

BANGOR DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR END
31 DECEMBER 2024



Esgobaeth
Bangor
The Diocese
of Bangor





TRUSTEES' REPORT

Introduction

2024 brought considerable challenges to the Bangor Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF). The prolonged absence of a key officer—the Diocesan Secretary—meant that the responsibilities of that role had to be carried by other staff and clergy.

The Trustees wish to begin this Report by expressing their profound gratitude to all DBF staff and others who, with professionalism and personal dedication, willingly embraced these challenges and ensured that essential work continued.

Our thanks to you are heartfelt and immense.

We hold a deep appreciation for all those who respond to their Christian calling across the Diocese of Bangor. Faithful worshippers and volunteers, lay ministers, stipendiary lay ministers, non-stipendiary clergy, and stipendiary clergy all give of themselves tirelessly in every aspect of diocesan life. Through their dedication, the missional and ministering presence of the Church is made real. It is both fitting and important to record here our sincere gratitude and admiration for their service.

Trustees also committed themselves to a demanding schedule of meetings throughout the year. It is important to acknowledge the dedication shown by all involved—particularly those trustees who have given countless hours of their own time and have gone above and beyond in fulfilling their responsibilities.

Their generous contribution of time, energy, and expertise has been vital to the work of the DBF.



One of the Bangor DBF most significant achievements this year has been the full delivery of its commitment to enable and support ministry and mission across the twenty-seven Ministry Areas of the Diocese of Bangor. In addition to sustaining existing Ministry Area Leader and Associate Priest roles, the DBF has successfully created and funded several new ministerial positions, including distinctive Pioneer and Chaplain roles. We are grateful to mission partners who are sharing the funding for these roles.

Further investment has been made in strengthening the infrastructure that underpins local church mission, with new roles established in property management, financial administration, and archdeaconry support.

The ongoing financial support for Ministry Areas through the Bishop's Ministry Fund (BMF) has been a key focus this year. In a strategic move, the DBF has committed to releasing a greater proportion of its reserves to the BMF for 2025, easing some of the financial pressure currently borne by Ministry Areas. This additional support is time-limited and will be reviewed regularly. Its purpose is to provide Ministry Areas with a window of opportunity to focus on strategic planning for growth and sustainability.



The Diocese of Bangor and its Ministry Areas continue to face significant and complex challenges. These include the call to make disciples of Christ, nurture congregational and community life, respond to societal needs and environmental threats, care for historic buildings, manage financial pressures, and meet the legal responsibilities of charitable governance. Trustees remain fully engaged with these issues.

Their focused attention in 2024 on policy and financial strategy is intended to ensure that they can continue to contribute effectively to the flourishing of diocesan life.



Diocesan Board of Finance

The role of the Bangor Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) is to ensure that there is sufficient revenue to maintain the cost of ministry in the diocese and allow administrative functions to be properly exercised. As a charity, Bangor DBF monitors diocesan finances to fulfil the mission and ministry of the Church in Wales (pastoral, evangelistic and social). This enables long-term transforming Christian ministry to be sustained throughout the extensive geographical area of North and Mid-Wales which is served by the diocese of Bangor.

The biggest allocation in the DBF budget goes towards providing clergy for the diocese, helping to fund stipends, parsonages and other associated costs. However the DBF also resources vital advice and support for clergy and hundreds of committed volunteers who serve their local communities, engage in altruistic and creative social action, and maintain a priceless cultural heritage of historic church buildings and churchyards.

The DBF works in partnership with the Bangor Diocesan Trust, other charities and public bodies to develop innovative projects which further its objectives.



Significant Activities

The charity sets the diocesan budget, receives the annual grant from the Representative Body of the Church in Wales, and oversees the collection of the Bishop's Ministry Fund (contributions from churches towards diocesan expenditure on ministry). The charity employs the staff team that form Tîm Deiniol, based at Tŷ Deiniol in Bangor and elsewhere in the diocese. These staff support the admin, finance and governance of the Bangor DBF and support activities and growth in our ministry areas throughout the diocese.



Charitable activities

The charity's principal focus remains the provision and support of ordained ministry throughout the Diocese of Bangor. This is clearly reflected in the financial statements, where the largest area of expenditure continues to be the cost of ministry and the support of Ministry Areas. These priorities remain central to the trustees, who are committed to sustaining and strengthening leadership across the diocese.

In addition, the charity continues to align its resources with diocesan principles by investing in new forms of ministry. It also provides increasingly practical, hands-on support to Ministry Areas—particularly in administration, finance, governance, and the care and maintenance of church buildings.

Principles and Priorities

The Diocese of Bangor continues to shape its mission around three strategic priorities that reflect its commitment to nurturing faith, expanding ministry, and welcoming all generations into the life of the Church.



- **Nurturing Disciples:** At the heart of the Diocese's mission is the call to follow Christ—a call that invites individuals to grow in faith and service. To be effective in its future witness, the Church must invest in nurturing new disciples and deepening the discipleship of all its members. Through teaching, worship, and community engagement, the Diocese seeks to cultivate a culture where discipleship is central to personal and communal life.
- **Growing New Ministries:** Emerging vocations across the Diocese are a sign of spiritual vitality and renewal. Building on the foundation of discipleship, the Diocese is committed to developing a wide range of ministries that reflect the diversity of gifts within the Church.
- **Welcoming Children, Young People and Families:** This priority reflects the Diocese's commitment to building a Church that is intergenerational, nurturing, and outward-looking—where children and young people are valued and empowered to grow in faith.

Financial Review

The Diocese maintained a generally stable financial position, although performance trends indicate a need for ongoing vigilance and proactive management. Fluctuations in asset values and income streams highlight the importance of robust financial oversight and strategic planning.

During the restricted element of DBF funds has increased from £1,651,093 in December 2023 to £1,712,710 as at December 2024.

Unrestricted reserves have decreased from £5,806,663 to £5,474,757 in the same period.

- **Giving, Donations, and Legacies:** The continued generosity of donors and supporters towards our Ministry Areas remained a vital source of income. The Diocesan Board of Finance trustees express their sincere gratitude to all who contribute to the mission and work of the organisation through their kind and sacrificial giving.
- **Investments and Other Income:** Investment income was impacted by challenging economic conditions. The trustees of the Bangor Diocesan Board of Finance and the Bangor Diocesan Trust are actively working with investment managers at CCLA to maximize returns while adhering to ethical investment principles and carefully managing risk.
- **Expenditure:** Prudent expenditure management remains a priority. The single largest item of expenditure for the DBF is its support of ordained and lay ministry across the diocese, largely though not exclusively through Ministry Area clergy stipends and related matters. The DBF is committed to ensuring that resources are allocated effectively and efficiently to support its strategic priorities.
- **Grants and Financial Support:** The Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) continue to play a vital role in supporting Ministry Areas and diocesan initiatives—both financially and operationally. This support is delivered through a combination of targeted grants, adjusted Bishop's Ministry Fund (BMF) contributions, and the deployment of specialist staff, including bookkeepers and property inspectors.

A particular area of development this year has been the strengthening of financial systems within Ministry Areas. The diocesan Finance Team has provided increasing levels of support, particularly through the appointment of additional bookkeepers. This has enabled several Ministry Area Treasurers to transition to MyFundAccounting, integrating local financial management with diocesan systems.

The impact of this support has been significant. Ministry Areas have expressed clear appreciation for the practical assistance received, with many reporting a sense of relief and renewed confidence in managing their financial responsibilities.

Risk Management

Trustees of the DBF and BDT recognise that effective risk management is essential for safeguarding its financial resources and ensuring its long-term sustainability. The trustees regularly review and update its risk management framework to identify, assess, and mitigate key risks.

In 2024, a comprehensive Risk Management Strategy was developed. This strategy identifies key risks, assesses their potential impact and likelihood, and outlines control actions to mitigate those risks. Key financial risks identified include:

1, Financial Instability of the Diocese: The trustees acknowledge that challenging economic factors, declining congregation numbers, and existing financial pressures within Ministry Areas have created a substantial risk for the wider Diocese. Mitigation strategies in place to address this risk include:

- Thorough financial scrutiny of projects,
- Clarity on strategic objectives,
- Maximizing use of RB funding streams.

2, Imprudent use of Funds. The trustees recognise the danger of poor use of funds. To address this the strategic objectives over the next quinquennium are being clarified and aligned resources are provided for projects.

3, Insolvency of a bank holding DBF deposits: All cash and money market deposits are only with banks with a Moody's A credit rating to attempt to reduce this risk.

The trustees committed to proactive risk management and continuous improvement in its risk management practices. Regular monitoring of the risk register by members of DBF staff, ongoing evaluation of mitigation strategies, and adherence to established policies and procedures are essential to ensure the organisation's resilience in the face of evolving challenges.



Ministry Area Support

Ensuring the resilience and effectiveness of Ministry Areas remains a strategic priority for the Diocese. In response to evolving challenges, the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) has made a significant commitment to strengthening local church life through targeted staffing and operational support.

In addition, the Diocese has appointed two full-time Property Officers, with plans for a third, ensuring coverage across all archdeaconries. These roles replace the previous ad hoc arrangements with contracted architects, offering consistent and responsive property support. The impact has been immediate and overwhelmingly positive, with Ministry Areas reporting improved efficiency and clarity in managing their buildings and assets.

This strategic investment in personnel and systems reflects the Diocese's commitment to equipping Ministry Areas with the tools and expertise needed to thrive in their mission and governance.



Property review

In May 2024 we established Bwrdd Tai, a new diocesan housing board which fulfils the constitutional responsibilities of the Parsonage Board. This has quickly made a real difference to management and decision-making. We have made a strategic decision to consider our carbon footprint in the preparation of parsonages which are welcoming new dwellers. These Carbon net-zero improvements are improving the lives of those who live in these properties and advancing the Church in Wales' response to climate change. We are also grappling with changes in legislation for tenants and landlords, as well as council tax charges for empty properties. These may well change the way in which Bwrdd Tai operates in coming years.

It has been wonderful to see an increase in the number of church buildings and Ministry Areas engaging with the Eco-Church initiative and gaining awards.

Whilst there is always much sadness when a church building has to be closed, it was notable that 2024 saw the reopening of a redundant church building at St. Mary's, Morfa Nefyn, Bro Madryn. Work has also been ongoing at St Cybi's Church in Holyhead, Bro Cybi, where a full refurbishment is underway thanks to Levelling Up Funding - a partnership between the UK Government, Diocese and County Council. The Neuadd Ni church hall refurbishment project in Conwy, Bro Celynnin is already helping the church there to better serve the town by meeting a local need for community space.

Welsh language

Welsh language ministry within the Diocese of Bangor has seen significant development over the past year, with a strong emphasis on training, worship, cultural engagement, and strategic planning. This work continues to support the Diocese's commitment to linguistic inclusion and cultural heritage and so embed y Gymraeg a Chrymreictod within the ecclesiastical and spiritual life of the whole Diocese.

A new initiative, Duw a Dysgwyr was launched to support Welsh learners in worship. The service includes phonetic guides, key vocabulary, and accessible hymns, followed by a shared lunch to encourage informal language practice. Additional support is provided to individuals seeking Welsh courses and resources, including guidance on technologies that enable practical language use.

A five-day residential course was held at Nant Gwrtheyrn Language Centre, focusing on Preaching through the Medium of Welsh for intermediate and advanced learners. Delivered in partnership with the Centre and funded by Dysgu Cymraeg Cymru, the course provided practical and theological training in Welsh. An introductory online taster course was also developed for non-Welsh speakers, offering a first experience of the language in a church context.

A three-year literary project will culminate in 2025 with the publication of The Cadfan's Way volume. There is active involvement in the Ynys Enlli Spirituality Committee including support for chaplains, training, retreats, and acting as a liaison between the Diocese and the island.



Ministry and Growing Disciples

We were delighted to welcome Canon Alex Mayes as our new Director of Ministry in June 2024. Discernment for ordained ministry continues to flourish across the Diocese. However, the Archdeaconry of Anglesey has been particularly affected by clergy shortages, a concern we continue to address with appropriate recruitment strategies.

Our Cadfan in-service training programme for clergy and layworkers aligned with the Provincial theme of Wellbeing in 2025.

In 2025, the Ministry Team will be seeking to appoint a Spirituality Officer and a Commissioned Ministries Officer, which will complete the team. Regular meetings continue, and an away day is being planned.

Licensed Lay Ministry (LLM)

There are currently 29 Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs) serving in 20 of the 27 Ministry Areas across the Diocese. We are currently working to support them with a regular prayer network, and expand training, for example in taking funerals. We are aware of the need to encourage younger candidates into this area of ministry.



Rural Ministry

Rural ministry continues to be a vital part of diocesan life. This year saw a strong church presence at agricultural shows and events, affirming our commitment to farming and rural communities facing challenging times.

Pioneer Ministry

The DBF has supported several new posts with Pioneer focus: Revd George Bearwood, Pioneer Priest in Bro Cybi, Revd Jane Finn, Pilgrimage Priest in Bro Enlli, and Jill Ireland, Outdoors Chaplain in Bro Eryri, whose role is joint funded with Rural Ministries. We are grateful to them for their generosity.

Pioneer ministers across the Diocese have met weekly online for Care Share Prayer, a space for mutual support and spiritual reflection. These ministries span youth work, chaplaincy, pilgrimage, the arts, and outdoor communities, united by a co-creative approach: listening, noticing God at work and joining in.



Anna Chaplaincy

Clergy and lay people in the diocese continue to support older people as a core part of their ministry. We are grateful for the hundreds of hours per year which is spent delivering home communion, or simply providing company or a listening ear. One particular innovation in the Bangor and Caernarfon areas has been the establishment of a network of Anna Chaplains, who visit care homes and sheltered accommodation to provide support, prayer and fellowship.

Chaplaincy for Retired Clergy

Retired priests continue to provide an invaluable service to our communities; we continue to appreciate the work they do in taking services and supporting our stipendiary clergy. Reverend John Bleazard took over the role of Chaplain for Retired Clergy in 2024, providing colleagues with pastoral support, and a first point of contact for admin work such as DBS checks and Permissions to Officiate.

Welcoming Children, Young People and Families

Grŵp Elen continues to support clergy and lay ministry teams in outreach and engagement, sharing ideas and resources for seasonal outreach, such as Easter and Christmas. Termly meetings took a break during 2024, but are due to begin again in late 2025.



Evangelism Fund

Llwybr Cadfan

The Llwybr Cadfan route was officially launched at St Cadfan's, Tywyn in September 2024. New resources to support the route include:

- A dedicated website with walk details
- The Pilgrim Passport and route map
- A widely distributed leaflet promoting the pilgrimage to tourist outlets

The site will host educational packs, presentations, and videos on pilgrimage, local churches, and the rich history of the Saints within our Diocese. A docu-animation on St Cybi and St Seiriol, produced by Griffilms (Anglesey), will further enhance these resources for schools.



Schools and Llwybr Cadfan

Pererin Ysgolion, within the Llan project had a highly successful year of engagement with schools, embedding pilgrimage and local heritage into education in innovative and inspiring ways.

Between July 2024 and March 2025, the project reached over 600 pupils from 19 primary schools and 7 high schools through the Llwybr Cadfan Stamp Project.

Each participating school received a full-day workshop which included:

- A presentation on pilgrimage along Llwybr Cadfan, as well as global pilgrimage traditions across different faiths.
- A creative stamping workshop, where children engaged with local churches and designed stamps reflecting the heritage of churches, villages, and towns along the route from Tywyn to Ynys Enlli.



We are planning day-long school pilgrimages along Llwybr Cadfan, where pupils engage with local church communities, history, and natural heritage. Such pilgrimages will enable them to learn about holy wells, engage in quiet reflection in nature, sketch and write prayers inspired by wildlife.

Initial feedback from schools suggests that these experiences will support delivery of the New Curriculum for Wales, particularly its emphasis on Cynefin and the RVE lenses within the Humanities Area of Learning.

Looking ahead in 2025 the project will work with the Cathedral on an event for the 1500 celebrations. It will also expanding its reach through the launch of an education website, www.pererinysgolion.com.

Pererin Ysgolion, within the Llan project continues to provide rich, faith-based and cultural experiences that connect children with their local and spiritual heritage, supporting both the curriculum and faith within our schools.

Tîm Deiniol - Our Diocesan Staff

We are grateful to the diocesan staff who continue to cope with a period of uncertainty in our leadership, and who continue to give of their best in challenging times.

A number of new staff joined us in 2024, and have quickly become valued members of the team.

The trustees recognise the need to increase the support and feedback given to all staff, particularly those who regularly work from home and have less opportunity to interact informally with colleagues.

Looking Ahead

Since the end of 2024 much has changed again, with the retirement of our Diocesan Bishop, Rt Rev'd Andy John. All areas of diocesan life look ahead with hope to the election of a new Bishop and the appointment of a new Diocesan Secretary.

In 2026 the DBF intends to continue drawing deeply on its reserves to support the presence of stipendiary ministry in the Ministry Areas through the Bishop's Ministry Fund. This includes Ministry Area Leaders, Associate Clergy, Stipendiary Lay-workers and Pioneer Priests.

The DBF looks forward, after the appointment of a Diocesan Secretary, to shaping a diocesan bid to the Church Growth Fund administered by the Representative Body.

An external governance review, due to report by the start of 2026, will ensure that our structures, governing documents, training and key policies are fit for purpose.



Trustees

(TRUSTEES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

The Reverend Canon M Beecroft

Mr M D Dean (appointed 1.1.25)

Mr C Dearden (appointed 1.1.25)

The Venerable J Harvey

The Right Reverend A T G John (resigned 31.8.25)

The Reverend Canon T J Jones (resigned 31.12.24)

The Reverend R LI Moules-Jones (appointed 1.1.25)

Mrs E W Owen

Mrs L Palshis (appointed 1.1.25)

The Venerable D A Parry

Dr H J Parry-Smith

The Venerable R W Townsend

Mrs S D Ward (resigned 31.7.24)

The Reverend Canon D J Williams (appointed 1.1.25)

The Reverend Canon E C Williams (resigned 31.12.24)

The Right Reverend D T Morris (appointed 11.5.24)

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Registered Charity number
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