

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023





## A WORD FROM BISHOP JOHN

I'm pleased to welcome you to the Gen2 Annual Report. Thank you for your interest and support for this brilliant project.

It has been a year of challenges and change as our mission enablers have grown alongside the children and young people we've been serving.

The project has engaged many churches and reached large numbers of younger people. It has also helped to change our diocese.

Thanks be to God!

**JOHN HOLBROOK**  
**BISHOP OF BRIXWORTH**  
GEN2 PROJECT CHAIR



## WELCOME

BY PETE WHITE

This past year has seen many challenges for us all. It is easy to lose sight of the fact that children and young people are often the most affected by societal and cultural change. 29% of children in the UK live in poverty, 20% of children aged 8-16 were affected by a mental health disorder, and persistent absence from school has more than doubled since 2019.

Yet we know that our church communities offer hope, faith and love to all and we need to find ways to do so to younger generations.

This is an ongoing challenge but we are encouraged by the ways our church communities are responding to the needs of the children, young people and families in their parishes.

The Gen2 Project has seen its own challenge as several of our mission enablers moved on and our deaneries were unable to secure the funding they needed to continue the posts.

I am grateful for the dedication of the Gen2 team for taking us through this difficult period. I am also thankful for the project board who have advised and supported us to navigate these changes and enabled the project to adapt and make the necessary adjustments.

As the project reaches its last year we are taking stock of what we have achieved and learned in order to contribute to plans for the next stage as we seek to be a diocese that is younger and more diverse. This report shares some of the achievements of the last year and provides details of the new focus for the coming year. Please read and be encouraged as we continue to share our faith from generation to generation.

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# OUR INVESTMENT

The Gen2 Project invested in a diocesan-wide culture change to prioritise mission and ministry with children, young people and families.

The core funding was used to invest in the training and employment of children and youth missionaries to help churches develop innovative and effective ministries of outreach and discipleship among young people and their families.

Our Mission Enablers provide skills, expertise, and experience, working closely with clergy and lay ministry leaders to enable the Church to grow younger.

The project offered training all clergy and lay ministers to be confident in their ministry with younger age groups. We actively sought new clergy with competence in this area of ministry.

Through creating a pathway from training to employment, churches, deaneries and mission enablers were supported for up to 5 years to create sustainable ministries among children and young people. This included funding for theological training and a tapered sponsorship to support the future employment of the children and youth worker.





## CURRENT DEANERIES

In 2024, Rutland and Wellingborough deaneries will have mission enablers in place as well as the Kettering schools role. These posts are under review to determine their sustainability as the central funding comes to an end. Funds committed to existing deaneries will remain available to support transitions to any new roles. The remaining funds will be allocated to the new small grants scheme (see pg 5).



# 856

Children have attended one of our outreach groups or events in 2023.



# 3,538

Took part in one of our outreach events or groups since 2018.



## OUR NUMBERS

Despite a year of challenge, the Gen2 Team is thankful for the continued evidence of culture change across parishes in the diocese. For example, in the Archdeaconry of Northampton, nine new clergy appointments were made and we ensured that every incumbent had experience of, and a commitment to prioritise children and youth. This is wonderful news, as it provides a legacy and sustainability beyond the project's designated timeline.

In terms of work with churches and young people we are delighted to have impacted so many more lives than the initial target of 700 children and young people. Despite changes in staff, in this year alone, 856 children were reached through our mission enablers and their outreach projects in parishes and schools leading to 31 discipleship groups being established.

In addition, the appointment last year of a mission enabler for schools is bearing much fruit with headteachers recognising the significant contribution to positive Ofsted reports, and churches seeing children growing in their faith and wanting to be baptised.





## NEW FOCUS

This year the project staff changed significantly with Peterborough, Higham and Corby mission enablers moving to new ministries with children and young people.

The project timeline and available funding meant it was not possible to replace them. However, the team is encouraged that seeds of sustainability have been planted. In Peterborough, the deanery agreed that the potential impact of a mission enabler was significant and is hoping to replace the role with 4 interns as part of our ministry experience scheme. Tove Benefice (Towcester Deanery) is recruiting a new children's and family worker to replace their mission enabler who left last year.

The Gen2 Project will continue to support the development of work with children and young people during its last year. The project board has agreed to offer a small grants scheme which will focus on supporting parishes throughout our diocese.

Grants of up to £5k will be available from the spring of 2024. Recent research by Youthscape reported that there is scarce investment by faith groups in lower income communities. Our grants will focus on providing much-needed work among children, youth and families living in areas of deprivation and parishes seeking additional investment in their children and families ministry.





**31**



New discipleship groups created in churches and supported across our diocese

**584**



Children attended discipleship groups or events

**50**



Churches reached throughout the lifetime of the project

**148**



Mentoring sessions of young people, especially between ages 10-17



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