**Please fill in an answer to each question. Keep your answers fairly brief, ideally 2/3 sentences maximum. Please write answers directly into this file where indicated.**

Your name, your age and your home village, town or city (where you grew up):

**Answer: My name is Sharon Collins I am 57 years old. I was born in Lymm, Cheshire and moved to Warrington when I was 8 years old and remained there until my recent move to Darwen in August this year. Although living in Warrington I was invited to do an Alpha course in 2012 at St Paul’s Widnes so I became part of the community there.**

The church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:

**Answer: I am based at St James Lower Darwen but also serve at St James over Darwen and St Paul’s Hoddlesden. I am delighted to be joining such a thriving group of churches committed to making God real to today’s generation and exploring new ways of making Jesus’ love known and relevant to the community that we serve.**

Tell us about your family:

**Answer: I am blessed with two daughters, Joanne and Laura. Both are married, and I have 5 grandsons ranging in ages from 5- 18 years.**

Your job (or how you keep yourself busy if retired)?!:

**Answer: I am employed by the Diocese of Blackburn as a *Community based Urban Evangelist.* This involves living on a local estate enabling relationships with the unreached community there to build so that faith can be communicated in a way that people understand. I also have a key role in the School of Urban Leadership, *M:Power,* which is a lay-leadership formation programme to equip people from and for urban parishes across the Diocese to make new disciples and grow congregations.**

Why did you decide to become a Reader?

**Answer: I was so blessed by undertaking a year- long A*pprenticeship Programme* in 2015 led by Revd Professor Jeremy Duff (then Vicar at St Paul’s Widnes) and Revd Greg Sharples - I was left hungry for more! It wasn’t a case of ‘deciding’, more of being “called out”. I started Reader training in 2016 with Liverpool Diocese because I had such a desire to serve God and get to know Him better also to learn more about the Christian tradition (of which I knew barely anything)**

What’s been the best thing about your training to be a Reader?

**Answer: It has led me to the job I do now; the module on mission and evangelism really helped draw out this calling to estates ministry.**

What’s the most important thing you have learned so far?:

**Answer: That I don’t have all the answers but serve God who is all knowing. I am just one piece in a Jigsaw we all have a part to play in God’s mission to the world.**

Can you name the most influential person in your Christian life to date and, briefly, say why?

**Answer: Jill Duff (now Bishop of Lancaster) who came alongside me in Widnes in 2012 when I described my life to her at that time as ‘a white- knuckle ride’. She totally ignited my faith, assured me of my worth in Christ (which had troubled me since childhood) and gently led me going deeper in my personal walk with Jesus.**

What is your hope for your future role as a Reader?

**Answer: To make Jesus known and accessible to all.**

Name one thing about you people would be surprised about?

**Answer: I eat raw garlic often!**

What would you say was your most significant personal achievement to date?

**Answer: Being able to use any giftings I have to further advance the Kingdom of God in this world. Gently leading new people to faith has been hugely exciting as has encouraging existing believers to go deeper in on their personal journeys and step up for God.**

Favourite quote (from the Bible or elsewhere). Also state briefly *why* it is your favourite:

**Answer: “When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, 'I used everything you gave me”. Erma Bombeck**

**My favourite because I am the woman with the alabaster jar of ointment, forgiven much (Luke 7) Jesus has given me everything, all that I have is His!**

Unfulfilled ambition?

**Answer: To be a prayerful worshiping hermit, but God has other plans right now.**

How do you personally hope to support the ongoing Diocesan Vision 2026 Healthy Churches Transforming Communities at parish level?

**Answer: By calling out the gifts of others and equipping them to share faith in their own context. I love the idea of us as ‘seed throwers’ for the Kingdom.**

How would you express your own vision for the church?:

**Answer: Thriving. Church at the centre of community life a place where people are loved back to health, restored and ‘sent out’ to rescue others.**

How do you relax?

**Answer: A soak in the bath followed by nice food and a beer helps!**