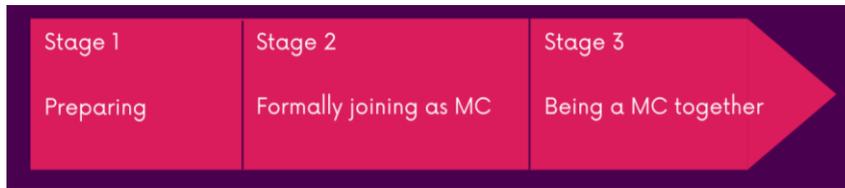




SBGJ Journey to Minster Communities

In October 2021 our diocesan Synod agreed the new minister communities framework for our diocese. This means that we will all be going through change as we move into the new way of working. But for many it may feel like very little is happening or changing right away.... The decision was made and then we all went back to our daily church business.



This is a journey that we will all take and by 2026 we hope that new framework will be fully implemented across the diocese. But this will happen differently for each area and context in each local area.

There are three main 'stages' to this journey and the formal creation and move into a minister community is only one part.

Stage 1 'Preparing for the journey'

Think of it this way... **stage one** is the preparation for the upcoming journey – the packing, the planning, looking at the route. During this stage we are asking local communities to do some thinking and praying. Looking at where God has placed you and what God has called you to, what are the passions and expertise in your community, where are the gaps and the areas in which you would like support? The Parish Transition and Ministry Department have created some resources to help you do this.

During this time there may continue to be opportunities to explore local partnerships in mission and ministry, even with those very different from you! This might be as simple as praying for your surrounding parishes and even visiting, to get to know and understand each other more. Partnership starts in prayer and grows through practical acts of support and generosity.

Promote vocations – we are going to need lots more lay ministers and non-stipendiary priests in the future. Is there someone you know who you think should explore this? Do you suspect God might be "tapping on your shoulder" and calling you? Prioritise school links – at the heart of our plans for Minister Communities is a radical shift towards working with children and young people. You can begin this shift now by prioritising work with your local schools (whether church or community schools).

And of course, continue to pray for the renewal of God's church and that God would lead us in all our conversations together.

Stage 2 'Setting off on the journey'

The second stage is setting off on the journey and making your first stop along the way – this is the formal part of the process in which your minister community will form and will be done with help and support from the diocese.

Stage 3 'Settling in'

Then the **third stage** will be settling in to your new destination, reviewing the journey you've taken so far, getting used to a new way of being and planning what could be next. In this stage you will be in your newly formed Minister Community where you can continue the conversations ... start working together as a Minister Community thinking and praying about who you are as a community, what you are being called to be, along with focusing on vocations, youth and children's work and schools engagement both in your immediate context and across the Minister Community.

These three stages will happen at different points for different parishes and communities. For some, particularly those in the pilot areas, they will be entering stage two fairly early in 2022, giving them more time in stage three. For others stage one will be their focus until implementation of their minister community can take place.

