the JC permitted the application to go through. Some clergy also fed back that it was at times difficult to identify and recruit lay leaders, particularly in areas of deprivation:

the problem I've got is getting a team together... some of the new mums are really keen to be involved, but they're very, very young in their faith.³⁴

³² Stakeholder interview

³³ Incumbent, FGD

³⁴ Incumbent, FGD

we're in one of the most deprived communities and leadership is always difficult. So we've been trying to grow leaders from within, but it's hard. So I have a couple of leaders who set it up [the new congregation] and really have [been] running it since³⁵

The evaluation sought to establish whether the new congregations were extra work or a burden to participating clergy. Clergy who participated in the focus groups were in favour of developing lay leaders and supporting new congregations.

I think just the nature of the way I've seen ministry change for me and what I've had to do is a lot of it is about supporting others, mentoring others, releasing others. And then if you can see that as bearing fruit, then you know, what they're able to do is far more than I could do if I was just doing it on my own. So, yeah, it's, it's more work, but actually that's in a way, the sort of oversight that we ended up having, and also just very much my view of what we're called to is about releasing others, supporting others, enabling lay people. So it's great.³⁶

Yeah... in one sense it is a lot more work... but it's not the type of work you think 'Oh, goodness me I've got a supervision meeting with these people today'. It's been a delight, the project has thrived, the lay leaders are really keen and we've seen new people come in... it's not the kind of work I'm going to begrudge when you've got to meet up with keen lay people who are running it. And it's meant we've moved forward as a parish in many ways. It's given us a new enthusiasm.³⁷

Feedback mechanism

The JC was the main hub for collating data and feedback from each of the new congregations and disseminating the required information. **There was a good structure to manage the JC project, with feedback from new congregations to bishops and the Diocesan Oversight Team.** A more rigorous method for collecting data and reviewing processes was instituted when there was a change of personnel on the JC Board.

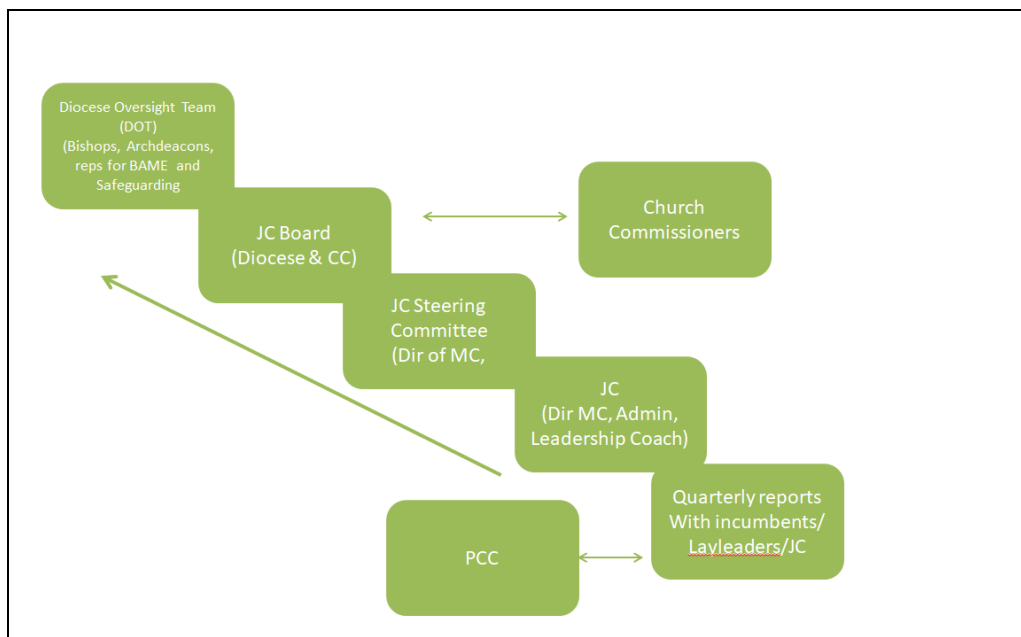
Information was also collated and posted on the JC website, including blogs from new congregations, though this became less consistent as the project was affected by Covid-19. There was no proactive collating of case studies and individual stories that were regularly communicated to the wider Diocese. In May 2022, a celebration event was held bringing together all the new congregations and their leaders, providing an opportunity to share stories and experiences with a wider audience, in particular the Steering Group and Board.

³⁵ Incumbent, FGD

³⁶ Incumbent, FGD

³⁷ Incumbent, FGD

Figure 7: JC Project feedback mechanism



the evening of sharing stories, maybe that's what we needed to do more really, share a variety of stories... I think that the Joshua Centre hasn't really been celebrated more... We go to the Diocesan advisory team meetings and I think it's been overlooked. It's almost been a little bit of the Cinderella I think, I don't know if I'm right in that, but that's been my feeling that people haven't celebrated it or rejoiced it or said, look, look, what's going on.³⁸

3.3 Efficiency

Overall the grant was allocated according to the SDF bid, with no major changes to the funding allocation. The main changes within the budget were associated with staffing: (1) a consultant was contracted to develop the JC project website; (2) employing a leadership coach for two days a week from September 2020 and (3) due to the impact of Covid-19 there was an underspend, resulting in a request to the Church Commissioners for a two year no-cost extension to June 2024. To pay for the leadership coach, ongoing congregations received a reduced grant of £12,000.

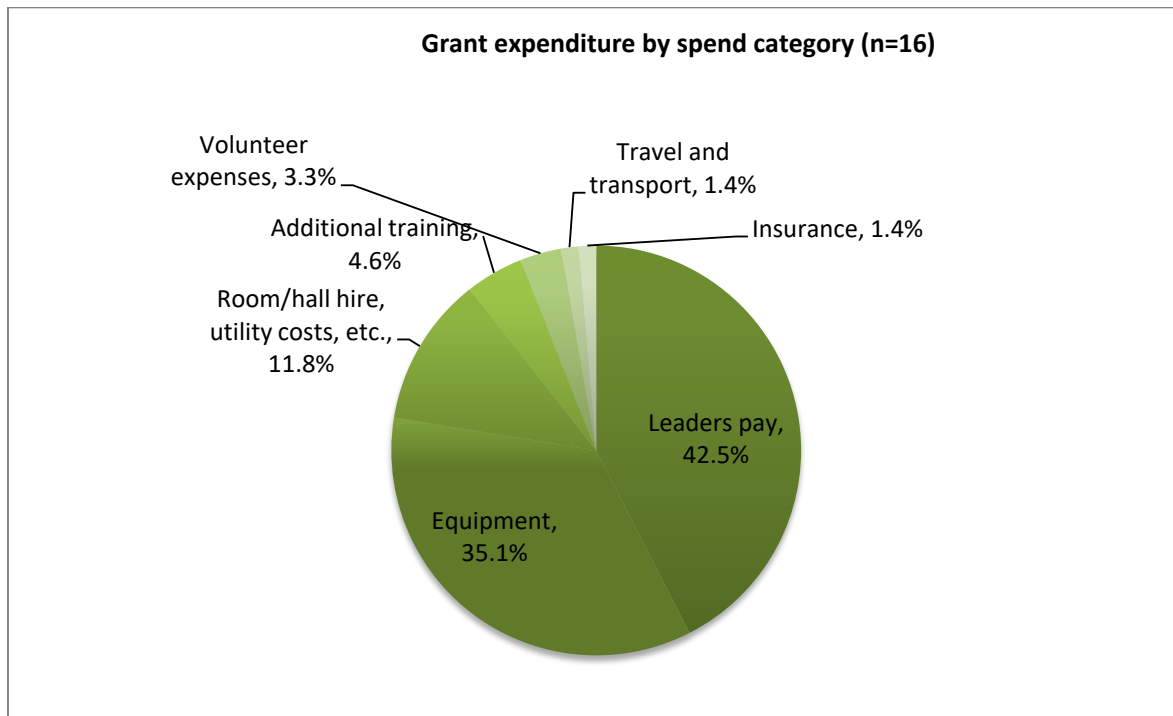
Prior to March 2022 grants were distributed to the new congregations via the PCC, according to the original bid using a sliding scale of £6,000, £5,000, £4,000, £3,000 and £2,000, regardless of individual plans and proposals. There was an annual review for all new congregations. If funding was not spent within 12 months of receiving the grant, or the new congregation was not going according to plan, funding could be stopped after discussion with the JC Steering Group. This was the case with two congregations. It is unclear how well the review process was communicated to lay leaders and clergy.

Grant expenditure

New congregations had autonomy over how they allocated their grant, though initial discussions on how it would be spent (e.g. employing a member of staff, purchasing equipment, etc.) took place during the application process. No data was formally collected on how new congregations spent their grant. Figure 8 shows that pay was the highest proportion of spending among survey respondents (42.5%), with eight of 11 new congregations allocating upwards of 75% of their grant on employing a leader. This was followed by equipment at 35.1% and room/hall hire and utility costs at 11.8%.

³⁸ Incumbent, FGD.

Figure 8: Allocation of grant by new congregations



Other income sources

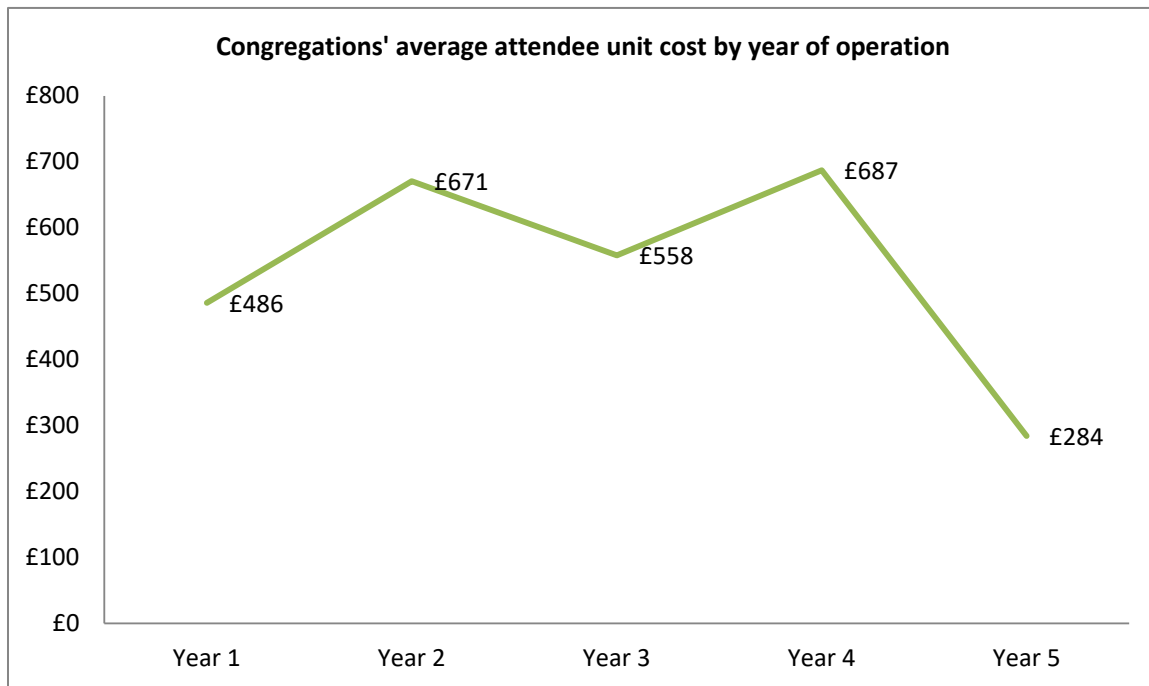
In addition to the grant from the project, just under half of survey respondents had received grants and/or donations from other sources to help with new congregations. Seven of the survey respondents had received a combined total of £35,750 in grants. This figure increased to £120,439 when including StoryHouse.³⁹

Attendee and congregation costs

Figure 9 shows the financial profile of congregations supported by the JC. The average attendee unit cost rose from £486 in Year 1 by 41% over the first four years and then fell to £284 in year 5, 58% of the Year 1 attendee unit cost. This suggests that the JC model is potentially financially sustainable, but not within a five-year period.

³⁹ StoryHouse was an outlier, as it received significant gifts and donations from other sources to establish a new congregation through a café (on a commercial basis) within a town centre. To better reflect the majority of the new congregations, the analysis separated out the findings with and without StoryHouse.

Figure 9: Congregations' average attendee costs (2017–2022)

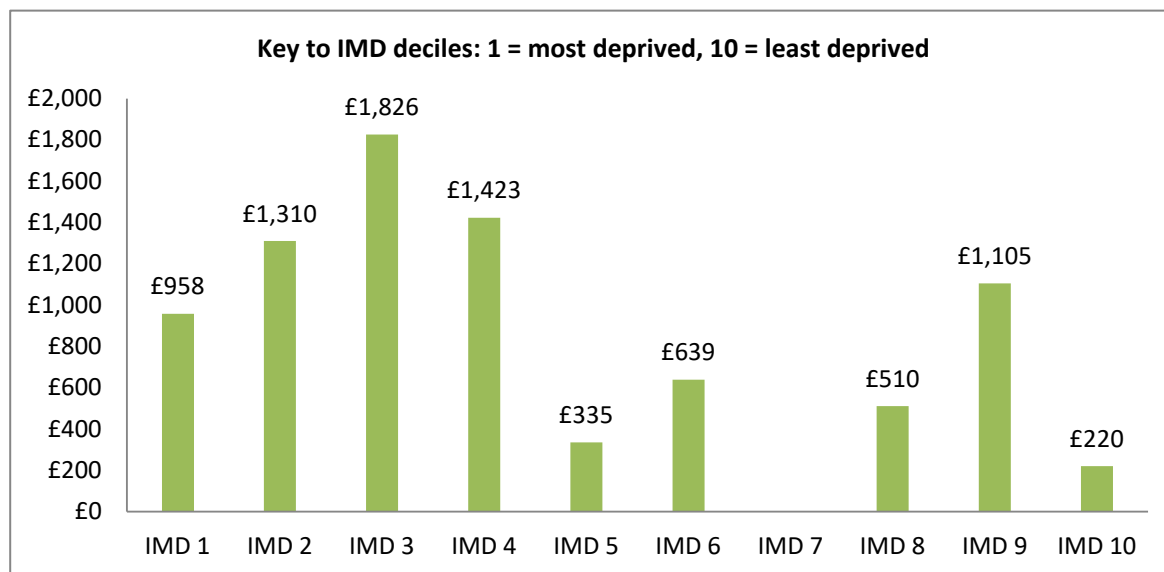


The evaluation established that survey respondents estimated the average ongoing monthly cost to sustain new congregations to be £395 (£1,652 including StoryHouse), but average monthly giving received by new congregations was only £112 (£405 including StoryHouse), less than a third (28.4%) of ongoing costs (24.5% including StoryHouse). This is further evidence that JC congregations did not become financially sustainable during the project period.

New congregations established in areas of deprivation

Figure 10 shows that congregations in the most deprived areas (40%) had higher average unit costs compared to those in the least deprived areas (60%). There was a negative correlation between new congregations' Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score according to their location and monthly giving to new congregations in the most recent quarter. This indicates that new congregations in deprived areas will be less likely to become financially sustainable, or will take longer to become sustainable, compared with congregations in relatively less deprived areas.

Figure 10: Average attendee unit cost by congregations' IMD score (excluding StoryHouse)



Value for money compared to a more traditional church plant

An external church plant (i.e. not Church of England) was examined as a comparator. This was a single church that was planted in the most deprived area of Liverpool city centre in Q1 2021. Its attendee unit cost for all current attendees is £1,294. The rural/urban classification of the external comparator church plant's location is 'major urban conurbation' and it is in the first IMD decile.

Figure 11 shows congregations that had closed had higher average attendee unit costs (£1,337) than those that were continuing (£784). The average unit cost of all congregations (£963) was lower than that of the external comparator church plant (£1,294). This suggests the **JC model for church planting provides is 40% more efficient than traditional church-planting models**. However, when observing congregations established through the JC project in major urban conurbations and the first IMD decile, the unit cost increased to £1,755. This suggests that the JC model for church planting is approximately 36% more expensive/less efficient than more traditional church-planting models in areas of deprivation.

The number of volunteer leaders' hours per week was the strongest contributing factor to attendance and reducing attendee unit costs. Congregations that had higher maximum average weekly attendance per quarter had a higher combination of grant and central costs associated with them. Those congregations that relied more on paid staff than on volunteers were less successful in terms of attendance and attendee unit costs.

Figure 11: Average attendee unit cost compared with external comparator (excluding StoryHouse)



Giving and becoming a self-sustaining congregation

Written into the SDF was the 'expectation that giving from the new congregation will grow annually to meet the shortfall so that by Year Seven the new congregation is self-sufficient'.⁴⁰ Feedback from interviews and FGDs acknowledged that expecting congregations to become financially self-sufficient within the project lifetime was unrealistic, more so given the impact that Covid-19 had on the congregations. Lay leaders and clergy were reluctant to speak about the giving of money, especially in an area of deprivation. However, there were several examples where attendees contributed by giving their time or bringing food as demonstrated in the following feedback:

*We didn't ever feel it was really possible to encourage giving in terms of a base basis, because there are poor families... and food issues as well. But what we did find there was a different generosity, so people would bring a box of cakes, they wanted to give back, they didn't like to just be given to. So there was a real sense of giving, but it wasn't financial... But getting them to give regularly, I think was a step too far really for that community, for those communities.*⁴¹

*Our giving strategy was first to encourage people to give to things beyond themselves rather than to start with 'keeping the roof on the clubhouse'. We do this by sponsoring a child through Compassion. We do frequently get offers of support e.g. the catering, as one of our newest members baked biscuits for the whole congregation on her second week!*⁴²

A number of new congregations raised money for various charities; for example, LifeTime donated all its refreshment monies to selected charities throughout the year and Platform #2 raised £2,035 during Lent to provide tents for displaced families supported by emergency disaster relief organisation ShelterBox.

⁴⁰ *Multiplying Congregations SDF Bid Stage 2.*

⁴¹ Incumbent, FGD

⁴² Lighthouse, *Quarterly Review*, March 2021.

Limited giving within the JC project is also reflected in other research. Eido conducted research with participants of new congregations, finding that ‘identification with the vision of Fresh Expression churches did not always translate to tangible contributions of time and money’; whilst there was an increase of giving by 15%, 31% continued not to give at all.⁴³

Importance of grants in establishing a new congregation

The majority of the new congregations met in buildings owned by the established church; some paid for building hire, others did not. **Some 94% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would not have been able to establish their congregation without a JC grant.** However, there were mixed responses from clergy; some said they would have started a new congregation without the funding, but it would have looked quite different.

We would have found a way to support it one way or another... It [the grant] was a bit of capital. We bought tables and things, so it's definitely been appreciated. But we could have done it with what we had... It was definitely more the people support I think for us⁴⁴

We'd have struggled without the grant to get equipment, hire the room etc., we're financially separate from the church and hadn't convinced [the] church to invest⁴⁵

In terms of starting off, I don't think the grant was massively important... but what we've learned is, if we actually want to grow these congregations and keep them going then we need funding to employ someone for their time and focus... [so] in terms of what we're delivering the funding is going to be vital going forward.⁴⁶



Regular attendees at Platform #2

⁴³ Eido (2022) *Fresh Expressions of Church Fruitfulness Framework*.

⁴⁴ Incumbent, FGD

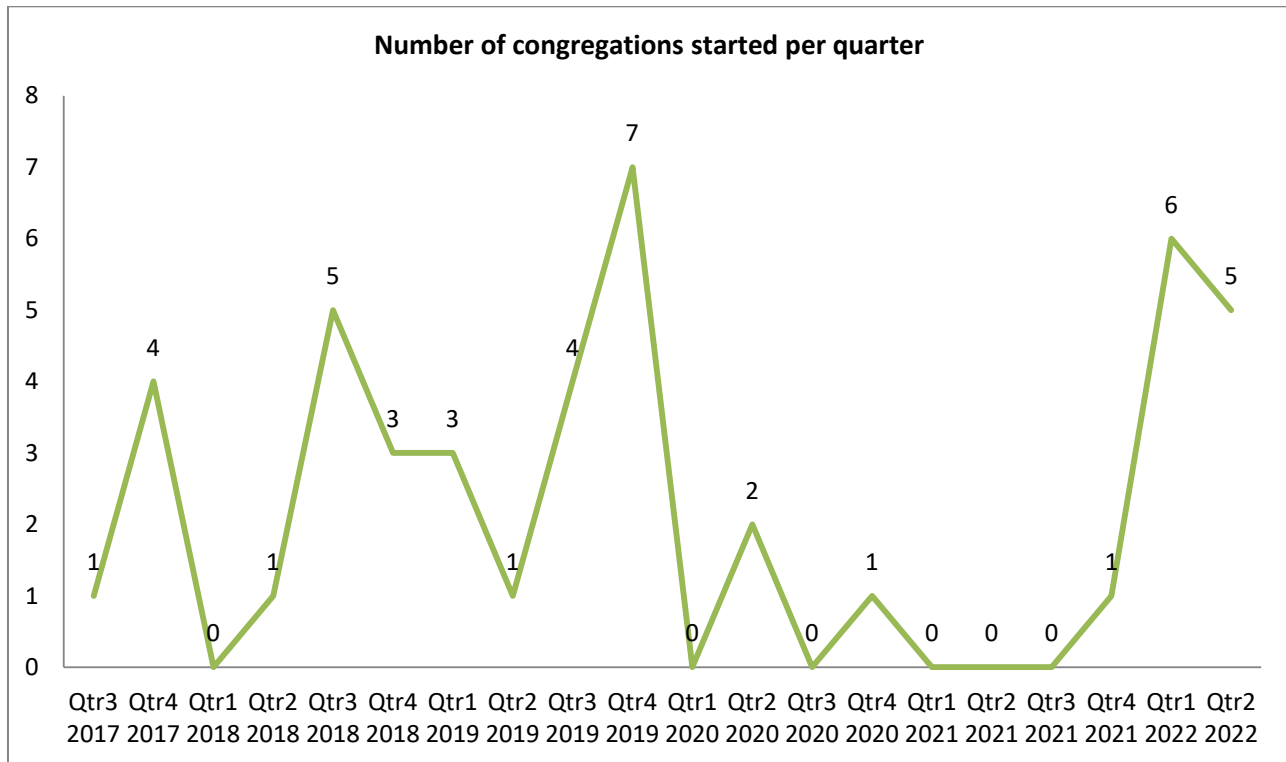
⁴⁵ Lay leader, interview

⁴⁶ Curate, FGD

3.4 Impact

Over the lifecycle of the project, 44 new congregations started; to date, 29 have continued (see Appendix 4). Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, 29 projects had started, but the pandemic significantly impacted the uptake of starting new congregations and contributed to the closure of six congregations. Figure 12 shows the low number of new congregations started between Q1 2020 and Q4 2021, the most acute period of the pandemic, despite a growth in the rate at which new congregations were started up to Q4 2019.

Figure 12: Number of new congregations started per quarter



New congregations sought to reach a range of groups within the communities they were living in: primary schools, asylum seekers and refugees, families, young adults and students; one was intergenerational, specifically targeting young children and people aged 55+. New congregations have established links with their local communities through supporting and working with food banks, setting up and piloting a farmers market, working with local businesses and other charitable organisations. **New congregations have also been successful in engaging and working with people with learning disabilities, as well as physical and mental health issues.** Faith Café has a number of people who are autistic helping serve in the café; one has completed a food hygiene course to be able to work in the kitchen.

*Joshua Centre has given us the push that we needed... and helping me and my team, just to be a bit more, this is where we're headed. Rather than it just being quite open.*⁴⁷

One of the aims was to understand how to target specific ecclesiologies, and BAME, low-income and young people. The JC project has been able to target areas of deprivation and work with young people, though it was impacted by Covid-19 as schools were closed and leaders unable to gain access to school

⁴⁷ Curate, FGD

premises and school children. One project specifically targeting young people closed during the pandemic as leaders were not able to remain in contact with them because they were not part of the established church and personal contact details were not available.

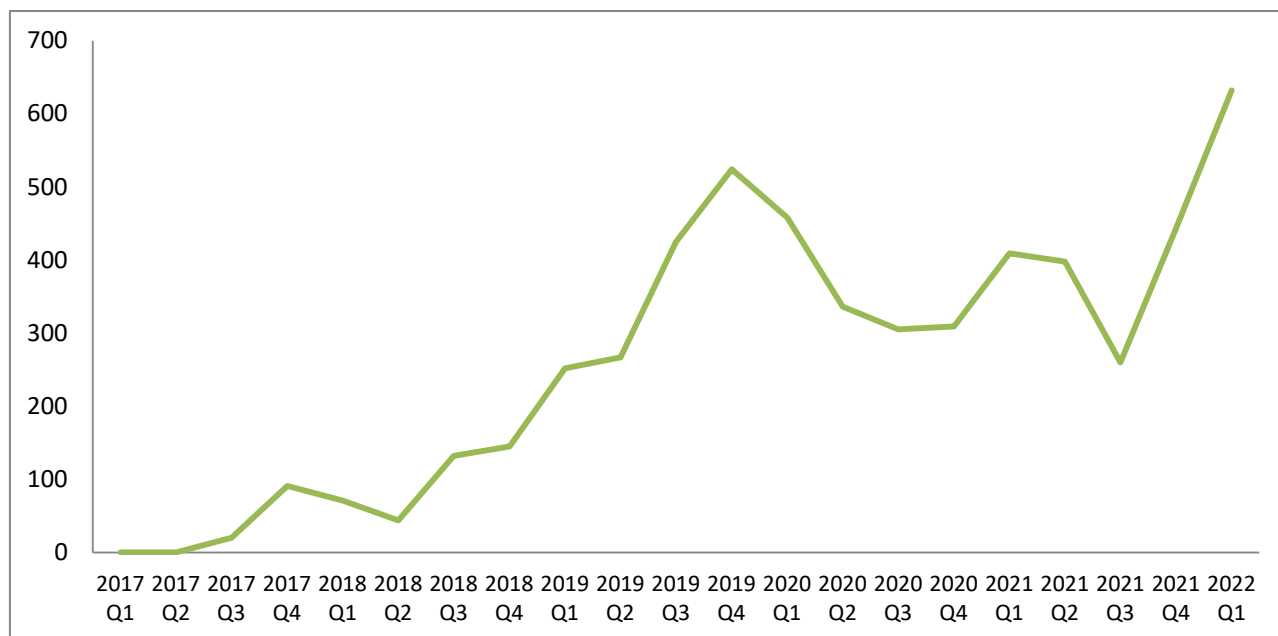
The leaders of new congregations are a mix of volunteers of various ages, mixed genders and paid leaders, some of whom were in post prior to the establishment of the new congregations.

Table 7: Planned activities and actual results

Planned activities	Actual results
30 congregations	29 congregations ongoing
900 new disciples	600+ attendees
30 leaders recruited and trained	70+
10 ordinands	7
Distribution of grants	2-year no-cost extension
Resource hub for ongoing leadership development and congregational multiplication	Resources available on website
New congregations will be self-sustaining and financially viable	1 congregation financially self-sustaining (StoryHouse)
Replication	Embryonic congregation at LifeTime

Impact of Covid-19 and other challenges

Figure 13: Total average weekly attendance figures (2017–2022)



Attendance data was collected but relied on each of the new congregations keeping and submitting records; some of the data is incomplete. The total average weekly attendance during Q1 2022 was 632, which is the closest equivalent to the number of ongoing attendees.⁴⁸ The Covid-19 pandemic appears to have had a significant impact on new congregations, with total attendance falling by 50% over the pandemic period (Figure 13) and six new congregations closing permanently. It is likely that the intended target of 900 would have been reached – and possibly surpassed – had the pandemic not had such a significant impact upon the project as a whole. An extrapolation of growth (using data from Q3 2017 to Q4 2019) shows that **the estimated total number of attendees at JC congregations would have risen to 1,273 by Q1 2022**. In addition, it is likely that more new congregations would have been established earlier in the life of the JC project and subsequently participated in ongoing support for longer.

The impact on medium/long term planning has been immense – a shift from asking ‘where will we be in six months’ to ‘where will we be on Sunday?’⁴⁹

the Joshua Centre encouraged us to persevere – we might have stopped with Covid and everything else, so actually the accountability of it and just the motivation to keep going⁵⁰

New congregations specifically targeting children and young people were particularly affected by the pandemic. There were a number of issues with maintaining contact with this cohort: some were very new groups and contact details were not kept; for those who had contact details, when transitioning onto Zoom leaders had to be compliant with safeguarding procedures and it was also difficult to keep young people engaged remotely for such a long period of time without having contact in person. New congregations who had contact with or met in schools were affected as schools closed their premises to outside activities. Some remained closed during the 2021/2022 academic year.

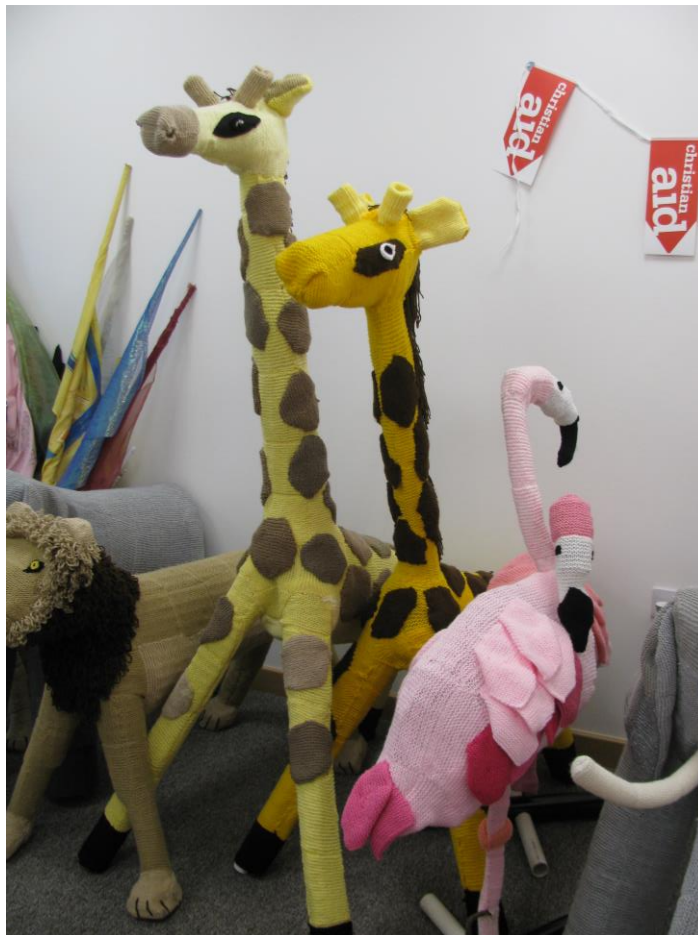
However, some groups such as Rivington were able to maintain some contact by using their grant to develop activity packs for children.⁵¹ LifeTime, an intergenerational group which remained closed throughout the various lockdowns, used the time to develop its team, as well as to plan and create a Noah’s Ark road show.

⁴⁸ However, the total of all congregations’ maximum average weekly attendance is 1,306, which is more likely to be representative of the total number of people who have attended a JC congregation over the life of the project.

⁴⁹ JC survey for new congregation leaders, January 2021.

⁵⁰ Incumbent.

⁵¹ Interview with incumbent.



Noah's Ark animals made by team from LifeTime during lockdown

New congregations have also increased the confidence and faith of lay leaders, as well as giving volunteers a sense of fulfilment.

I've been ill for a long time and not worked for over 30 years. [Being part of the team] has been an amazing experience for me. I look forward to it and feel useful doing something. We pray and share before the meeting – these ladies are amazing⁵²

God has blessed me tremendously and my faith has grown. Dan has been so releasing and affirming. In the past things have been work ethic and responsibility ethic but I've been able to sit back and see what God's doing and not feel spiritually drained. It's released me, I can make mistakes and tell people. I'm still not clear about the future but content.⁵³

Attendees at new congregations are made up of people who broadly fit into three groups: (1) those who have moved from other churches;⁵⁴ (2) those who previously went to church but stopped; and (3) others who are totally new to attending a church. **Attendees have described the new congregations as having 'a real sense of community and belonging',⁵⁵** as well as being welcomed if they came with children and

⁵² Faith Café, lay leader interview

⁵³ LifeTime, lay leader interview

⁵⁴ The target for the project was 'new attendees'; therefore, those who moved from established congregations should not technically be included in the data. However, there is no documentation to identify the proportion of attendees who have moved from established congregations into a new congregation.

⁵⁵ Attendee, StoryHouse.

not feeling judged if the children make a noise, or if they do not attend every week.⁵⁶ Others have just enjoyed the opportunity to socialise with a range of people in a friendly atmosphere, which was not the case in other community groups.⁵⁷

One of the key aims of the new congregations was to ensure that there was an opportunity to share the Christian faith in the most appropriate way for each congregation. Some groups have led more relaxed services, than established churches, starting with refreshments or sharing of meals and a short time of worship. Others have delivered Alpha courses, including Alpha Youth, as well as one-to-one support with a listening ear and praying. During the first lockdown, Church4All put up a 'prayer gate' in the grounds of the church building, which people from the local community could add prayers to.⁵⁸ **Some 22 of the new congregations (including those which closed) reported around 144 (24%) of new attendees being on a journey with Jesus.**⁵⁹ ⁶⁰ This figure is also reflected in Eido's research which found that 29% of respondents had not previously been part of the church network.⁶¹

*God came to me through [being] here. There's companionship and friendship. These people are my family, I can ring anyone. An absolute lifeline for me. I go to a Catholic church, but this is my family.*⁶²

New congregations are dependent on the availability and maturity of leaders. The availability and recruitment of lay leaders was raised as being a challenge by clergy in focus groups and interviews, as well as being reported back in quarterly reviews by lay leaders. There is also the issue of retaining volunteer lay leaders as some work full time and have family commitments; when there are personal pressures, individuals have to step back or resign from the team.

The JC project relied on clergy to *buy in* to the strategy of creating new congregations and supporting lay leaders. One interviewee described the approach as 'passive resistance, meaning that the clergy haven't obstructed the project, but haven't engaged with it either.'⁶³ Leaders of the new congregations have received a varied range of support. Clergy who engaged with the evaluation were more likely to be those who have been supportive of their lay leaders and starting new congregations.

Replication and momentum of starting new congregations within the Diocese

At the time of the evaluation, none of the new congregations had replicated into another congregation. However, LifeTime is planning to establish another group targeting older children with new leaders, so that there is a transition group from the current congregation.

The JC project has built the momentum in parishes to create new congregations. However, it remains unclear if this has made any difference in or had an impact on other parishes across the Diocese that have not been involved with the project. One interviewee said that the geographic distribution was too spread out to create a momentum across the Diocese.⁶⁴

Unintended outcomes

The project had some unexpected outcomes:

⁵⁶ Attendee, Platform #2.

⁵⁷ Attendee, LifeTime.

⁵⁸ Church4All, *Quarterly Review*.

⁵⁹ 'New disciple' refers to someone who was previously walking away from Jesus, but who is now walking towards Jesus.

⁶⁰ Information collected from quarterly report. Note: not all congregations reported back on this figure

⁶¹ Eido (2022) *Fresh Expressions of Church Fruitfulness Framework*.

⁶² LifeTime attendee.

⁶³ Stakeholder interview.

⁶⁴ Stakeholder interview.

- The project increased the faith and confidence of lay leaders.
- There was unexpected support from Hong Kongers who have specifically supported LifeTime rather than the established congregation.
- Relationships developed beyond the initial focus on young children through deepened relationships with parents (e.g. responding to the social need of one family by raising funds for a specially adapted chair).
- Congregations continued despite Covid-19 and used the pandemic as an opportunity to develop and strengthen their teams, as well as plan for when people could meet in person again.
- Staff morale being affected by the impact of the pandemic resulted in a leadership coach being appointed.
- **Some new congregations are now the same size and/or bigger than established congregations.**
- Covid-19 led to congregations closing and delays in congregations starting – children-/youth-focused congregations were particularly affected.
- Lack of a communication strategy was a missed opportunity to promote the different congregations, their stories and impact on lay leaders, clergy and attendees – **many new congregations have excellent stories to promote, as well as creative ways of working with communities**, which have been under-promoted.
- There was a lack of discussion and clarity on a pathway for new congregations where they now ‘sit’ within the parish.
- The project came into conflict with other Diocese priorities – for example, two congregations closed due to a clash with an SDF project, and another closed as lay leaders who were supporting a JC new congregation left one church to establish another church plant.
- During the JC project issues were raised concerning accountability of safeguarding and the JC project staff had to monitor safeguarding procedures were adhered to; without JC staff, there is now the potential that safeguarding procedures will fall through the net.
- Most new congregations have met in buildings owned by established churches or in church schools; therefore, there is no specific learning on how new congregations can be established in secular spaces.
- Staff changes on the Board and Steering Group⁶⁵ may potentially have changed how the project could have been mainstreamed.

3.5 Sustainability

Building the capacity of lay leaders, clergy and Diocese

Recent research conducted by Myriad, part of the Gregory Centre for Church Multiplication, found that culture and structures within the Church of England can present barriers to lay people in planting churches.⁶⁶ However, interviewees described the message given by the JC project as ‘permission giving’ and in doing so it ‘challenged’ the culture of leadership. The ethos of the project enabled lay leaders and clergy to imagine what could happen beyond regular services, which enabled new congregations to be established that provided alternative lay-led worship communities, supporting the needs of attendees within their communities.

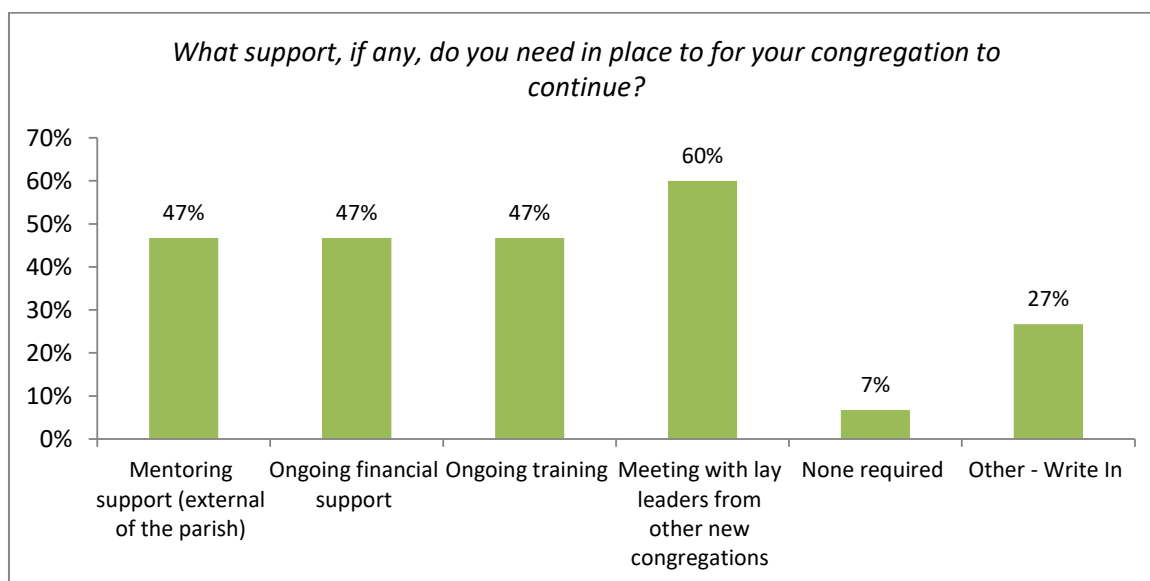
Survey respondents were asked what type of support they would need to continue: 60% highlighted meeting with leaders from other congregations; and 47% identified mentoring support (external to the parish), training and financial support (see Figure 14). Other support mentioned was the need for a vicar to be appointed and the reintroduction of the pioneer evening sessions that used to take place in the

⁶⁵ three key individuals ,who were involved with the initial bid and were pioneer and missionary leads, left within two years of the start of the project

⁶⁶ CCX, Myriad (January 2022) *Executive Summary: Listening to the Voice of the Lay Planters*.

Diocese. Recruiting leaders, particularly in areas of deprivation, will continue to be a challenge not only to maintaining current congregations, but also for future replication.

Figure 14: Ongoing support needed by lay leaders



Exit strategy and mainstreaming

FFM is a Diocese-wide initiative funded through Strategic Transformation Funding. It is a growth-orientated and locally delivered change programme to enable mission and ministry to flourish in the Diocese of Liverpool.⁶⁷ FFM will be piloted in two deaneries, West Derby and St Helens, moving on to a bigger cohort of six deaneries in years 3 and 4.⁶⁸ Within the programme there is a focus on developing new congregations, and feedback and initial learning from the JC project and other projects were used to develop the FFM proposal.⁶⁹ Cultivate, a laity training programme, will be launched through FFM in West Derby and St Helens in September 2022.

There was no specific exit strategy for the project. However, the SDF bid did anticipate that the role of Director of Multiplying Congregations would be mainstreamed within the Diocese and designated funding would be identified to continue to support development of future new congregations.⁷⁰ In the final year of the JC project, sustainability planning was conducted among the JC Board and Steering Group, with an agreement to extend the contract of leadership coach to ensure newer congregations established through the JC project had ongoing support. The post holder is also employed for one day a week with FFM. The role of Director of Multiplying Congregations was not mainstreamed and did not transition into FFM. In the future, if new congregations require funding, they will be expected to apply to the Mission and Growth Fund through the parish share scheme. However, the availability of this funding is limited if (a) it has been allocated to other missional projects or (b) the parish share has not been paid in full.

There appears to be no clear pathway for how new congregations started through the JC project will be supported by FFM.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Diocese of Liverpool, *Fit For Mission Scoping document, version 2*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Stakeholder interviews.

⁷⁰ *Multiplying Congregations SDF Bid.*

⁷¹ FGD with clergy; interviews with stakeholders

It does feel a bit like the work of the Joshua Center has been sort of assimilated into it [FFM], but I don't know whether with enough seriousness taken to the learning that has been going on through it and the support that we've appreciated. It's like it's sort of been replaced or whatever with Cultivate and the focus on congregations and pioneer and stuff through there. But I think, um, I know that the emphasis is still there, but I hope that some of the stuff, that we've learnt... I mean, we've all been talking about how good Dan is. I'm really sad that he's not been kept on by the Diocese, that he's not part of the fit for mission strategic bid. Dan has been appreciated, and that vision... and his real sense of conviction, his deep theology and his ecclesiology has been really helpful. And I hope that's not going to be lost really in the emphasis on Fit for Mission and the direction that it will take us.⁷²



Layleaders, volunteers and Hong Kongers at Life Time

Financial sustainability

The SDF bid anticipated that new congregations would become financially sustainable; to date, StoryHouse is the only new congregation that has achieved this since receiving its final grant allocation. Congregations led by unpaid lay leaders are relatively low cost to maintain and some of the incumbents have said that the parish would continue to support them.⁷³ However, new congregations led by paid leaders may find it more of a challenge to continue after the funding has come to an end, particularly in areas of deprivation. Of the 16 survey respondents, 15 congregations said that they would continue; the one project that said it would not continue focused on students and had a paid leader.

⁷² FGD with incumbents.

⁷³ FGD with incumbents.

Table 8: Areas which can be sustained by new congregations and some potential challenges to them being sustained

Area	Sustained	Challenges
Increased number of trained lay leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Empowered and increased confidence of lay leaders - Increased knowledge and experience retained within church community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lay leaders are volunteers and at risk of changes in personal circumstances - Recruiting and retaining leaders is an ongoing challenge – especially in areas of deprivation - Paid lay leaders will no longer receive grants – dependent on parishes to fund role or will have to seek outside funding
Developed model for starting/supporting new congregations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resources developed - Training will continue through FFM with Cultivate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New priorities within Diocese may not take learning forward
Covid-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased teams’ resilience - Developed creative ways of engaging with congregations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Burnout or fatigue of lay leaders due to many personal pressures brought about by the pandemic
New congregations established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Range of new congregations were established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential they will be lost in transition to FFM - Need ongoing support and encouragement
Support from Diocese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Had a positive impact and was permission giving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Now JC project is winding down, possible this will be lost in transition to FFM
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well-led, low-cost congregations are likely to continue with support of parishes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Congregations in areas of deprivation led by paid leaders may struggle to find the budget to sustain them

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

Relevance

The project was relevant and appropriate and followed the overall project design, though there were some changes to the original plan.. The changes that occurred were in the areas of (1) staffing and (2) delaying the project’s close date due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In general, lay leaders were recruited and promoted by clergy from within their parish; those who were supported by parish clergy were more likely to thrive.

There was a well-structured training programme, though there was some inconsistency with training materials at the start of the project. A formal evaluation of the training would have helped to identify what was valuable and what was less so. **Training a team rather than an individual leader was a positive adjustment to the JC model**, increasing the number of volunteers trained, and enabling an opportunity to build a team. However, leaders could not always access training due to work and family commitments,

and the location of the training. Zoom was introduced during the pandemic, which helped address some issues of time and access, though some found this method of delivery difficult and unsustainable.

The new congregations developed organically and with a good geographic spread across the Diocese. New congregations were established in low-income areas, across family groups, children and young people, young adults and students, and refugees and asylum seekers – there is good learning within these groups which has yet to be captured. Established BAME groups and different ecclesiologies were not targeted; any future intentions to target these groups will need to be intentional and planned.

Effectiveness

The project was successful and effective in establishing new congregations, despite losing nearly two years of implementation due to Covid-19.

The project was effective in developing a structure for establishing and supporting new congregations through the application process, training and quarterly reviews. The application process crystallised the vision and plans, whilst the quarterly reviews kept the clergy and leaders on track. **The Director of New Congregations and leadership coach developed good relationships with clergy and leaders alike, which was integral to encouraging development of leaders and congregations. This support was particularly important during Covid-19, without which more congregations would have closed.**

The project empowered lay leaders and increased their faith. Lay leaders overwhelmingly 'identified the most important aspect of the training as being able to interact with and learn from' their peers. As well as providing encouragement, peer support reduced leaders' sense of isolation.

Support from clergy was essential to establishing new congregations. New congregations were only started in parishes where clergy were in alignment with the Diocese strategy to start lay-led congregations. **The JC project provided support to the clergy through formal meetings, as well as the knowledge and reassurance that leaders were being well trained and supported.** The project supported clergy to focus on missional activities.

Whilst there was good management of the project through feedback and oversight, the project did not identify the need for a communication strategy, resulting in limited promotion of the good practice and learning developed through the project. Not only might it have helped to raise the profile of developing new congregations within the Diocese, but it could also have been a catalyst to encourage other potential lay leaders and parish clergy to participate and support development of new congregations. Future projects such as FFM could be strengthened by building in effective communication, as well as a specific focus on promoting stories of lay leaders from a range of different backgrounds and experience.

Efficiency

There was good oversight and management of the grants by the Director of the JC and the Steering Committee. The main costs associated with the grants new congregations received were associated with employing lay leaders. Learning could have been improved by collecting information on how new congregations allocated their grant. It is possible that some new congregations did not need all their grant allocation and the congregations could have been established with less funding. However, as all congregations received the same amount, the project has not been able to establish what level of funding is necessary to start new congregations.

The total number of volunteer leadership hours per week had a stronger relationship with new congregations' attendee unit cost than any other factor. This suggests that strategies to develop a strong team of volunteer leaders are more likely to lead to financial sustainability than increasing paid staff leadership hours.

New congregations that were established in areas of deprivation have higher costs associated with them. Financial giving by congregation attendees is particularly affected in areas of deprivation. Leaders are

also reluctant to ask for money, especially when starting new congregations. Attendees who did not give financially were willing to give their time or contribute to meals.

Evidence suggests **congregations established in more affluent areas could become financially sustainable**, but not within five years. New congregations in areas of deprivation will cost more to establish and take longer to become financially sustainable.

Impact

The JC project has been successful in developing a model for multiplying new congregations across a range of groups, though congregations targeting children and young people were particularly affected by Covid-19. Six projects closed during the pandemic and others struggled to maintain their congregations, with attendee numbers dropping during this period. However, support from JC staff helped lay leaders and clergy through the difficult period and 29 projects are still in operation. Two years of Covid-19 affected attendance figures. The latest figures show 632 attendees; however, it is likely a projected figure of 1,273 could have been reached if the project had been able to develop as planned.

Currently, no congregations have replicated into another congregation. Therefore, no learning or good practice has been developed through replication. Again, this may have been an outcome of Covid-19, which resulted in projects closing or stagnating growth. However, one of the JC congregations, LifeTime, is planning to replicate.

It was not part of the evaluation to ascertain feedback from clergy not involved with the JC project. Therefore, whilst some clergy will be opposed to establishing new congregations through lay leaders, it may also be the case some do not feel that they have the time, the resources or leaders to establish a new congregation. Further research would be needed to better understand the reasons.

Sustainability

The JC project showed that new congregations can be successfully established through the Diocese being proactive and intentional. **The JC project model reinforced the Diocese vision for establishing new congregations with a practical package of support through mentoring, training and funding.** There is considerable learning which could be passed on by lay leaders and clergy to ordinands and those thinking about becoming a lay leader.

Having an external voice was helpful to both lay leaders and clergy to review plans, suggest changes, keep focused and provide encouragement to continue, particularly through numerous lockdowns when people could not meet in person. The experience of leading in this period means that congregations that continued through Covid-19 have developed resilience and are potentially better able to cope with future shocks.

The project succeeded in empowering lay leaders and clergy and increasing their confidence. They are now aware of the importance of liaising and connecting with other leaders and pioneers. Ongoing support will be needed to sustain leaders, not just for the newest projects that have recently started, but for all of the congregations started through the JC project.

The project supported parish clergy through building the capacity of lay leaders. JC provided support both in person and remotely, particularly during Covid-19. Had the pandemic not had such a prolonged impact, it is likely fewer projects would have closed or started towards the end of the project.

The model lacked a clear pathway or discussion on how new congregations 'sit' within the parish. This may affect continued financial support as they have not been part of PCC planning or budgets.

The JC model, whilst replicable, has not been mainstreamed into the Diocese, though FFM will continue to promote and encourage the establishment of new congregations. There was no specific exit strategy.

However, sustainability planning was delivered in the final year that recommended continuing with the role of the leadership coach for one day a week. There is also a link to FFM: the leadership coach is also employed for one day a week with FFM, providing an opportunity to ensure that there is a transition of project learning and support for congregations.

4.2 Learning and recommendations

I've learnt how difficult it is to secure volunteers for a daytime, midweek group in a church with lots of students and very few retired people! Also, how volunteering is a great way of drawing people in to be more involved in the church. I've learnt lots about communicating with people through a pandemic! About continuing to trust God through challenging times. How a group such as this can be a great way of helping people from different nationalities to feel welcomed and develop friendships. How developing good relationships is a huge investment, taking a lot of time, but extremely rewarding. How God is always at work, on so many different levels even when we can't see it.⁷⁴

Table 9: Key learning from the project

Project component	Key learning	Recommendations for future projects
JC model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approach worked well and is replicable, providing a systematic way of engaging and working with lay leaders and incumbents - Training provided support as well as learning - JC promoted and explained benefits of new congregations to PCC and wider audience - Board and Steering Group provided oversight, and kept project on track, including recruiting leadership coach during Covid-19 - Application process clarified aims and objectives of new congregation leaders, increasing success rate - Quarterly reports were helpful and kept leaders and clergy on track - Project challenged culture of leadership, allowing lay leaders to establish new congregations - Clergy given permission to focus on mission - Resources and learning developed by the project could be lost as project draws to a close - Grants (1) gave value to the work of the lay leaders and (2) enabled new congregations to employ lay leaders or purchase equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen projects to establish new congregations by embedding learning from JC project into current and future project designs - Develop case study (2–3 pages) to promote work of JC project and model to distribute beyond Diocese of Liverpool - Collate and promote case studies of lay leaders, clergy and attendees at new congregations (e.g. how JC project has changed practice of lay leaders, clergy and PCC, personal impact, etc.) - Future projects should develop a communications strategy - Communicate how all JC congregations will be supported - Encourage a 'road show' of new congregations to other parishes - Continue to encourage new congregations through peer networks and support - Share learning with Diocese and beyond (e.g. Fresh Expressions network, Gregory Centre for Church Multiplication)
Training of lay leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training of teams rather than individuals strengthened the teams - Training preferences vary and need to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure training is offered to teams rather than an individuals - Future training should be offered both in

⁷⁴ Lay leaders survey.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> adapt to using remote technology, as well as meeting in person - Unclear what elements of training were helpful or unhelpful - Volunteer lay leaders have work and family commitments, which restrict participation - Not all people have the same starting point – training needs to adapt to the needs of the team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> person and virtually - Evaluate training programmes – learn and revise as appropriate - To maximise use of leaders’ time, identify what each team needs – tailor training accordingly - Identify range of resources that respond to lay leaders’/incumbents’ range of knowledge and experience
Clergy and lay leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lay leaders and clergy have a lot of learning and experience to share, which should be captured - Project showed lay leaders can be encouraged and supported to lead new congregations - Increased faith and confidence of lay leaders - Lay leaders actively supported by clergy were more likely to be successful - Clergy found JC support helpful (1) in gaining confidence of PCC and 2) knowing there was structured training and support for lay leaders - Difficult to recruit leaders, especially in areas of deprivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build learning into training with Emmanuel Theological College (e.g. create placements with new congregations/lay leaders, encourage lay leaders and clergy to lead sessions with students on establishing new congregations) - Continue to support clergy in developing new congregations - Capture learning on identifying lay leaders – give practical examples of what has worked well
Targeting specific communities or groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New congregations developed organically – groups such as established BAME and, different ecclesiologies were not represented - Good learning identified (e.g. on refugees/asylum seekers, students, children and young people, intergenerational groups) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to be proactive and intentional in targeting hard-to-reach communities or groups - Capture learning on specific groups – give examples of good practice and key learning points
Exit strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of specific exit strategy potentially weakened project’s sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop exit strategy before implementation and update document regularly
Establishing new congregations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having a specific lead person was key to supporting new leaders and establishing new congregations - Funding is necessary for new congregations, though amount of funding needed is not clear - Grants will not be available if parish share has already been allocated for missional activities or has not been paid in full - Application process helped leaders and clergy solidify ideas and aims - Unclear how new congregations ‘sit’ within the parish - Learning yet to be developed on replication – this will be challenging, especially in areas of deprivation when recruiting leaders, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify a new congregations lead person for incumbents and lay leaders to go to - Identify a specific fund potential new congregations can access, especially in areas of deprivation - Maintain application process/ongoing accountability for establishing new congregations - Diocese should send a clear message on new congregations including (1) how they will be supported and (2) how they are integrated into a ‘mixed ecology of church’ - Be clear who will oversee safeguarding in new congregations - Have a specific ‘go to’ page on the Diocese website for new congregations, with

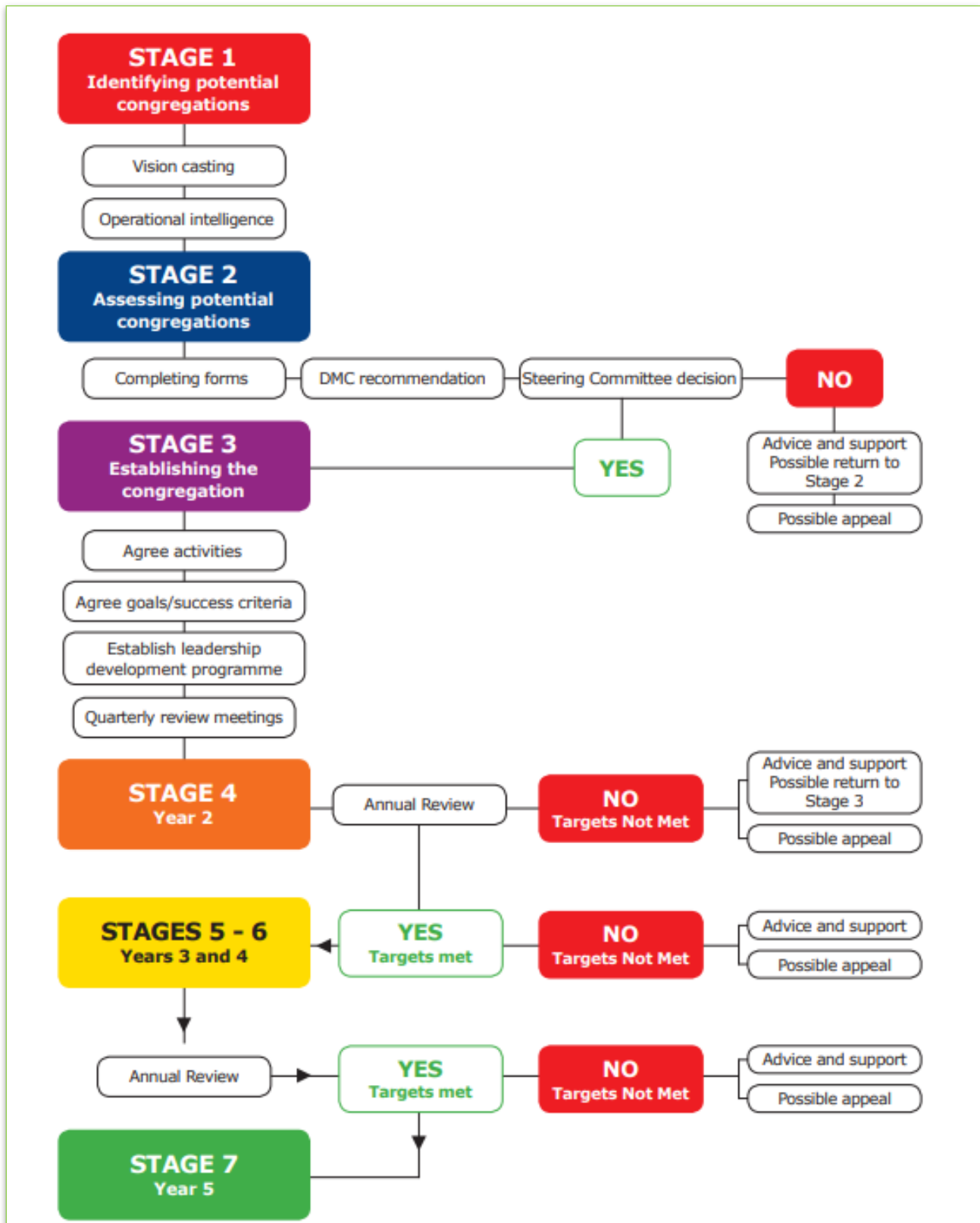
	<p>with limited funds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear safeguarding protocols need to be followed and overseen by the Diocese 	<p>learning and JC project resources, key contacts, etc.</p>
FFM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JC project and FFM appear to run in parallel rather than dovetailing - Unclear how FFM will support new congregations established by JC, due to time lag in FFM being rolled out - Unclear how new congregations will be established and supported through FFM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FFM should clearly communicate its strategy on establishing new congregations, including how JC has helped to crystallise learning - Learning exercise review (e.g. representative group of JC clergy, lay leaders, leadership coach, FFM) – what can be integrated into FFM? - Clarity needed on role of Cultivate and how this fits with establishing new congregations
SDF grants for projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited qualitative feedback to Board and Steering Group - Financial sustainability takes longer than 5 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For future projects, key stakeholders should schedule site visits - Future grants should be for 5+ years

Appendices

Appendix 1: Key informants

Stakeholder	Method
Director for Multiplying Congregations	KII
Chair of the Joshua Centre Programme Board	KII
Diocesan Secretary	KII
Diocesan Missioner (former)	KII
Diocesan Programme Manager	KII
Church Commissioners representative	KII
Director of Mission in the Diocese of Liverpool (former)	KII
Children's Missioner for the Diocese	KII
Joshua Centre Leadership Coach	KII
Joshua Centre Administrator	KII
Lay Leaders	FGD, KII, Survey
Archdeacon of Widnes, St Helens and Warrington	KII
Archdeacon of Liverpool	KII
Parish Vicars supporting new congregations	FGD
Parish Vicars supporting JC project, but unsuccessful in starting new congregations	KII
BAME representative on Diocese Oversight Team	KII
Cultivate Lead	KII

Appendix 2: Five-year stage plan for developing a new congregation, including a two-stage application process



Initial Ideas Form: For New, Multiplying Congregations

The purpose of this form is to document all initial ideas for starting a new, multiplying Congregation.

It will be followed up by a personal conversation between local leaders, and the Joshua Centre Director, who will make recommendations to the monthly Steering Group as to which of the initial ideas received should progress to the next stage of the application process (i.e. Stage 2).

Contact Name:

E-mail:

Telephone Number:

Role:

Incumbent:

Parish:

Deanery:

Background:

How did the idea for this new congregation come about?

Current Situation:

What kinds of mission activity are already happening here?

Team:

Who is currently involved in making these activities happen?

Next Steps:

How do you imagine things could develop, in the next six months?

Vision:

How do you imagine things might develop, over the next six years?

Practicalities:

How would support from the Joshua Centre help to make this Congregation happen?

Stage 2 Joshua Centre Application Form

Planning Questions for New Congregations

Date Filled In:

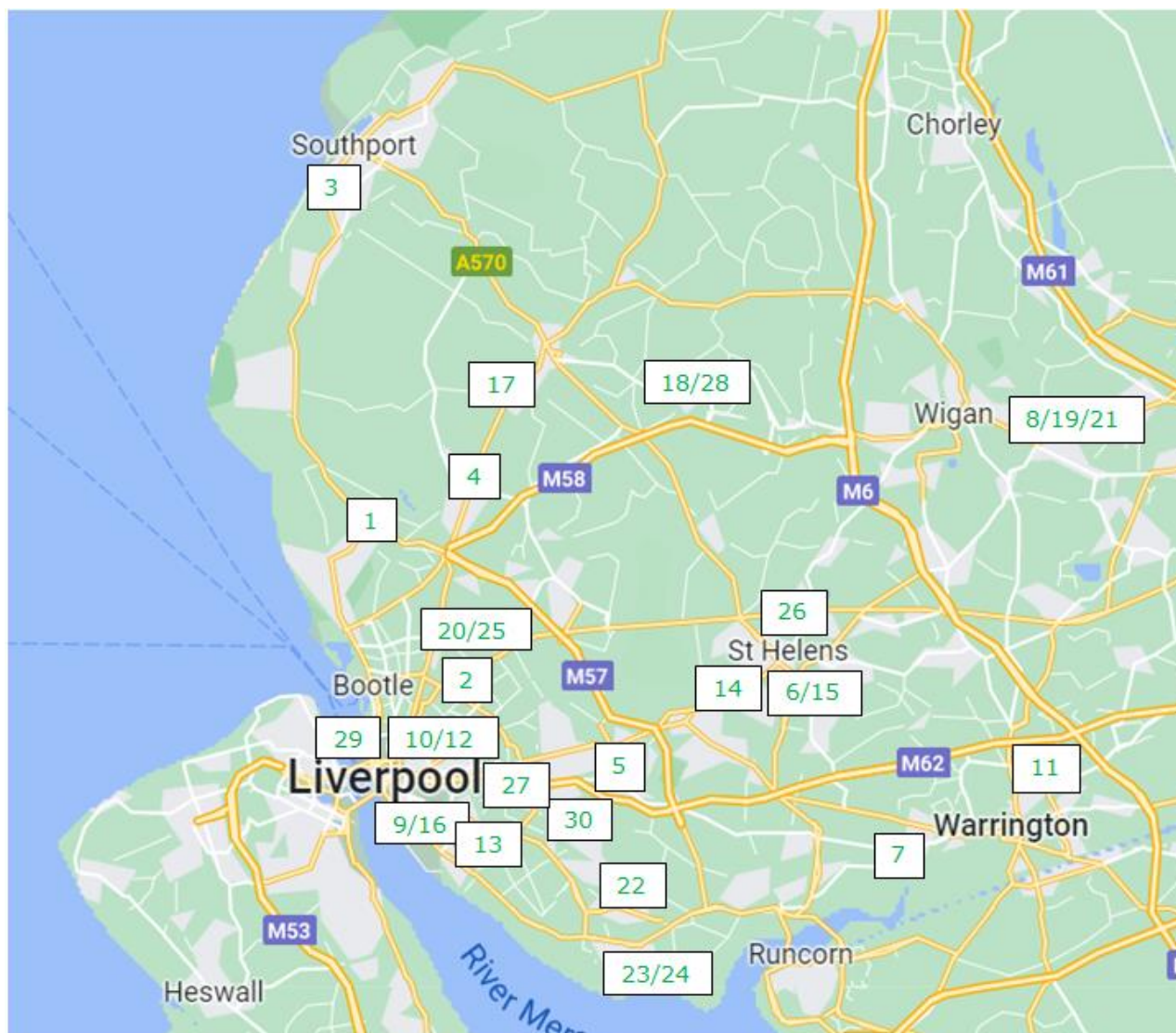
By Whom:

Congregation Name:

Parish Name:

1. What missional activities are *already* happening with the target group of people?
2. Please read this web-page and watch the video: <https://joshuacentre.org.uk/what-is-a-congregation>.
In the light of this, what might your goals be for this congregation be, over the next 12 months, i.e.:
 - a. Number of people you have **made contact** with?
 - b. Number of **new disciples** you have made?
 - c. Number of people **attending** your weekly gatherings?
3. Over the next 12 months:
 - a. How will you **listen** to the people whom you are trying to reach?
 - b. How will you **love** them, in practical ways?
 - c. How will you build a sense of **community** with them at its centre?
 - d. How will you **share Jesus** with these people?
 - e. How will you help those who respond develop **discipleship practices**?
 - f. How will you develop new leaders, and send them out to **repeat** this process?
4. What funding might you need, for year 1, and how might you spend it (*i.e. on what/whom, by when/why*)?
5. How might this new congregation become financially self-sustaining, within 5 years?

Appendix 4: List of all congregations mapped across the Diocese of Liverpool



		Congregation name	Parish	Type of congregation	
New congregations – ongoing		StoryHouse	1	St Luke's, Crosby	All ages
		Living Room Church	2	Christchurch, Norris Green	Families
		CCS Youth	3	Christchurch, Southport	Young people
		Church4All	4	St Peter's in Maghull and Melling	All ages
		Family Church	5	St George's, Huyton	All ages
		Gateway/Feast	6	St Andrew's, St Helens	De-churched families
		LifeTime	7	St Paul's, Penketh	Intergenerational
		Lighthouse	8	West Wigan Hub	Primary school
		STJ Minis	9	St James in the City, Liverpool	Parents/carers
		New Horizons	10	All Saints, Kensington	Adults in recovery
		The Table@Oakwood	11	Church of Transfiguration, Oakwood	Local community
		Pardis	12	All Saints, Kensington	Refugees/asylum seekers
		Persian	13	St Philemon's, Toxteth	Refugees/asylum seekers
		Platform #2	14	St Anne's, Rainhill	Local community/young families

	Rivington	15	St Andrew's, St, Helens	Primary school
	The Brewery	16	St James in the City, Liverpool	Young adults
	Wild LYFE	17	Christchurch, Aughton	Children
	Fun In Faith	18	Upholland and Dalton	Families
	Faith Café	19	West Wigan Hub	All age
	Highfields St Matthews	21	West Wigan Hub	Children
	BIG@Halebank	22	St Mary's, Hale	Community
	Speke L.U.N.C.H.	23	St Aidan's, Speke	Community
	Speke Kingdom Tots	24	St Aidan's, Speke	Children
	Messy Family Church	25	Walton	Children
	Voyager Church	26	St Mark's, Haydock	Young adults
	Lauda	27	St Dunstons <i>et al.</i>	Romani/children
	Digmoor Disciples	28	Upholland and Dalton	Children
	Dash!	29	St Cleopas, Dingle	Children
	Gateacre	30	Gateacre	
New congregations – closed	Widnes Young Adults	A	St Paul's, Widnes	Young adults
	Something New	B	Cathedral, Liverpool	Young adults
	Foodmarket	C	St Bede's and St Clements, Toxteth	Local community
	Joshua's Den	D	St George's, Wigan	Homeless men
	FillUp@4	E	St Helens Parish Church	Primary school
	That Music Thing	F	St Luke's in the City	Students
	Marshside	G	Emmanuel, Southport	Families
	Outdoor Oaks	H	Oaks Skelmersdale	Families
	Franasabas Clemt	I	St Francis, Marsh Green	Families
	Switch	J	St Andrews, Clubmoor	Young people
	HaleBank	K	St Mary's, Hale	Primary school
	Thrive	L	St Andrew's, St Helens	Primary school
	Belong@Garston	M	St Michael's Garston	Local community
	Kurdish	N	St Philemon's	Refugees/asylum seekers
	Sunday@6	O	St Gabriel's, Toxteth	Young adults
	Infinite	P	St Bartholomew's, Roby	Young adults
	Feast At Five	Q	St Mary's, Arnot	Primary School

Appendix 5: Average giving shown by IMD score

