

The Diocese of Chelmsford



Deanery Lay Chair's Role Description and Handbook

Preface

The partnership of Area Dean and Lay Chair is invaluable to the health of every deanery within the diocese. It models and embodies an understanding of ministry as partnership that is central to our diocesan vision. This is vital if we are to develop the new forms of ministry and the new partnerships for mission that will enable us to become a transforming presence in every community we serve, and enable the church in each community to grow and flourish.

This is a time of great change. By defining these roles more clearly, and seeing where our different responsibilities lie, and how we can work together for the mission of God's church across the diocese, I also hope that we will enable Area Deans and Lay Chairs to work collaboratively and more purposefully with their Archdeacon and Area Bishop, and with all the churches of their deanery. I hope and pray that you will be richly blessed in this role and through this ministry.

The role of Lay Chair is hugely important. Although there will be more changes ahead, and in time this will probably affect the shape and nature of the deanery itself, in the immediate future our deaneries will be the place where we will work out the shape and ministry of our church's mission for the next decade and beyond.

I thank you for your commitment to this ministry and commend this Handbook to you as a valuable resource. Thank you for all that you do in your role as Lay Chair and for the hidden and public acts of service that you give in the diocese of Chelmsford.

+Stephen Chelmsford

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Stephen Chelmsford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a '+' symbol at the beginning.

March 2014

Deanery Lay Chair

Purpose Statement

To inspire, encourage and support the Deanery in the delivery of the mission strategy and priorities of the Diocese, these are expressed in Transforming Presence as

- Inhabiting the world distinctively
- Evangelising effectively
- Serving with accountability
- Re-imagining ministry.

A Deanery Lay Chair ministering within this framework will also seek to faithfully represent the views, needs and hopes of the Deanery as this work progresses.

Values

Underpinning this ministry are our common values and Deanery Lay Chairs will seek to always be:

- Collaborative – we work together by nurturing partnerships locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.
- Creative – we are open to change and imaginative new ways of working.
- Contextual – we are committed to the transformation and well-being of each locality and ministry context.
- Contemplative – standing back, attentive stillness, prayer and theological reflection are the foundation for our action.
- Accountable – to God and each other. We do not go it alone.

Leadership

Working closely with the Archdeacon, Area Dean and Deanery Officers to provide active leadership, encouragement and support across the churches and communities of the deanery.

Induction and support

The Area Dean plays a key role in introducing a new Lay Chair to the Deanery Synod and to deanery church leaders. Wherever possible a good handover of responsibilities should be arranged with an outgoing Lay Chair. If desired, a Lay Chair can receive the support of an experienced Lay Chair as mentor. S/he is always able to seek help and advice from the Archdeacon and the Lay Chair of Diocesan Synod as well as other Area colleagues.

Area Dean and Lay Chair Shared Responsibilities

The quality of the leadership of the Area Dean and the Lay Chair, acting together, will have a direct bearing on the effectiveness and morale of the local church and on its influence in the community as a whole. They are also in a key position to develop collaborative working with Deanery Officers and to strengthen Mission and Ministry Units.

Together they will seek:

1. To lead and unite the deanery, foster the well-being of the deanery's clergy and people and develop the mission of the Church in the world, working across all traditions of the church.
2. To consult regularly together, to plan and consider jointly deanery matters, including mission and ministry, finance, administration and communication, involving the Standing Committee and its officers as necessary and enabling it to fulfil its responsibilities as the Deanery Mission & Pastoral Committee.
3. To encourage Christian stewardship and establish and keep under review a principled and transparent method for determining the fair allocation of the Deanery Share among the parishes in the deanery – to be approved by Deanery Synod – working closely with the Deanery Treasurer.
4. To participate in regular meetings with the Bishop, Archdeacons and Diocesan Chief Executive to explain and interpret diocesan policy in local terms and represent local needs in the diocesan planning processes.
5. To consider standing for election to Diocesan Synod, Bishop's Council and its committees and working groups and to ensure that their deanery is fully briefed at all times about the development of diocesan policy and practice and especially working with Transforming Presence and The Ministry Framework.
6. To assist the Archdeacon with the annual Visitation and Admission of Churchwardens if requested.
7. To assist the Archdeacon with the visitation of parishes under the Inspection of Churches Measure. On a joint or individual basis they will inspect the churches, chapels and churchyards within the deanery at such interval as instructed by the Archdeacon. On such inspections they are to examine the state of the terriers, inventories, log books, plate, altar linen, ornaments, registers, service books, electoral rolls, together with the security, safety and disabled accessibility of the buildings and their contents. Such visits should be conducted with the local churchwardens, providing a good opportunity for communication and mutual support, when sensitivity and confidentiality about local circumstances is important.

8. To encourage and facilitate ecumenical relationships and joint working within the deanery as most practicable, recognising formal ecumenical arrangements in Local Ecumenical Partnerships and Churches Together.
9. To encourage and facilitate local partnerships with civic authorities and community organisations.
10. The Area Dean and Lay Chair have particular responsibilities in supporting parishes during ministry vacancies.

Deanery Lay Chair - Role Description

The Lay Chair is elected by Deanery Synod to serve for three years (renewable). Deanery laity should endeavour to sponsor and elect the very best candidate available for what has become an important lay ministry role in deanery life. The Lay Chair shares with the Area Dean leadership in the deanery and in particular will encourage the effective contribution of the deanery's laity to the mission of the local church. The role of Lay Chair is a fine balance between providing a measure of leadership and being elected the senior local lay representative of the Church.

1. Share with the Area Dean in the joint chairing of Deanery Synod.
2. The Lay Chair will maintain regular contact with the Archdeacon and the Bishop, attending meetings arranged for them, often including Area Deans.
3. The Lay Chair is ex officio Chair of the Deanery House of Laity and acts as returning officer for the election of clergy representatives to the Diocesan Synod. (S)he may call occasional Deanery House of Laity meetings.
4. Lay Chairs are invited to attend the Area Mission & Pastoral Committee.
5. Lay Chairs are encouraged to regularly share in worship at all churches within their deanery, to get to know churchwardens and PCC officers and, by invitation, to meet PCCs.
6. Lay Chairs assist the Deanery Treasurer and Standing Committee in maximising Parish Share achievement, communicating the financial facts of Church life to parishes within the deanery.
7. Lay Chairs use the Deanery Secretary to help them carry out their role effectively and claim proper working expenses from the Deanery Treasurer.
8. Vacancies: the Deanery Lay Chair plays an important role in vacancies (in the past known as the interregnum) and together with the Area Dean should prepare for, and be pastorally diligent during vacancy periods when vacant parishes and their officers value support and advice.

Specifically, the Deanery Lay Chair:

- Supports the churchwardens as they take charge of the parish(es), establishing effective lines of communication.
- In partnership with the Archdeacon, churchwardens and PCCs discusses the mission and ministry plans for the future, taking care to enable fruitful discussion locally about any pastoral reorganisation anticipated and consequent concerns. Promotes the creation of new Mission & Ministry Units.
- Is invited to attend (with the Area Dean) any preparatory meeting chaired by the Archdeacon for PCCs in vacant parishes to explain the process to be followed in making a new appointment, and in particular re-stating the Deanery Vision and Plan.
- Is invited to attend the meeting (with the Area Dean) chaired by the Archdeacon when the Parish Profile and ministry provision / recruitment process is discussed.
- Has a public role in the licensing service for new clergy, welcoming the new minister into deanery life on behalf of the laity.

Deanery Synod and Deanery Standing Committee

The Church of England is episcopally led and synodically governed. Currently the Deanery Synod is the intermediate unit of leadership and governance between parishes and the diocese. Deanery Synod has a concern for the whole mission of the Church – pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It meets several times annually as business and topical concerns demand, and its composition and procedures are arranged according to the *Church Representation Rules*.

The Deanery Standing Committee also acts as the deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee and has a key responsibility for shaping deanery policy and the Deanery Vision and Plan. It advises parishes and diocesan leadership about pastoral reorganisation, Parish Share and Mission Opportunity Fund grant applications. It comprises the deanery officers ex officio and a number of clergy and lay members as provided by Church Representation Rules and deanery custom. It should have a concern for succession planning for key deanery leadership roles.

The Area Dean

The Diocesan Bishop appoints an Area Dean. The appointment is made following consultation with the Deanery clergy and Lay officers of the Deanery Synod, the Archdeacon and Area Bishop. An appointment is usually for a period of five years but this can be renewed following further consultation.

Deanery Chapter

The Chapter is a mutually supportive meeting for licensed clergy in the deanery and should not be confused with synodical gatherings of the Deanery House of Clergy. Regular meetings will naturally develop their local character and will typically include

worship and theological reflection, business and social dimensions. The Lay Chair will receive an occasional invitation to meet with the Chapter.

The Area Dean ensures that Chapter plays a trustworthy pastoral role for local clergy and invites visitors as appropriate. Considerations concerning the composition of Chapter are highlighted in the Area Dean Role Description.

Deanery Treasurer

The Treasurer has a key role in the arrangements for apportioning the Deanery Share among the parishes of the deanery and ensuring regular and full payment. S/he assists parish treasurers with best practice and is expected to join in regular meetings arranged by the Chairman of the Finance Committee and Diocesan Office colleagues when diocesan budget and Parish Share issues are explained and discussed – the annual Inter-Deanery Finance Forum, Treasurers' Training etc.

Deanery Secretary

The Secretary provides the Deanery Synod and Standing Committee with administrative support in the notification of meetings, circulating papers, minute taking and record-keeping. The Secretary is the recipient and disseminator of some diocesan communications. The role may be developed locally according to need.

Further Information

Additional information about topics mentioned in this booklet can be found in

The Canons of the Church of England
The Church Representation Rules
The Churchwardens Measure 2001
(All Church House Publishing)

Practical Church Management by James Behrens
(2nd edition, 2005 Gracewing)

Deanery leaders should ensure that they have access to up to date copies.

The Diocesan Registrar can provide guidance on a range of legal issues.