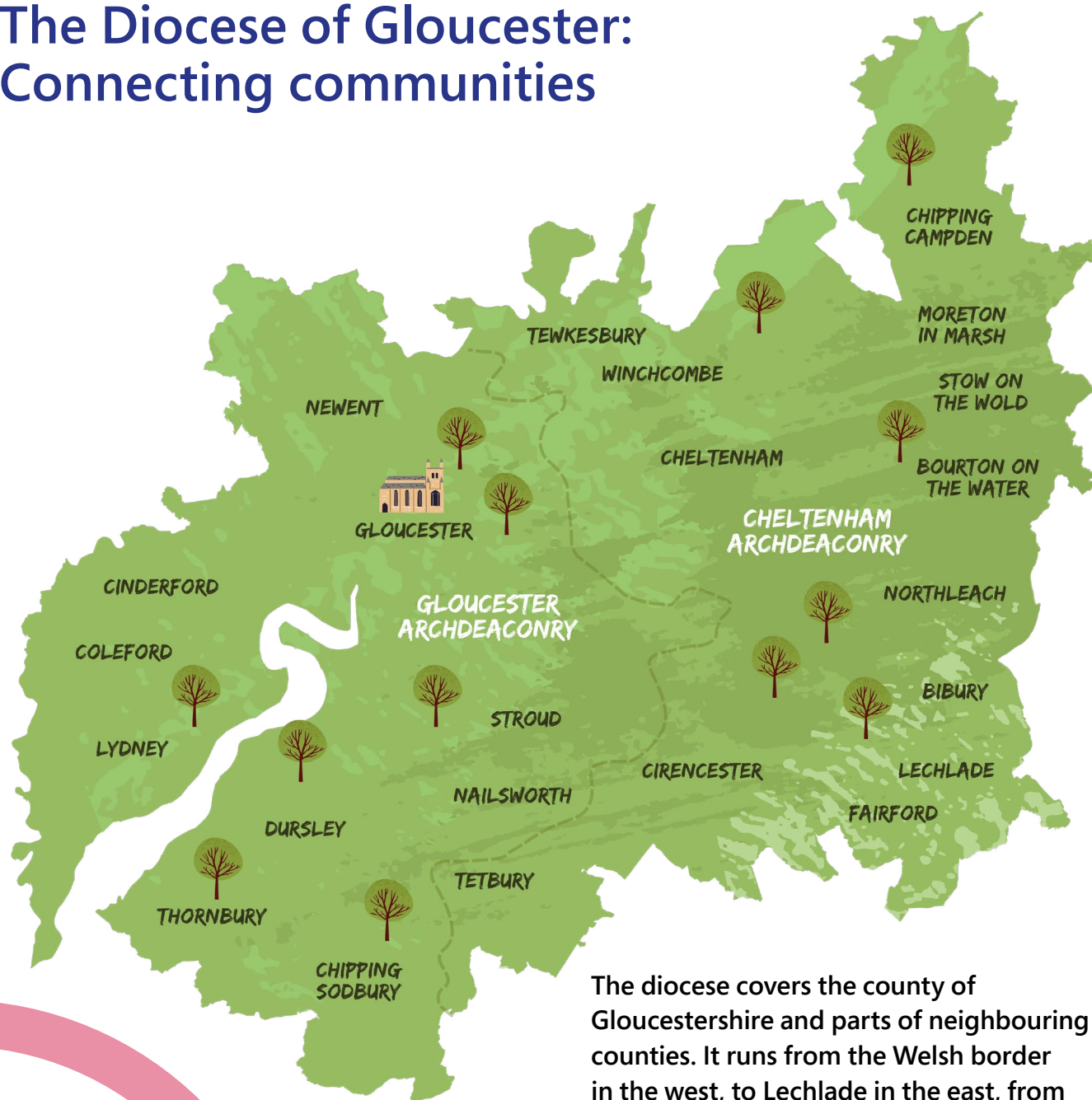


The Diocese of Gloucester: Connecting communities



The diocese covers the county of Gloucestershire and parts of neighbouring counties. It runs from the Welsh border in the west, to Lechlade in the east, from beyond Chipping Campden in the north to Chipping Sodbury in the south. It is home to over 750,000 people, living in settlements ranging from small rural communities, through market towns, to the urban centres of Gloucester, Cheltenham and Stroud.

These communities are served by 327 parishes, 390 churches and 117 church schools.

In our diocese there are over 200 licensed clergy who minister in our communities. Some of these people are stipendiary (paid), getting an allowance so that they can be freed to serve God. Most of them exercise their ministry in parishes as rectors, vicars or priests-in-charge, some are chaplains in hospitals, prisons and educational institutions and a small number work for the diocesan central support services. Some are curates, newly ordained, and continuing their training in parishes. There are also clergy who are licensed but do not receive a stipend and some of these are employed in other spheres of life. In addition to our licensed clergy, there are a significant number of clergy exercising a ministry in retirement.

We also have hundreds of 'lay ministers and officers' who give their valuable time to serve their church and community. In addition, we are very thankful for the thousands of other volunteers who also give their time to serving God in many different ways.

Understanding Church Structures

The Church of England operates within a clear structure to best serve its communities:

- **Parish:** This is the most local expression of church life. Each parish has its own church, a Parochial Church Council (PCC) (an independent charity), lay officers like churchwardens, and a parish priest or ministry team. Parishes are where people often feel their strongest sense of identity and commitment.
- **Benefice:** Often, especially in rural areas, several parishes are grouped into a 'benefice'. These parishes share the ministry of a single parish priest, or in a very large benefice a number of priests and may have a benefice council and shared worship and mission initiatives.
- **Deanery:** This unit of Church life sits between the local benefice and the wider diocese. A deanery is typically a cluster of 12-15 benefices. An Area Dean, an elected lay chair and a Standing Committee provide leadership for the deanery. The Deanery Synod, composed of clergy and elected lay people, addresses local ministry and mission issues and engages with matters referred by the diocese.

Gloucester Diocesan Board of Finance (GDBF)

Like all dioceses, the Diocese of Gloucester is supported by a Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF). The Gloucester DBF (GDBF) is a registered charity and company dedicated to housing, training, and paying clergy. It also manages central investments and provides essential support services to parishes and other Church charities, helping them fulfil their "LIFE Together" vision.



For further information on Parish Share please find more resources on our diocesan website - gloucester.anglican.org and search Parish Share.