

The Venerable Pete Spiers
Archdeacon of Knowsley and Sefton
Telephone: 0151 705 2182
Email: pete.spiers@liverpool.anglican.org

To all parishes in Sefton South Deanery
22nd October 2025

Dear Friends,

Re: Fit for Mission in Sefton South Deanery

I want to thank you sincerely for the time, attention and prayer you have given over the past eighteen months as you and your PCC have engaged with this important and complex decision. I know that you have taken it seriously, listened deeply and sought God's guidance in this discernment. I have now met with the Area Dean and Lay Chair to discuss the outcome of the voting.

The following churches expressed their wish to entering the "acting as if" stage:

St Faith's Crosby
St Mary's Waterloo
Christ Church with St John Waterloo
St Oswald's Netherton
SS John and James Orrell Hey
Christ Church Bootle

Whilst this forms a viable cohort to move forward, in addition, we propose to invite the following three churches from Sefton North who have expressed a similar wish to join as their close proximity provides a natural opportunity to honour the decisions of churches in both deaneries.

St Nicholas' Blundellsands
St Michael's Blundellsands
St Luke's Crosby

I recognise that working across deanery boundaries brings practical and relational considerations, and I will support these being addressed over the coming weeks and months.

The following churches have decided they are not currently able to commit to starting out on the Fit for Mission journey but remain fully committed to the mission and ministry of Sefton South Deanery:

St Helen's Sefton
St Paul's Litherland
St Philip's Litherland
St Matthew's and St Leonard's Bootle

The Deanery Synod of Sefton South meeting on 6 November 2025 will be asked to affirm the PCCs and churches in their desire to move to the next stage as well as to encourage on-going fellowship and collaboration across the deanery.

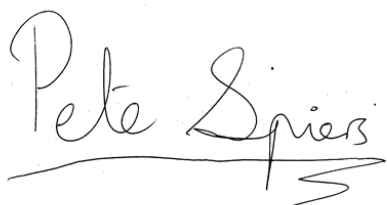
Next steps for those continuing with the Fit for Mission journey include appointing a Change Lead (from among their clergy) and a Change Facilitator (appointed by the Diocese) to support the "acting as if" period. A Navigation Team, a small group made up of clergy and laity from participating churches, will also be formed and is expected to start meeting in January – their role is co-ordination and communication during this two-year period.

For those who have felt unable to commit to starting out on the Fit for Mission journey, I recognise the care and discernment that has gone into your decision and honour the path your church is following. I encourage you to continue seeking opportunities to connect and collaborate across the deanery, so that more people come to know Jesus, discipleship is strengthened, more leaders are developed, and more justice is seen in the world.

If your circumstances change and your church did feel able to commit to starting out on the Fit for Mission journey, I would be glad to explore this with you.

May all in Sefton South deanery be filled with wisdom, courage, and hope as we serve faithfully and grow God's kingdom together.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pete Spiers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, horizontal flourish underneath the name.

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