

2025
2028

Deanery Development Planning Handbook

Seeking, Sharing, Sending
Together in Mission

Published November 2025

 Seeking  Sharing  Sending

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How to Use This Handbook

This handbook is for everyone involved in Deanery Planning — clergy, lay leaders, DDG and PCC members, and anyone helping their community grow in faith. It offers guidance and questions to help you pray, reflect, and plan together in the spirit of Seeking, Sharing, and Sending.

You don't need to read it all at once. Use one section at a time — perhaps as part of a meeting, or shared reflection. Allow time for conversation, prayer, and listening to one another.

What's Inside:

- Our diocesan vision and values
- What we've learned so far
- Our next focus areas for 2025–2028
- Practical tools for planning together
- Role descriptions and useful contacts

A Prayer for Our Shared Journey

*God of Seeking, Sharing, and Sending,
guide our hearts and hands in this work.
Help us listen deeply to You and to one another.
Give us courage to imagine new possibilities,
faith to follow where You lead,
and joy in walking together as Your people.
Amen.*

Key Dates

Following the launch event on **15th November 2025**, the next large meeting proposed will be on **Saturday 21st February 2026**, when there will be the opportunities to discuss initial thinking with members of other DDGs.

Draft plans are invited to be sent to Archdeacons by **30th June 2026**.



A Message from Bishop Helen-Ann

I have on my desk two long, rusty nails. Occasionally ordinary objects gather meaning because of where they are found and act as reminders of events. They hold importance, in other words. I have had these two nails for quite some time, and they are well-travelled. I picked them up from the floor (I should add I was given permission!) of the construction site of the 'Cardboard Cathedral' in Christchurch, New Zealand. It was designed by the Japanese architect Shigeru Ban and opened in August 2013, a few years after the 2011 devastating earthquake. It gets its name from the use of over 90 large cardboard tubes for its walls and roof. I visited the site in April 2013 when I was based at the theological college in Auckland and the nails have served as a powerful memory for me ever since. More than just a memory though, they speak of (re)building and of the importance of responding well and with imagination and creativity when circumstances might dictate otherwise. If you visit Bishop's House remind me to let you see and hold them!

I start with that memory and image because we are a people of place and context and our buildings matter for what they are and what they point us towards. Buildings need to welcome, to inspire, to provide shelter and safety, and to reflect God's glory in our worship. This isn't about being grand (though beauty matters!). It is all about the visible Kingdom of God being seen and felt in the detail and the accessibility. Our buildings help us to communicate God's story and enable us to imagine new and different ways of enabling everyone to experience God's love. They say something important too about how we care for our world and tread lightly on it. We take all this (of course) beyond any walls out into the communities we serve seeking new partnerships in mission. This is why this next phase of our deanery development work is about seeking God, sharing God's story, and sending us continually out to live and tell the good news of Jesus Christ.

At the beginning of John's Gospel, we read: 'the Word became flesh and pitched his tent among us' (taken from Nick King's translation). This is a powerful evocation of the sense of rootedness of place whilst always being on the move. Tents are not usually meant to be permanent dwellings. Perhaps above all, I pray that this new season of deanery development work will be about thinking hopefully about how we inhabit and respond to mission opportunities. Sometimes this will mean looking at the buildings we use, and sometimes it may require us to look beyond the walls we currently inhabit.

And so in this new season we will together consider how we might enable our buildings to be fit for God's mission. We will recognise our own need to build ourselves (and others) up in our understanding and knowledge of God through learning and discovery. And we will find and affirm new and renewed ways of gathering and worshipping to connect afresh with the communities and groups we work alongside and with. It is a bit of a cliché, but it bears repeating: the church doesn't have a mission, the God of mission has a church!

The writer and theologian John O'Donohue writes: 'When you know where you belong, then you know where you are' (Eternal Echoes. Exploring our Hunger to Belong. 2000, p.8). May this season of Deanery Development be filled with hope and discovery! And with great gratitude for all that happens to further God's mission across our whole diocese!



+Helen-Ann Newcastle

*The Rt Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley
Bishop of Newcastle*

Why Do We Need Deanery Planning?

Deanery Planning helps us to work better together as churches, so that we might better serve our wider communities. When we plan as churches together at deanery level, we strengthen our mission and our care for one another. Planning helps us to be Confident Christians who **face outwards in mission and to grow younger and more diverse**.

To achieve this mission, we need a **plan** that involves **enabling our people, our church buildings and our worshipping communities** to be strong and vibrant. The Deanery is a key unit of sharing, mutual support, encouragement and collaboration.

Three words are helping us to strengthen our culture towards something more outward facing and missional. These are: 'Seeking, Sharing, Sending':

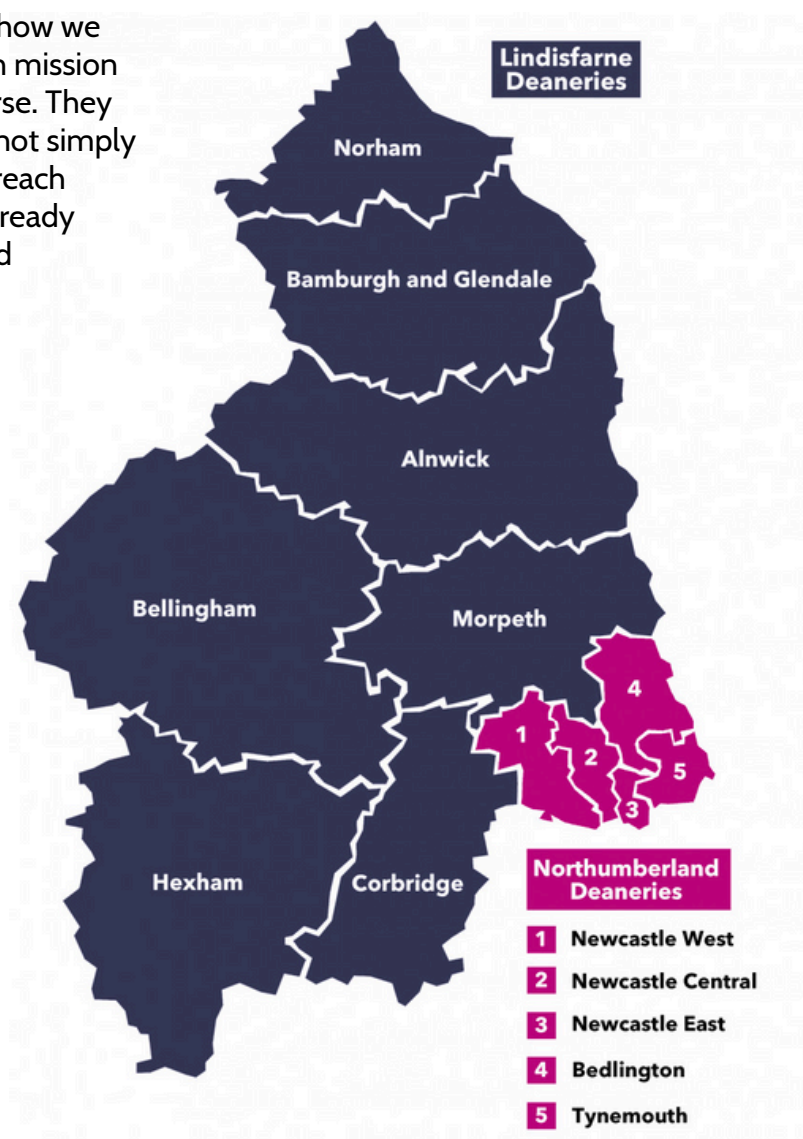
SEEKING - being open to God's love and guidance in all we do

SHARING – offering our gifts, stories and faith generously with others

SENDING – stepping out to serve and bless our communities with courage and hope

'Seeking, Sharing, Sending' guide how we more confidently turn outwards in mission and grow younger and more diverse. They are a reminder that we are called not simply to maintain what is, but rather to reach out and join in with what God is already doing in his world, so that new and different voices begin to be heard and our life together is enriched.

These dynamic ideas have added new energy to our Deanery Development Planning.



Looking Back 2022 - 2025

The previous season of Deanery Planning included the following key areas:

- Leadership and Governance;
- Mission and Pastoral Care;
- Buildings fit for Purpose;
- Generous Giving;
- Development of Lay Ministry.

Deaneries reviewed their structures and shared creative ways of working together. Plans were developed and implemented to make sure ministry and resources are sustainable for the future. The greatest learning has been that prayer, partnership, and mutual support bring new life and hope.

We asked Deanery Development Groups to **discern the number of stipendiary clergy required** in their deanery. **The target overall number diocesan financial resources can sustain, based on parish share returns, is 80.**

The allocation per deanery as agreed by Diocesan Synod is as follows:

Deanery	Stipendiary Clergy Allocation
Norham	4.5
Bamburgh and Glendale	3.5
Alnwick	6
Morpeth	7.15
Bellingham	2
Hexham	6
Corbridge	5.3
Bedlington	8
Newcastle Central	10.5
Newcastle East	6
Newcastle West	10
Tynemouth	11

This work continues to be a prerequisite for the ongoing aspects of deanery planning as we seek a sustainable future.

Deanery Development 2025 - 2028

For this new season our focus is on three key areas:

- **New Worshipping Communities**
- **Buildings for Mission**
- **Growing Closer to God**

We have chosen these areas of focus because:

- They will equip us to be confident Christians who face outwards in mission and grow younger and more diverse,
- They are areas of church life where deanery wide collaboration is likely to be fruitful, rather than lone parish working.
- They respond to what we discern God to be doing through calling new people to explore faith.
- Resource has been identified to assist deaneries with these developments.



1 New Worshipping Communities

The goal is to create welcoming spaces where new people can explore faith together. They are defined by:

- **New:** an expression of worship designed specifically with those in mind who have not been regularly worshipping with us in recent years – ie new worshippers
- **Worshipping:** they should include at least two of the following: prayer, sung worship, bible study, reflection on Christian living.
- **Community:** they should meet regularly – at least monthly – in order to build community.

There are many examples throughout the diocese already: 'Pints and Praise' in a pub in Norham; 'Late at Eight' in the village of Wark; 'Toddly Play' in Felton. Other examples might include family friendly teatime worship, quiet reflective evening worship, worship with contemporary or reflective music, worship with extended time for exploring questions and sharing fellowship, services that involve interaction and moving around, gatherings that include generous offers of food, themed teaching, and many others. We seek to engage more than the 3 – 5% of the population currently regularly attending worship.

Few parishes are sufficiently well resourced to undertake this task alone. There needs to be sharing of human resource, sharing of wisdom, sharing of experience, sharing of flexible venues, sharing of financial resource, sharing of musicians, sharing of skills in hospitality and in teaching.

Most deaneries are already developing several new worshipping communities based local need. Many are finding ways of sharing accumulated wisdom in this area of mission.

Support and advice is available from your archdeacons and Diocesan Director of Mission and Ministry to discern suitable New Worshipping Communities. Not all those tried will thrive, but faithful efforts will always bring new life and hope.



2 Buildings for Mission

Are our church buildings in a good state to welcome new-comers and visitors as well as ensuring regular worshippers are comfortable and confident in their hospitality?

Are they environmentally sustainable and set to meet net zero targets?

Are they open to collaborative projects with others in the locality?

Is the fabric well cared for?

Engagement with these questions enable work towards buildings that are fit for mission, ready to host new activities and partnerships.



Resources available to assist in this work:

The Open and Sustainable 101 toolkit bit.ly/sustainable_toolkit was developed in this diocese thanks to a large grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Accompanying videos on the web pages newcastle.anglican.org/ruralchurchesforeveryone illustrate the difference this process can make in developing sustainability plans for church buildings.

The process is best undertaken by a group of individuals made up of those who know the church building well and those who come with fresh eyes. Collaboration with partners from across a deanery is ideal.

There are many quick wins in the 101 toolkit as well as more focussed and detailed explorations. Deanery groups should work together to audit their buildings and discuss the resulting reports which offer 'traffic lights' to show how 'open and sustainable' the church is in every sense of these words.

Support and advice about church buildings is available from:

- Church Buildings Support Officer Tim Lewthwaite: CBSO@newcastle.anglican.org
- DAC secretary Lucy Burfield: DAC@newcastle.anglican.org
- Net Zero Programme Manager, Marion Schooler: m.schooler@newcastle.anglican.org
- Small Net Zero Quick Wins grants are currently still available

Please do not be put off by the fact that the overall project was initially called 'Rural Churches for Everyone' – this was just the initial target group of churches who helped design and pilot the toolkit. The toolkit works for all church contexts.

A further bid is in progress to the NLHF with the aim of securing human resource to accompany parishes and deaneries as they seek to implement the results of the Open and Sustainable 101 audit.



SOLAR PANELS, BERWICK PARISH CHURCH

3 Growing Closer to God

This part of our planning focuses on how we can encourage one another to deepen our faith. We can learn from one another through conversation and relationship in home and study groups, Lent courses, through art and music, serving together in our communities and sometimes from simply gathering for a shared meal. Growing closer to God is a lifelong journey. We might call it 'life-long learning' or 'whole life learning' or 'discipleship' or 'formation'. We hope that this aspect of our work might also include exploring some shared material through a diocesan-wide scheme that could be offered to deaneries to share in.

Being a Christian is not just about belonging, but is a journey of growing into the likeness of Jesus. There are many ways we can enable and encourage one another to become more Christ-like. Our scriptures emphasise that God's love is an enduring one (Ruth 1:8). It is a love that is with all kinds of people in all kinds of circumstances (Matthew 5:1-12). By growing in confidence, we can even enable one another to see God at work when circumstances are more challenging (John 16:7). Scripture teaches us that God is always with us (Psalm 139:7-12). Our growing closer to God together should equip us to lean on our faith and even share our faith during times of challenge as well as times of joy (Romans 8:31). Our focus on growing closer to God reminds us that God is at work in every human being.

Taking part in Christian courses and groups helps to grow people's confidence in expressing faith and also helps integrate faith into all aspects and decisions of life. Some may even feel a sense of new vocation emerging. For those who would like to explore a sense of calling towards ordained, Lay Reader or Authorised Lay Ministry training, you should speak with your parish priest and churchwardens. With their support, you may also contact our Diocesan Director of Ordinands and Vocations, Stephen Tranter (ddo@newcastle.anglican.org) and Lay Ministry Development officer, Nic Denyer (n.deny@newcastle.anglican.org).



4 Additional Notes

i) Stipendiary Clergy

There is no requirement in this phase to further reduce the numbers of stipendiary clergy allocated in the 2022 – 2025 phase, although some deaneries are yet to fully enact the plans that identify where these posts will be based. **This work must continue until we have clearly identified no more than 80FTE equivalent stipendiary posts.** DDGs will be supported to complete this work as soon as is practicably possible. Archdeacons, Bishops and Diocesan Director of Mission and Ministry continue to work with those deaneries where there is difficulty in agreeing and/ or implementing new pastoral arrangements.

ii) Deanery Development in the wider Church of England

Every diocese is different and different models of Deanery Development Plans exist, but a glance at national guidance might be helpful in setting the context in which we work: https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/deanery_plans_guidance_october_2018.pdf

Sharpening our sense of shared vision and mission by working strategically as deaneries will strengthen our confidence and help us to discern where it might be fruitful to seek additional resource through regional and national grant funding programmes.



Working with the Deanery Development Toolkit

The toolkit helps each Deanery Development Group (DDG) reflect, plan, and act together. It includes prayer materials, study resources, and a planning template.

- Begin each meeting with prayer and reflection.
- Listen carefully to one another and value every voice.
- Set clear priorities, but allow space for creativity and change.
- Keep in regular contact with your Archdeacon and diocesan staff for guidance.
- Celebrate what's going well — joy is part of our witness!

A Prayer for Our Common Life

Loving God,
*Bless the work we share across our deaneries and parishes.
Make us people of courage, patience, and hope.
Teach us to listen deeply, to serve gladly,
and to see Your hand at work in every place and person.
May our planning lead to joy,
our service to renewal,
and our faith to the flourishing of all Your people.*

*Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*



Appendix I : Area Dean Role Description (Statutory)

The Commissioning of an Area Dean

..... by Divine Permission to Our beloved in Christ Vicar of the Parish of within Our Diocese and Jurisdiction

GREETING

We do hereby commission and appoint you for a period of five years from the date hereof unless this Our Commission be sooner revoked to serve as Area Dean of the Deanery of within the Archdeaconry of And We desire that in executing the duties of this Office you do act in co-operation with the Archdeacon of the said Archdeaconry and do faithfully observe the instructions hereunto appended.

IN TESTIMONY whereof We have hereunto set Our hand and caused Our Episcopal Seal to be affixed this in the year of Our Lord and in the year of Our translation.

The Duties of an Area Dean

The statutory duties of the Area Dean are substantially set out in Canon C23 (see below). Essentially this is to report to the Bishop any matter of pastoral or administrative concern within the deanery, to report to the Archdeacon any matter of concern or defect in the fabric, ornaments and furniture of any church or other benefice building in the deanery, to be joint chair of the deanery synod (in accordance with church representation rules) and to ensure that the laity in every parish are represented in the councils of the church in accordance with current legislation.

In addition, the Area Dean may have responsibility for inspection of buildings delegated by the Archdeacon under Canons F17 and 18. The Area Dean may also under Canon C11 be mandated to induct an incumbent to a benefice. The Area Dean also has responsibilities under Canons B43, D1, E4, E5 and E7 when a benefice in the deanery is vacant.

The Bishop will therefore look to the Dean for co-operation and support in the mission and ministry of the Church in his/her deanery.

1. In pastoral care. The Dean will seek by personal contact to get to know the clergy and their families and the parishes and chaplaincies in which they serve. S/he will be aware of arrangements to care for retired clergy, spouses and their widow(er)s. S/he will report annually to the Bishop and at other times bring pastoral matters or cases of illness or urgent need to his/her attention.

2. In managing the life of the church. The Dean will meet regularly with the Archdeacon and, where requested, deputise for him/her in the deanery. S/he and the Deanery Lay Chair will also meet, together with their colleagues from the other deaneries to discuss relevant diocesan matters.

The Area Dean will have an enabling role within the Deanery Leadership Team and Deanery Development Group in shaping plans for the pastoral reorganisation and development of ministry.

In cases of vacant parishes, s/he will act as one of the Sequestrators and accept prime responsibility for providing the services, to visit the church and parsonage house as necessary and to support the churchwardens. With his/her knowledge of the needs of the parish and community, s/he will be available to give guidance in the production of the parish profile and be available to receive and assist prospective new incumbents. S/he will arrange and attend institutions and present the new incumbent where appropriate.

3. In leading and encouraging. S/he will act as co-chair of the Deanery Synod, and, together with the Deanery Leadership Team and Deanery Development Group, will seek to develop a strategy for mission and ministry within the deanery. The Dean will be a focus for unity and co-operation and will promote the sharing of a vision of the kingdom of God. As chair of the chapter, s/he will encourage the deepening of fellowship and study among the clergy particularly seeking to involve those who work outside the parochial system.

4. In fostering good relationships with clergy of other denominations and faith communities and encouraging contacts with civic authorities and other structures within the secular world. S/he will also have a special concern for church schools within the deanery through their relationship with their parish priest.

5. In Safeguarding. Area Deans have a number of important safeguarding roles to play across the Deanery. They are well positioned to support parishes in establishing and maintaining safe working practices and in championing a positive safeguarding culture. A helpful starting point for this would be encouraging the take up of training and the use and updating of the Parish Dashboard system. Area Deans are well placed to potentially identify where one parish may offer particular safeguarding support to another and to identify and encourage opportunities for collaborative safeguarding training events within the Deanery.

Where a safeguarding concern arises in respect of a member of clergy within the Deanery, particularly where it may be necessary for that person to have a period away from parish ministry, Area Deans take a key role in supporting the parish through a difficult and uncertain time.

If an issue arises in a parish during a vacancy the Archdeacon or Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser will speak to the Area Dean if they will have a particular role to play.

Area Deans are expected to model collaborative ministry, not only with their clergy colleagues in Chapter, but also with the Lay Chair, the Deanery Secretary, the Deanery Finance Officer and other lay people including, but not exclusively, members of the Deanery Synod.

In this spirit, it is not expected that Area Deans will carry out all the tasks listed here, but rather that they will ensure that they are carried out:

1. To pray for the people, parishes and chaplaincies of the Deanery.
2. To lead and facilitate the ownership, development and implementation of the strategic direction (mission) of the Deanery in line with the Diocesan Vision.
3. To oversee the pastoral care and support for all those who hold the Bishop's license in the Deanery and ensure that concerns are reported to the Archdeacon or Bishop as appropriate. The pastoral care of Readers is currently delegated to the Warden of Readers.
4. To convene the Deanery Chapter, and to encourage the full participation of all stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministers.
5. To attend and participate in diocesan meetings of Area Deans and Archdeaconry meetings, according to local practice.
6. To enable good communication between members of the Deanery and Diocesan offices and officers.
7. To support Parish Share offers by example, by encouragement and by sharing information and good news stories.
8. To participate in the recruitment process for clergy and other staff to the deanery as appropriate, for example in the drawing up of parish profiles.
9. To share in the planning and execution of licensing/collation/induction services according to local custom.
10. To share in parish inspections, on behalf of the Archdeacon.
11. Alongside the Lay Chair, to maintain good communication with the Deanery.
12. To stay in regular contact with their deanery retired clergy officer.
13. To act as returning officer for the election of lay members to Diocesan Synod.

When There is a Vacancy

When a vacancy for the incumbent/incumbent status post in a parish is announced, the Archdeacon will arrange with the Area Dean to meet with the Churchwardens to discuss how the mission and ministry of the parish can reasonably be sustained in the vacancy.

If the vacancy is to be filled the process set out below is followed. If other arrangements for ministry are to be made, the Archdeacon will liaise with the Area Dean and Lay Chair about how these will develop. Whichever route is followed, a period of vacancy is almost certain to follow.

Responsibilities During a Vacancy

During a vacancy the Area Dean and Churchwardens become 'sequestrators', i.e. the Bishop's officers in the parish. During the vacancy, the Area Dean should be the first point of contact for Churchwardens and others seeking advice and support in the day-to-day running of the parish. (This may often be to direct them as to where they may find the answer rather than providing it!). In some cases, a regular meeting with them may be helpful.

The Area Dean should liaise with the Archdeacon about the supervision of other clergy in the parish and other licensed and authorised ministers. The one exception to this is that in the rare case of there being a title curate in the parish their supervision will be arranged between the Bishop and the Director of IME (and the Area Dean will be informed). In the event of a vacancy in either of these posts, the Archdeacon will work with the remaining one and inform the Area Dean.

The Churchwardens and the Area Dean are responsible for the maintenance of appropriate church services for the parish including provision for baptisms, weddings and funerals. Churchwardens may need help in finding cover, and this may require the active involvement of the Area Dean in establishing rotas and dealing with gaps.

The Appointment Process

Area Deans and Lay Chairs will be provided with the most up-to-date version of diocesan information booklets which explain the vacancy and appointment process in detail.

Either before or shortly after the incumbent has left, the Archdeacon (and Patron if applicable) and Area Dean will visit the PCC to explain the vacancy process. The PCC will subsequently arrange its own 'Section 11 Meeting'.

The Area Dean will work with the PCC in producing the draft of its profile to send to the Bishop's Office, especially helping them with forming the sections that include a statement of their strength, needs and challenges and a person specification. The Archdeacon will work with the Bishop to draft the statement which may be requested from the Bishop under Section 11 of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986. A statement will in any case be included when the Bishop is appointing a priest-in-charge or is Patron. The Area Dean and Lay Chair will be asked to provide a paragraph either for the Parish Profile or the Bishop's Statement about the life and nature of the Deanery.

The appointment process is usually overseen by the Archdeacon and the Bishop's Office and involves the Area Dean and Lay Chair in the following ways:

- 1.The Archdeacon will ensure the Area Dean and Lay Chair are aware of the vacancy timeline.
- 2.The Area Dean's contact details will be made available to shortlisted candidates, inviting them to make contact to learn more about the life of the local churches and deanery.
- 3.The Area Dean (and where practicable) the Lay Chair will be invited to meet the candidates at some point on the Parish Visit Day.
- 4.The Archdeacon will inform the Area Dean and Lay Chair when an appointment is made and the likely timescale for induction/licensing.
- 5.The Area Dean will be involved in the announcement of an appointment and communicate this to the deanery.

Welcome the New Priest

Before the new priest moves in the Area Dean should be in touch with information of interest and concern, for example dates of Chapter and Synod meetings or anything key to the life of the deanery. A note of greeting from the Lay Chair also sets a good tone! The Archdeacon and Area Dean should ensure that at least one of them visits a new priest on the day they move in. It is good practice for the Area Dean to visit again 6-8 weeks after the service to check that all is well.

Other Appointments

The Area Dean should encourage there to be a deanery dimension to the licensing services for Team Vicars and other assistant clergy and at ordination services for colleagues in the Chapter.

Chaplaincies

Appointments at chaplaincy level (hospitals, prisons, schools), which may be lay or ordained, operate under different procedures and it is expected that the Area Dean will make contact with chaplains who work in the Deanery and seek to support and include them through the Chapter and Synod. Chaplains bring perspectives that could add substantially to the lives of deaneries but some can feel isolated. It may be helpful to entrust someone with ensuring that details of chaplains serving in institutions in the deanery are kept up to date and that chaplains are invited to Chapter meetings. The Archdeacon of Northumberland has a particular responsibility for chaplains across the diocese and can be contact for information or with any concerns.

Appointment

Area Deans are appointed by the Bishop usually after consultation with the clergy serving a deanery. Their licence is for a five year period which can, after consultation, be renewed. It is generally expected that the Area Dean role will take one day per week.

Meetings with Bishop and Lay Chairs

There are opportunities for all Area Deans and Lay Chairs to meet with the Bishop and the Archdeacons.

Meeting with the Archdeacon

Area Deans will be in regular contact with the Archdeacon but there are some more formally arranged meeting of Archdeacon, Area Deans and Lay Chairs in each Archdeaconry throughout the year.

Finance

- 1.Travelling expenses are met in full by the Diocese. Claims should be made, in accordance with the usual supporting evidence, to the Diocesan Accounts Office. (See leaflet and form)
- 2.An annual allowance of £500 is available to each deanery for developmental support, including the purchase of equipment.
- 3.Claims need to be made within 3 months of expenditure and submitted before the end of the financial year (usually first week of January) There is a diocesan expenses policy that prohibits claims for alcohol.

Training

No formal training or induction is normally undertaken but as well as using the support networks of Archdeacon, Diocesan Officers and colleagues there are numerous opportunities for development that Area Deans can undertake.

Canon C23 Of rural deans*

1. Every rural dean shall report to the bishop any matter in any parish within the deanery which it may necessary or useful for the bishop to know, particularly any case of serious illness or other forms of distress amongst the clergy, the vacancy of any cure of souls and the measures taken by the sequestrators to secure the ministration of the word and sacraments and other rites of the Church during the said vacancy, and any case of a minister from another diocese officiating in any place otherwise than as provided in Canon C8.
2. In the case of any omission in any parish to prepare and maintain a church electoral roll or to form or maintain a parochial church council or to hold the annual parochial church meeting, the rural dean on such omission being brought to their notice shall ascertain and report to the bishop the cause thereof.
3. If at any time the rural dean has reason to believe that there is any serious defect in the fabric, ornaments, and furniture of any church or chapel, or that the buildings of any benefice are in a state of disrepair, s/he shall report the matter to the archdeacon.
4. The rural dean shall be a joint chair (with a member of the House of Laity) of the deanery synod.

* The Canons still refer to 'Rural Deans' but this term is interchangeable with the term 'Area Dean'.

Appendix II: Lay Chair Role Description

(Diocesan document)

Introduction

The role of Deanery Lay Chair is important in the life of the deanery and diocese. Lay Chairs are a representative of the Deanery Synod elected for a three-year period. Under the leadership of the Bishop and together with the Area Dean, the role of the Lay Chair is to further the mission and ministry of the deanery within the wider diocesan vision: seeking sharing sending.

The purpose of this role description is to give a greater clarity about what the role involves and about the responsibilities and expectations. This document is the result of much work and discussion among lay chairs themselves. Although there will continue to be some variations across the diocese in terms of the work or initiatives that are taken this document sets out the basic role description. It is complemented by the Area Dean role description, and we hope that together these documents will support our ever-greater collaborative working.

The Ven Dr Catherine Sourbut Groves

Archdeacon of Lindisfarne

The Ven Rachel Wood

Archdeacon of Northumberland

This document will be due for review in 2027 before the next triennium begins

The Purpose of the Lay Chair

- It is recognised that this role is fulfilled voluntarily and that there may be occasions when circumstances restrict how much time and energy can be devoted to it.
- The purpose of the role of the Deanery Lay Chair primarily includes:
 - Sharing with the Bishops, Archdeacon and the Area Dean in their ministry of oversight across the deanery.
 - Leading the deanery by working collaboratively with the Area Dean and Deanery Development Group to fulfil the vision of the deanery as a local network of churches and communities, inspiring, influencing and leading mission and ministry.
 - Sharing with the Area Dean, the responsibility for modelling the good collaborative practice of lay and ordained in the deanery

Primary Responsibilities

In partnership with the Area Deans:

- Co-chair the Deanery Synod and Deanery Development Group.
- Ensure the Deanery Plan for mission and ministry is kept up to date.

Have knowledge of the canonical responsibilities of an Area Dean (see [Canon C23](#)) and support them in this role.

NB The Deanery Development Group membership includes the Area Dean, the Lay Chair, the Deanery Secretary, the Deanery Finance Officer and lay and clergy representatives. The Deanery Development Group effectively replaces what may have been known previously as the Deanery Standing Committee.

Key Tasks

These are divided into essential and desirable tasks. Working collaboratively with the Area Dean and the Deanery Development Group, within the restrictions of time, capacity and skills, the Deanery Lay Chair will seek to ensure:

Essential

- a. There are regular meetings for prayer with the Area Dean, including preparation for Deanery Synod.
- b. The Deanery Development Group meets regularly (at least 3 times each year) and has a membership which is appropriate for the deanery.
- c. The Deanery Plan for mission and ministry is kept under regular review with the involvement of the Deanery Synod and communication to PCCs.
- d. The chairing of the Deanery Synod is shared with the Area Dean as appropriate.
- e. Meetings with Archdeacons and Bishops are attended as required.

Desirable

- f. The key roles of the Deanery Synod are filled.
- g. The involvement of the laity and clergy in the mission and life of the deanery is encouraged, and training needs identified to allow Lay Chairs to offer informed support at PCC/Parish level. Opportunities for ongoing development of Lay Chairs are identified.
- h. They share an awareness, with the Area Dean, of the general well-being of the clergy and lay leaders, as appropriate.
- i. They help to support parishes in vacancy jointly with the Area Dean where possible, including advising/supporting preparation of Parish Profiles/ Job Description - and attending pre interview discussions.

j. They attend Services of Licensing, Institution or Collation for new clergy and support their induction into the deanery.

k. They have an awareness of the discussions and decisions of Diocesan Synod, either through attendance, or membership if possible.

l. They have an awareness of Generous Giving within the deanery and actively seek to encourage generosity and commitment.

Key Relationships

- Area Dean.
- Deanery Development Group and Deanery Synod.
- Deanery Lay Chair colleagues.
- Bishops and Archdeacons.
- The Chair of the House of Laity of the Diocesan Synod.

Other

- Newly elected Lay Chairs will be commissioned by the Bishop or Archdeacon at an appropriate opportunity as soon after their election as possible.
- Lay Chairs will be offered an induction into the role and the deanery by the Archdeacon and Area Dean.
- Lay Chairs will be provided with support and development opportunities as required.
- Lay Chairs are expected to model good practice in safeguarding and undertake the minimum training expected of PCC members, and ideally Leadership level.
- Lay Chairs are reimbursed by the diocese for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties:
- Travelling expenses are met in full by the Diocese. Claims should be made, in accordance with the usual supporting evidence, to the Diocesan Accounts Office. A leaflet and form are available from Gillian Green in the Accounts Department: G.Green@newcastle.anglican.org
- Claims need to be made within 3 months of expenditure and submitted before the end of the financial year (usually first week of January).
- An annual allowance of £500 is available to each deanery for developmental support, including the purchase of equipment.

Appendix III: Deanery Finance Officer Role Description

(Example to be adapted to your deanery)

Overview

1. As a member of the deanery synod, the primary task of the Deanery Finance Officer (DFO) is to encourage parishes in the deanery to be generous, transparent and cooperative in all financial matters. The DFO will help parishes understand the importance of Parish Share which makes the vital contribution to the Diocese being able to maintain the parish's current and future Incumbent.
2. The DFO will be a member of the Deanery Development Group (DDG) and work closely with the Area Dean, Lay Chair of Deanery Synod, Secretary and other members of the DDG to ensure that there is realistic understanding of issues as seen through parish eyes and those of the Archdeacon and Diocesan staff.

Relationships

3. As ever good personal relationships underpin success. The DFO needs to establish a personal relationship with parish Incumbents and Treasurers; being ready to join PCCs to discuss financial issues if requested. The DFO will do the same with the DDG, Archdeacon and the Diocesan financial staff. The outcome of these relationships will be the ability to let others know of financial issues, positive or negative, on the horizon so that amelioration can be sought and/or assessed.

Meeting Commitment

4. The rhythm of meetings may vary from deanery to deanery and year to year but the DFO might attend:
 - Around 3 deanery synods a year and provide a Financial Report.
 - Around 4 DDGs a year.
 - Around 3 meetings of all DFOs with the Diocesan Finance Officer, sometimes the Archdeacons will also attend. These meetings are frequently virtual meetings.
 - On taking up the post the DFO will probably arrange to meet the Incumbent and Treasurer of all the parishes in the deanery. Thereafter visits to parishes will be on an as needed basis.

Monitoring Parish Share Offers and Collection

5. The 'nuts and bolts' for the DFO is the Agreement of Parish Share Offer between each parish and the Diocese and then the collection of this offer. The rhythm of this activity is mainly done by email and might look like this:

- In September the Diocese will ask that every parish to make a Parish Share Offer by a set date in October. The DFO needs to ensure that all parishes in the deanery make a return. The Diocese will share the returns by email with the DFO who can send them by email to all the deanery Incumbents and Treasurers. This enables gratitude to be expressed and transparency achieved. Should the DFO judge that a parish is not being as generous as it should be (this is a result of reviewing previous years' financial returns that the Diocese makes available to DFOs) a conversation will take place with the relevant Incumbent and Treasurer. If the explanation is unconvincing a further discussion with the Area Dean will follow.
- At the start of the year the DFO will invite those parishes that can to 'front load' parish share contributions to ease the Diocesan cash flow. It must be understood that some parishes are unable to make any contributions until the spring due to their own cash flow challenge.
- Thereafter the Diocese will share by email the parish contributions made each month. The DFO can review this and start a conversation with any parish that appears to be in difficulty. It is not necessary to share the monthly collection with Incumbents and Treasurers every month but on a more selective and targeted basis. All the time offering encouragement while asking parishes who forecast falling short of their annual offer to declare it.
- In November and December when shortfalls are becoming clearer the DFO will ask those parishes that can to contribute more than the original offer to offset this shortfall.

Deanery Funds

6. Some deaneries have small funds to cover deanery expenses. The DFO might normally manage the accounting of these funds, reporting their status to the DDG and Deanery Synod. These small funds do not reach the threshold for Financial Inspection but must be made publicly available for deanery synod inspection.

7. Should a deanery have more substantial funds these might be managed by someone as the Treasurer rather than the DFO whose role is different and explained above.

Appendix IV: Deanery Secretary Role Description

(Example to be adapted to your deanery)

The Deanery Synod Secretary works alongside the other officers of the Deanery Synod, i.e. the Area Dean, Lay Chair and Treasurer, in carrying out tasks which ensure the smooth running of the Deanery Synod, and more widely in the Deanery as necessary.

The Deanery Secretary is a member of Deanery Synod and Deanery Development Group.

In particular the Deanery Synod Secretary is responsible for:

Deanery Development Group

- Attending the meeting.
- Preparing minutes of every meeting of the DDG. The minutes are then circulated to members of DDG
- Actioning any points from the meeting eg contacting and liaising with the speaker for Deanery Synod
- Any secretarial work needed in conjunction with that meeting ie agendas etc

Deanery Synod

- Attending the meeting
- Provide: extra agendas, minutes, paper and pens
- Ensure badges are all ready – people often take them away!
- Ensuring that the speaker has the equipment they require.
- Preparing minutes of synod. The minutes are then circulated to members of the synod.
- Notifying members of the meeting and circularising the relevant paperwork at least two weeks before a meeting
- Receiving notice of any business for a meeting of the synod.

At Meetings

- The Deanery Synod Secretary takes the minutes. It is important to make a note of the following: those present; of decisions made (including where necessary, the wording of resolutions passed and the results of any votes taken); of the outcome of discussions; and of important facts brought up at the meeting.

Additional Tasks

- Being a link between the Deanery and the Diocese
- Sending out information received from Diocese
- Keep an updated list of the members of the synod
- Booking venues for meetings and liaising practical arrangements with the relevant parish.

Appendix V: Bishop's Officer for Retired Clergy Role Description

(Diocesan Document)

There is a Bishop's Officer for Retired Clergy for each Deanery. They are to act as the focal link for Retired Clergy in the deanery including:

1. Be a point of contact and information sharing – signposting to pastoral support and financial assistance. This will include clergy widows and widowers as appropriate.
2. Keep the Area Dean informed of matters concerning the Retired Clergy, including the updating of contact lists of clergy with PTO as appropriate. Attendance at Chapter and Deanery Synod by the Officer, or their representative, once a year is required as a minimum.
3. Support and encourage deanery retired clergy in matters relating to safeguarding training, safer recruitment and the Bishop's Permission to Officiate.
4. Ensure the sharing of information with retired clergy about annual meetings with the Bishop of Newcastle, retired clergy deaths and funeral services, any relevant courses or CMF opportunities.
5. Work with the Bishop's PA to arrange an annual lunch with the Bishop for retired clergy with PTO.
6. Work with the area dean to appoint a PTO rep for Deanery Synod.
7. Key relationships include:
 - Area Dean, the Archdeaconry Officer for Retired Clergy, other deanery retired clergy officers and the Archdeacons
 - Diocesan communications – the fortnightly mailing, monthly e-bulletin and Link
 - The Retired Clergy Association.

Terms

- The Bishop's Adviser for Retired Clergy and their Families will be appointed by the Bishop.
- The appointment will be for 3 years.
- The Bishop's Adviser for Retired Clergy will be accountable to the Bishop.
- The expenses of office will be paid from the Bishop's Discretionary Fund.