

## **Blackburn Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd**

### **Job Description**

<b>Job Title:</b>	Rural Renewal Officer
<b>Salary:</b>	£22,291 per annum
<b>Hours:</b>	18 per week
<b>Location:</b>	Diocesan Offices, Clayton House, Walker Office Park, Blackburn BB1 2QE
<b>Responsible to:</b>	Parish Renewal Lead
<b>Responsible for:</b>	Parish Renewal Programme delivery

### **The Diocese of Blackburn**

The Diocese of Blackburn is approaching its 100th anniversary having been founded in 1926. It serves almost the whole of the county of Lancashire, covering an area of 930 square miles, with a population of 1.38 million. It is divided into 14 deaneries and two archdeaconries (Blackburn and Lancaster). The Diocese has 173 benefices, 235 parishes and 272 churches.

The Diocese covers an area of extraordinary variety, from the stunning countryside of the Trough of Bowland to the former mill towns of East Lancashire, from the University cities of Preston and Lancaster to the seaside towns of Blackpool and Morecambe. It is also socially and ethnically diverse. 12 parishes have a score below 100 on the Index of Multiple Deprivation including the most deprived parish in the country, St Peter's, Blackpool. In contrast, the Diocese also has three of the wealthiest parishes in the country. While the religious demographic of Blackburn Diocese is predominantly Christian (53%) or no religion (31%), 10% is Muslim with Muslim communities living primarily in the towns/areas of Blackburn, Pendle, Preston, Hyndburn and Burnley.

The Diocese of Blackburn has 190 church schools (including 10 CofE High Schools) making us one of the biggest dioceses for church school education in the country.

We have parishes of all church traditions and are strongly committed to the principle of mutual flourishing which is lived out very generously across the diocese.

### **Vision 2026**

Vision 2026 is an agenda for growth and change agreed by the Blackburn Diocesan Synod in 2015. It challenges our parishes to be healthy churches that transform their communities as we look ahead to our diocesan centenary in 2026. It also lays out four ways in which this over-

arching goal can be achieved: Making Disciples, Being Witnesses, Growing Leaders and Prioritising Children and Young People.

All that we do as diocese is focussed on the delivery of Vision 2026. To make disciples we are raising levels of prayer, helping regular patterns of bible reading to be established and encouraging generous giving of time, talents and treasures. To be witnesses, many parishes are setting up new local congregations at different times and in different places to reach out to new groups of people as well as showing God's love in action through projects that meet a local human need. New leaders are emerging as we seek to enable and equip those God is raising up in our midst for lay and ordained ministry. And our focus on children and young people is enabling creative thinking to raise up a new generation for Jesus Christ.

Over 85% of our parishes have a 'Vision Champion'. This is usually a lay appointment and the Champions' role is to encourage and support their parish leaders in pursuing the goals of Vision 2026 in a way that is appropriate for their local community.

In the Diocese of Blackburn we are inspired by confidence in the Gospel and are ambitious in our desire to make new disciples for Jesus Christ. We are committed to mutual flourishing, to maintaining clergy numbers and to investing in training for new curates.

Through prayer we see the grace and power of God who can alone bring renewal and growth. Our Diocesan Vision Prayer is:

"Heavenly Father, we embrace Your call for us to make disciples, to be witnesses, to grow leaders and to inspire children and young people. Give us eyes to see Your vision, ears to hear the prompting of Your Spirit and courage to follow in the footsteps of your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen"

You can find out more by visiting the Vision 2026 pages on our website:

[www.blackburn.anglican.org/](http://www.blackburn.anglican.org/)

As an integral part of the Vision 2026 implementation strategy, the Parish Renewal Programme has been running since April 2022. There are currently 23 incumbents representing over 30 parishes engaged in the programme. There have been clear signs of renewal and growth in those parishes during that time, with significant encouragements and gains across multiple fronts.

As a result of funding from the national Church of England Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment board, we are now looking to implement Phase Two of the programme. This will run up until December 2027 and seek to substantially increase the capacity of the programme. This exciting new role of Rural Renewal Officer will be crucial to the effective delivery of that second phase, and the continued effectiveness of the whole Programme, as we plan a rural context specific stream of the programme.

### **Key responsibilities**

- Overseeing cohorts of rural parishes on the Parish Renewal Programme, following the process now established for Phase One, including planning and delivery of diocesan rural 'Leading Your Church into Growth' conferences.
- Building effective relationships with incumbents, church officers and PCC members of participating parishes, to support and guide them through the Parish Renewal Programme process, reassuring concerns and anxieties and providing advice, encouragement and inspiration.

- Facilitating and teaching on 'Leading Your Church into Growth' (or 'LYCiG') follow-up sessions, delivering LYCiG material to incumbents and lay delegates, sharing examples from your own experience and helping equipping participants to teach the LYCiG material to their own PCCs.
- Meeting bi-monthly with participating incumbents, and with lay leaders where appropriate, to reflect on progress so far, share encouragements, and offer advice and support where appropriate.
- Facilitating Mission Action Planning for participating parishes, and providing Mission Action Planning support and facilitation for other parishes not engaged with the Parish Renewal Programme.
- Planning of senior clergy led parish mission weekends for the Parish Renewal Programme rural stream parishes, including working with relevant senior clergy, incumbents and parish lay team to plan a programme of events for those mission weekends, and ensure advice and support are given to enable effective delivery.
- Supporting the Parish Renewal Lead in coordinating and deploying the team across rural stream parish mission weekends.
- Facilitate effective reflection and debrief with Parish Renewal Programme rural stream parishes following parish mission weekends, and encourage them to make mission weekend part of the culture of the parishes.
- Engagement with and membership of the Rural Focus Group, ensuring positive networking with those engaged in rural issues across the diocese.
- Support the planning and delivery of other Parish Renewal Programme and parish mission training events, residentials and retreats.

## **Key relationships**

### **Diocese**

- 1) Parish Renewal Lead and wider Parish Renewal Team
- 2) DBF colleagues, especially Director of Vision Delivery
- 3) Parish Renewal Group, especially the chairing Bishop and the Archdeacons
- 4) Rural Reflection Group and Rural Focus Group
- 5) Vision Partners team
- 6) Parish Mission Team

### **Parishes**

- 1) Incumbents and clergy of parishes
- 2) Church officers
- 3) PCC members

### **Beyond**

- 1) Leading Your Church into Growth national team
- 2) Colleagues in similar roles in other dioceses, especially through the Northern Missioners' Network.

## Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
<b>Qualifications and Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree or equivalent qualification or equivalent experience in theology, mission, pastoral ministry or similar.</li> </ul>	
<b>Knowledge and Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Priest or permanent Deacon of good standing, who takes genuine delight in their own call to service and lives it out in a way that can be a role model to others.</li> <li>• Demonstrable, proven experience of leading a rural multi-parish benefice through turnaround and into growth</li> <li>• Experience and awareness of the issues and challenges facing rural communities and churches</li> <li>• Excellent interpersonal skills and self-awareness</li> <li>• Able to analyse barriers to renewal and growth in rural parishes and benefices, and to prayerfully discern key missional and financial obstacles and opportunities</li> <li>• Ability to network and build relationships across the diversity of the DBF/ DBE and diversity of our parishes, so that support and expertise can be shared effectively</li> <li>• Strong communication skills capable of establishing respect and building effective working relationships with a wide range of colleagues – clergy, parish representatives, buildings officers etc.</li> <li>• Competent using MS Word, Excel and Power point.</li> <li>• Experience of leading the Mission Action Planning (MAP) process and successful implementation of the resultant MAP (or equivalent church strategic planning tool).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of ‘Leading Your Church into Growth’ material</li> <li>• Knowledge and/ or experience of the church and communities in Lancashire</li> </ul>

<b>Attributes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Someone who takes real delight in the breadth of the Church of England with a genuine appreciation of the Five Guiding Principles and the willingness to work sensitively in diverse cultural and theological contexts</li> <li>• Excellent administrative, problem solving and time management capabilities.</li> <li>• A proven team player, willing to cooperate with and listen to others and follow instruction, but who can also work with minimum supervision and manage their own workload well.</li> </ul>	
<b>Personal Qualities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A committed, communicant and active member of an Anglican parish</li> <li>• A proactive, positive, hopeful and patient yet determined approach to work</li> <li>• A person of prayer, sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit</li> <li>• A passion for spiritual and numerical growth in rural parishes</li> <li>• A desire and call to serve the church in Lancashire, especially in rural contexts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

### Outline of Terms and Conditions

**Employer:** Blackburn Diocesan Board of Finance

**Contract type:** Permanent (but the role is subject to external funding until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2027).

**Salary:** £22,291 per annum

**Hours:** This is a part-time role based on a 18-hour working week, usually over 2.5 days, but the post holder will be required to work additional hours as to meet the reasonable requirements of the role. The post holder will be entitled to time off in lieu for attending meetings outside normal office hours, which will regularly include evenings and weekends.

**Location:** The post holder will be based at the Blackburn Diocese Board of Finance, Clayton House, Walker Office Park, Blackburn, BB1 2QE. The nature of the role requires regular travel around the diocese, and sometimes beyond. A smartphone and laptop will be provided to assist remote working.

**Pension:** The default for staff is a Royal London Pension Scheme, 10% Employer contribution 2% minimum employee contribution. Clergy can opt into the Church of England Clergy Pension Scheme via a salary sacrifice. Details of this are available on request.

**Annual leave:** The full-time entitlement is 25 days (not including statutory bank holidays) in the first year of employment rising by 1 day per completed calendar year up to a maximum of 30 days per year. This is pro rata for part time employees. The holiday year runs from 1 January to 31 December.

Additional discretionary days (non-contractual) may be given between Christmas and New Year.

**Probationary period:** The appointment is subject to the satisfactory completion of a six-month probationary period.

**Notice Period:** During the six-month probationary period two weeks' notice is required on either party. Thereafter you will be required to give six months' notice should you wish to resign.

**Expenses:** Working expenses are paid at the diocesan rates.

**Employee Assistance Programme:** is available

**Right to work:** The post-holder must have the right to reside and work in the UK.

**Diversity - The Diocese of Blackburn believes that diversity enables us to thrive and develop and is committed to race equality, welcoming applications from UK Minority Ethnic/ Global Majority Heritage backgrounds**

**The Diocese of Blackburn is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All post holders and volunteers are expected to share this commitment.**

**Job Description Agreement**

Recruitment Manager's signature		Date	
HR Manager's signature		Date	

**Preparation of Job Description**

Author of Job Description	Rev'd Steve Haskett, Parish Renewal Lead	
Date signed off		Version