

Reader Selection – Incumbent Reference

Reference for**:** \*Applicant Name\*:

You have received this letter, because the person above is considering applying for Reader Ministry. We trust that they have already talked with you about their calling.

Reader Ministry is a nationally recognised lay ministry. In line with the Central Readers’ Council, the Diocese particularly emphasises the role of Readers as:

* Enablers of Mission
* Teachers of the Faith
* Leaders in Church and Society

They have a Bishop’s licence which allows them to lead services and preach. They also undertake pastoral work arising from these ministries. No-one is expected to be uniformly able in all these roles, but they should be gifted in at least one area and, with training, be competent in all. At the end of this reference you will find the national selection criteria against which we will explore the applicant’s calling. You can read more about Reader ministry on the diocesan website.

Please note that the applicant will see this reference, but please do not let that deter you from being honest. The forms should be emailed/ posted to the applicant once completed, unless advised otherwise.

If you have any concerns about the calling or this reference, please do contact your Archdeaconry Warden of Readers who will be working with the applicant:

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| Bath Archdeaconry Warden  Reverend Trevor Cranshaw  10b Coleridge Road  Clevedon. BS21 7TB  01275 871458 | Wells Archdeaconry Warden  Prebendary Graham Witts  The Vicarage, 38 Rectory Road  Burnham-on-Sea. TA8 2BZ  01278 782991 | Taunton Archdeaconry Warden  Reverend Robin Lodge  St Andrew’s Vicarage,  118 Kingston Road  Taunton. TA2 7SR  01823 352471 |

Readers and the Church

Reader Ministry is a discrete lay calling, taking many forms, that is not simply an assistant to the incumbent. They are expected to form part of the leadership team working collaboratively with clergy, other Readers, Wardens and lay leaders. The PCC of each church, in which they will minister, needs to agree, by formal minute, to their training/ ministry. A Ministry Specification will need to be drawn up for them at licencing. In return, for all they offer voluntarily to a church, the church is expected to pay their expenses and contribute around £250 pa to their training.

The Incumbent- Reader relationship is particularly key to the success of any Reader’s ministry. As Incumbent, if you have any concerns or questions please talk immediately to the Archdeaconry Warden. In agreeing to a Reader’s Ministry, the Incumbent is committing themselves to regular support meetings with the Reader, undertaking an annual review and a more detailed five-yearly review with them.

We are very grateful to you for helping in this way and trust that you and the church will benefit from any ministry that is discerned. The applicant will give you a date by which they need the reference.

1. How long have you known the applicant?

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1. How have you, and the church, been involved in the discernment of the applicant’s gifts and calling?

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1. Please describe the applicant’s involvement in the church now and in the past

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Please comment on their fulfilment of the selection criteria, detailed more fully at the end of this form.

A Christian Tradition, Faith and Discipleship

Their desire to learn from Scripture and Tradition, their potential for study, commitment to key beliefs and willingness to engage with hard questions.

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B Mission, Evangelism and Making Disciples

Their personal commitment to Christ, capacity to share the good news, their sense of the world as the context for service and ministry and their ability to communicate the good news orally and in writing.

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C. Spirituality and Worship

Their desire to grow closer to God, through worship, prayer and Bible study. Their openness to differing expressions of spirituality and their ability to relate worship to the world.

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D. Personality and Character

Their personal integrity, self awareness and emotional stability. Other’s recognition of their stability and trustworthiness. Their ability to recognise their own gifts and weaknesses and receive feedback.

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E. Relationships and Community

Their approach to being a member of the body of Christ, their relationships with a wide variety of people, their listening skills and their service of the community.

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F. Collaboration and Leadership

Their ability to collaborate with a variety of people, work as a team, but also work individually. Their leadership style and their ability to value those they disagree with.

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G. Vocation and Ministry

Their ability to articulate their sense of calling. Their appreciation of the CofE in its diversity and challenges, and their willingness to commit to training, formation and the authority of the Church.

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Enablers of Mission, Teachers of the Faith, Leaders in Church and Society.

Please comment on their giftings in terms of these three roles for Readers in the Diocese.

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Do you consider this person can work safely and appropriately with vulnerable people?

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Will the applicant’s immediate family be supportive?

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Reader Ministry

In what ways could the applicant benefit from further training and personal development?

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The Selection Conference recommends people for Reader Training. During training, ministries develop and grow. With this proviso, at this stage, what ministry do you envisage the applicant having in your Parish/Benefice/ Deanery? What challenges will they face in fulfilling this ministry?

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How well do they deal with stress, new challenges and hostility? What guidance and support are you able to commit to, and what other support will be available? How does the Church Leadership Team work in the Parish/Benefice?

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Is there any other information that we should know or that you would like to add?

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Declaration by Incumbent

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| This application has my full support. I do not know of any moral or legal reasons why the applicant should not be considered for training as a Reader. I believe the applicant has a firm faith and is regular in prayer and bible reading and is a regular communicant. I undertake to share in the pastoral and practical training of this candidate. | |
| Name |  |
| Signature |  |
| Date |  |
| Email Address |  |

PCC Support

The following minute (please adapt to suit your church) has been approved by the PCCs of the churches listed below.

The PCC supports the application of \*\*Applicant’s Name\*\* for the discernment of a call to Reader Ministry. If she should be recommended for training, we will support that training spiritually and financially. Should she be licenced we will welcome her ministry in our church.

PCC Name: Date:

Please return your form in electronic or paper format to the applicant.

Many Thanks

Reader Ministry is very valuable to the Church. Thank you for your help in the honest discernment of the gifts and calling of your applicant. Offering themselves for Reader Ministry is a very significant step for applicants and we appreciate your help in the process.