

Sharing in Deanery Leadership

**God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts.
Use them well to serve one another. *1 Peter 4:10***

As a diocese, we seek to release the gifts of all; equipping God's people to live and tell the story of Jesus at home, at work, in school, in church, with our families and amongst our friends; living out God's love and being confident and fruitful disciples.

This paper affirms the importance of clergy and laity working together, in collaboration with others in our deaneries, to better serve our communities and the common good.

Our deaneries have a vital role to play in making our diocesan vision a reality. This paper is part of the diocese's work to help deaneries - and all involved in them - realise their potential as real agents of change for our communities. We hope it will support and encourage conversations about shared deanery leadership, what it means and who might be involved.

What is a deanery?

A deanery is a group of parishes and benefices and is vital for the strategic operation of our diocese. The deanery is one way in which Christians may stretch their horizon to support and encourage each other beyond their immediate internal concerns. Other ways include working with ecumenical partners and secular agencies.

**For just as the body is one and has many members,
and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. *1 Cor 12:12***

The Diocese of Bath and Wells has nineteen deaneries, divided up into the three archdeaconries of Bath, Taunton and Wells. Deaneries differ in size but most are made of around twenty to thirty parishes grouped together in several benefices.

The deanery structure has an important role to play. During 2017 every deanery formed a deanery mission plan to encourage growth and discipleship. The deanery mission and pastoral group, synod and the deanery chapter are vital as each deanery becomes an agent of change and encouragement.

Throughout the year key events may take place within a deanery, such as a confirmation and the archdeacon's visitation. Some deaneries may hold deanery worship; praise events, choral evensong or a deanery Eucharist. Deaneries may celebrate the commissioning of new ministries such as ordained ministry, lay worship assistants or pastoral assistants. Each deanery operates in its own way but we all follow a common purpose: To live and tell the story of Jesus.

What is a lay dean?

Elected by the deanery synod's house of laity, the lay dean is their representative and key spokesperson who works alongside the area dean in leading the deanery. Meeting regularly with the area dean for prayer and support they are able to bring the views of the laity to clergy chapter and archdeaconry mission and pastoral meetings. Alongside area deans they meet with the bishops, senior staff and members diocesan central support services bringing insights from the local area, and its congregations. They are to assist in the appointment of new clergy to the deanery. Alongside the area dean, they take a leading role, in the discernment and implementation of the deanery mission plan. They may be called as a mediator in delicate situations. The role can be shared with an assistant lay dean. For an example role description, please see appendix 1.

What is an area dean?

The area dean is appointed by the bishop after consultation with members of the deanery clergy, lay dean and archdeacon. The appointment is usually for six years but may be extended. The area dean may seek to appoint an assistant area dean in consultation with the archdeacon and bishop.

The area dean works closely with the lay dean. Together they actively encourage the ongoing development of mission and ministry across the deanery. They are to encourage the implementation of the deanery mission plan. One of the key roles for the area dean is exercising pastoral care and oversight of the clergy. As a colleague of the archdeacon and an officer of the bishop, the area dean will help to strengthen the devolved episcopal oversight.

The area dean and lay dean share in the leadership and chairing of synod. Training to develop and support essential strategic skills and leadership will be provided through the ministry for mission to ensure ongoing growth and confidence.

For an example role description, please see appendix 2.

Teamwork within a deanery

Deaneries have a vital role to play in making the diocesan vision - to live and tell the story of Jesus in our communities – a reality. Each deanery has developed their own plan to address the three priorities of the vision:

- To place mission and evangelism at the heart of everything we do
- To focus our resources on mission
- To identify, develop and release the gifts of all our people.

In addition to the area dean, and lay dean, other appointments may be made within a deanery to share in the leadership and implementation of vision.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit 1 Cor 12:4

Assistant area dean and lay dean

The leadership of a deanery can be greatly enhanced by the appointment of assistant area deans and lay deans. An assistant lay dean will be elected by the house of laity at a deanery synod. An assistant area dean is appointed by the bishop but at the request of the area dean and in consultation with the area dean and often the archdeacon. The area dean, lay dean and assistants will decide on how to share the work and support each other in their roles.

Deanery treasurer

The treasurer has an important role to play in the leadership of the deanery. As leadership across deaneries is developed, training and support will be given to deanery treasurers to develop their potential as a source of support for parish treasurers. They are a key link between the deanery leadership, archdeacon, parish treasurers, and diocesan support services, including the parish development & resources advisors and the finance team. As deaneries develop the role as an agent of change, supporting parishes in to spiritual and numerical growth, there will also be an emphasis on parishes developing strategy to become financially sustainable. A deanery treasurer has the potential for understanding need across the deanery and may signpost parishes to areas of support and advice. The role description is developing and is likely to become much more focused on this area of support in addition to keeping an updated account of deanery finances and to report at synod gatherings. It is likely that the treasurer will either be elected on to the DMPG or attend meetings as a co-opted member.

Deanery secretary

The secretary keeps an up to date membership list of deanery synod and is the main point of contact for all communication of synod. In consultation with the DMPG they will compile and circulate agendas of synod meetings and inform all synod members of dates, times and venues of such gatherings. They will take notes at all meetings of synod and circulate to members. It is a role that requires good computer skills and access to email. It is likely that the secretary will either be elected on to the DMPG or attend meetings as a co-opted member. If the secretary cannot attend the DMPG or a synod they should arrange for a suitable deputy from amongst the members.

In addition to the above roles a deanery may adopt other roles to form a strong team.

It is likely that these roles will reflect the ethos of the deanery mission plan (see below). Those holding such roles may be elected on to the DMPG (see below) or attend key meetings that address their area of work. Deaneries are encouraged to think carefully about additional roles. It will depend on the size and context of the deanery. Several Deanery Mission Plans have identified champions or enablers for particular areas of ministry. Deaneries may develop a coordinator for schools ministry and chaplaincy. They may appoint someone to support pioneer initiatives in their deanery. Here are just two suggestions.

Communications officer

Effective communication is essential. This person would support parishes and the deanery to share the good news of Jesus as well as help build relationships and effective communications channels both within and outside the deanery. They would work closely with the diocesan communications team, developing a two-way flow of information between parishes and the wider diocese ensuring parishes are kept up to date with key developments and any new resources. The diocesan communications team can be alerted to parish stories which they, in turn can celebrate through diocesan channels, showing how we are living and telling the story of Jesus in our communities.

Working with the diocesan communications team, the communications officer might also consider the deanery's and parishes' online presence and whether it is appropriate to develop deanery channels e.g. website/Facebook/Twitter. The person might also encourage take up of diocesan training within these areas, for those who need further encouragement or mentoring.

Lay ministry coordinator

Parishes are encouraged to release the gifts of all people. Several Deaneries are exploring deanery led courses to develop ministry and discipleship. There is a wealth of resources and courses available through central diocesan support services. The coordinator would ensure a deanery is accessing these courses, and in finding local people to share in leading the training.

What is the deanery mission and pastoral group? (DMPG)

A small group of elected people from the house of clergy and the house of laity form the deanery mission and pastoral group (DMPG) Deaneries may choose to have a standing committee in addition to the DMPG but most will operate as one.

DMPG members are tasked with having an overview of the whole deanery and an eye to the ongoing flourishing of God's mission throughout its life. The group seeks to stay up to date with community and wider church developments in the deanery (e.g. new or closing schools, planned expansion of communities through house building etc).

The DMPG has a key role in developing and reviewing the deanery mission plan. It will monitor needs and opportunities for mission and pastoral work that can best be met at a wider level than parish or benefice, and will initiate responses to those needs and opportunities. Diocesan central support services, and in particular the Ministry for Mission teams, offer training and support in this area.

The DMPG should meet at least as often as deanery synod. Dates of meetings will need to be synchronised with deanery synod and archdeaconry mission and pastoral group meetings to ensure regular feedback and accountability. The group will monitor diocesan plans and feedback comments and suggestions via the archdeaconry mission and pastoral group or meetings of lay deans and area deans.

The DMPG should 'dream dreams' as well as have 'an eye for detail'. The DMPG is in an excellent position to act as the standing committee for deanery synod, thus enabling synod gatherings to reflect the ongoing mission of the area.

What is the deanery mission plan and how does it relate to the diocesan vision?

Our diocesan vision and strategy aims to equip all God's people to live and tell the story of Jesus. We want to focus all our energy to this aim. Deaneries have a key part to play in this. The deanery mission plan (DMP) is a tool to enable deaneries to take a strategic overview of mission and ministry, and to enable change and development within the deanery. Prayer needs to be continually part of the process of developing the DMP.

The DMP is not a conventional exercise in dividing up ministry resources and moving parish boundaries. The emphasis is on mission and discipleship not roles, responsibilities and boundaries. It

is about mission and discipleship – how the churches of the deanery can work together to effectively live out our common faith in Christ and to share his love in our communities.

It is right and proper for deaneries to take an overview of parochial ministry and deployment but this should not be the starting point. The DMP process should start by considering the future priorities for mission in the area, and then consider whether to make any recommendations for pastoral reorganisation or deployment of posts in the light of those priorities.

What is the purpose of deanery synod?

A synod is a gathering and sharing place. The aim of deanery synod is to support and strengthen the parishes in common mission across the deanery. Real value is to be gained by meeting together with representatives from across all deanery parishes from different traditions of worship and contexts of ministry. It is important that all voices are heard and valued as we seek to be the presence of God in every community; from the largest town to the smallest village, the most affluent and the more deprived areas, catholic, evangelical, liberal and everything in-between. When functioning well, deanery synods are important vehicles for discussing diocesan initiatives at greater depth from our differing experiences. These insights are fed back to diocesan leaders and offer valuable insights thus informing future development.

Synods can be creative about how and where they meet. Synods may meet in schools or pubs, in a barn or a cider farm, as well as church buildings. Spaces need to be big enough for the whole group but also lend themselves to small group discussion. Occasionally synods may choose to share food, and an opportunity for members to really get to know each other. Synod is a space to share in worship and prayer from different traditions and strengthens relationships. Synods may take the form of forums with a speaker on a subject of interest to the deanery.

Members of deanery synod (lay and ordained) are critical in developing an effective two-way communication with members of their parochial church councils as the deanery works together to implement the vision and plan.

How are decisions made?

Deanery synod has a direct relationship with parochial church councils (PCCs), with diocesan synod and, through diocesan synod, with general synod. Members of deanery synod are elected every three years at annual parochial church meetings (APCMs) and become ex-officio members of PCCs. Deanery synod becomes the electing body to diocesan and general synods.

Deanery synod representatives may bring any matter either of general church interest or affecting that parish before the deanery synod. Deanery synod may move to put such a motion before the diocesan synod, and may propose one of its own deanery representatives on diocesan synod to speak to and move such motion. Such requests need first go to the standing committee of diocesan synod.

On occasions diocesan synod may request a motion to be discussed at deanery synod and a vote to be taken. Occasionally the motion may have originated in general synod and a wider opinion is valued.

When a formal vote is taken, it is carried out and recorded in the two separate houses of clergy and laity. This reflects the voting practice at diocesan and general synod. Important decisions have to be agreed in each house for significant changes to be made.

For reference to the formal legislation please see appendix 3 or follow the link [legislation](#)

How do I become a member of deanery synod?

House of clergy members are all clerks in holy orders beneficed in or licensed to any parish in the deanery or licensed to any institution in the deanery, plus a retired member of the clergy.

House of laity members are elected at annual parochial church meetings and are drawn from every parish within the deanery. Depending on the size of the church membership, some parishes may present up to three lay members. It is helpful, when elections are drawing near, for the lay area dean to send out a letter to all members of the electoral roll, highlighting the constitutional and aspirational role of the synod with a request for members to think prayerfully as to whether they are being called to stand for election, and if appointed whether they are willing to be actively involved in all aspects of the synod's governance ministry. All synod representatives are *ex officio* members of their PCCs and should report back regularly at PCC meetings in order that parishes may be kept abreast of the synod's activities.

What is the deanery chapter?

Local clergy meet regularly as the deanery chapter for support and encouragement. Chapter meetings include times of worship and prayer as well as an important social element. Chapters may invite a speaker to address a particular concern. The lay dean may be invited to attend chapter meetings and to offer their own support and encouragement and in turn receive support for their own role. Chapter meetings are also important places for communication and often points can be clarified and chapter members are then better equipped to share information with PCCs. Chapter meetings are not the place for major decision making, this sits with the PCC and synod. However practical matters e.g. where the next synod meeting will be hosted may be discussed.

Schools, colleges and deaneries working together

Schools have been described as being at the 'heart' of the Church's mission to the nation and there is no doubt that they provide a focal point for children, young people and families. Schools themselves can be 'hospitable communities', providing valuable outreach in their specific context.

When schools and churches work together, there are huge opportunities to serve the communities they have in common. Be it responding to need, providing a social hub, or being a space where people can come together to worship and to explore faith. By building on existing relationships, creating new relationships and looking at a shared leadership model, there can be a real cultural shift to the idea of 'better together.'

Who might be involved?

In each deanery this will look different according to local context, needs and strengths. However, in each there will be a range of leaders from a variety of settings, who will share a vision of serving the common good. These may include:

- Headteachers, senior leaders & governors
- School & College Chaplains
- Local clergy, PCC members & wider teams in parishes
- Area deans and lay deans
- Chaplains

In many deaneries and parishes these leaders already work effectively together. There may be further scope for them to come together in a more cohesive, structured and planned way.

How might this happen?

It is suggested that in order to take relationships further, there will need to be an 'instigator' or facilitator, and this will depend on each local context. Listed below are suggestions to encourage the development of collaborative forms of leadership:

- Shared conversations facilitated between leaders
- A shared understanding of the local context; its needs, challenges and opportunities
- A sharing of who does what, how good practice can be developed, and where shared opportunities can be exploited
- A sharing of a common vision and principles. For example, how do the Church of England Vision for Education and the diocesan vision link with deanery plans on the ground?
- The exploration of leadership models such as 10 characteristics of Servant Leadership to look at how these translate into the local context (see appendix 4)
- The use of resources and materials such as the diocesan toolkit on School-Parish partnership and the chaplaincy toolkit
- The practical sharing of strategic plans, such as the deanery mission plan and school development plan, to look for overlaps and opportunities
- Facilitation from the diocesan education team

Conclusion

Finally as we work together let us also work with God, ensuring the undergirding of prayer in everything we do and an openness to what he is already doing in each of our deaneries.

Follow the link to the diocesan cycle of prayer. [Calendar of Prayer](#)

**Gracious God,
may your Holy Spirit guide us into the future.
Help us, throughout the diocese,
to show uninhibited reliance on your grace and power,
as we seek renewal of our lives.
Give us courage, rigour, imagination and generosity
in order that your kingdom may come
and that your abundant life be known by all.**

Appendix 1: Example role description: Lay dean

Purpose: The lay dean is appointed triennially by the deanery synod's house of laity from among its members as its representative and key spokesperson. Along with the area dean they lead the synodical life of the deanery, with an overview of all issues affecting the parishes.

Key Relationships

- To meet regularly with the area dean for prayer and support
- Exercises pastoral care for lay synod members where necessary, attending deanery events and special services to support and encourage individual benefices and parishes.
- Bishops and other members of bishop's staff meet regularly with lay deans and area deans order to share matters of policy and to review the shared privilege of ministry.

Principal tasks and responsibilities

Deanery

- To work with ordained and lay colleagues across the deanery and from central diocesan support services to shape and further the mission of the church.
- To attend archdeaconry pastoral meetings for updates and input on any new Measures that might be under consideration. To also attend archdeaconry scrutiny sessions re: Parish Share contributions to the Common Fund.
- To administer the effective gathering of deanery synod alongside the area dean and other principal officers, helping to formulate policy and develop agendas
- To chair the deanery mission and pastoral group alongside the area dean.
- To attend chapter meetings in order to promote good communication between the laity of the parishes and the wider diocese, and to offer support and encouragement to the clergy of the deanery in their parish ministries.
- To act as an independent returning officer in elections for the house of clergy

Parishes

- To assist with the appointments of clergy following deanery vacancies by consultation and membership of the interview panel.
- To assist the archdeacon/bishop in deanery services such as visitations, confirmations, services of welcome and induction and other key moments in the life of the deanery.
- To provide support and insight to the area dean and archdeacon when difficulties/conflicts arise in parish structures.

Personal development and wellbeing

- To work alongside the area dean in ensuring that the task set before them is shared and not overwhelming.

See also [Handbook-for-Rural-Deans-Assistant-Rural-Deans-and-Lay-Chairs.pdf](#) (to be updated)

Appendix 2: Example role description: Area dean

Purpose: The area dean is an officer of the bishop charged with exercising pastoral care and oversight of the clergy. Alongside the lay area dean, the area dean actively encourages the ongoing development of mission and ministry across the deanery.

Key Relationships

- The area dean works closely with the lay dean and, where appointed, the assistant area dean.
- The area dean, as a colleague of the archdeacon, helps to strengthen devolved episcopal oversight.
- Bishops and other members of bishop's staff meet regularly with area deans and lay deans in order to share matters of policy and to review the shared privilege of ministry.
- The area dean will seek to develop an atmosphere of collegial support and encouragement among members of the chapter.

Principal tasks and responsibilities

Deanery

- To work with lay and ordained colleagues across the deanery and from central diocesan support services to shape and further the mission of the Church.
- To administer the effective gathering of deanery synod alongside the lay dean and other principal officers.
- To chair the deanery mission and pastoral group alongside the deanery lay dean.
- To facilitate effective chapter meetings thereby promoting good communication between parishes and the wider diocese, and encouraging ongoing professional development by sharing of information and good practice and by including times for reflection, worship and prayer.
- To provide pastoral support for clergy (including during periods of illness) and to ensure that concerns are properly managed in consultation with the archdeacon.

Parishes

- To liaise with the archdeacon during a transition in ministry (vacancy) and to enable churchwardens to exercise their functions during vacancies including consulting on arrangements for services.
- To assist the archdeacon/bishop in deanery services such as visitations, confirmations, services of welcome and induction and other key moments in the life of the deanery.
- To carry out church inspections as required, on behalf of the archdeacon
- To provide support when difficulties/conflicts arise in parish structures.

Personal development and wellbeing

- To foster good practice, ensuring regular time off, and to appraise the balance between their own parish and leadership in the wider community and the duties of being an area dean, making the most of the opportunities that the various responsibilities provide.
- To ensure they are fully reimbursed for their expenses of office.
- To pay special attention to training needs as a strategic leader.

See also [Handbook-for-Rural-Deans-Assistant-Rural-Deans-and-Lay-Chairs.pdf](#) (to be updated)

Appendix 3. Synodical Legislation

Every deanery is required to have a synod. This is chaired by the area dean and an elected lay dean, who work closely with the archdeacon and the bishop. The deanery synod consists of all clergy licensed to a benefice/parish within the deanery, plus elected lay members, at least one and may be more.

One of the most important objectives of the Synodical Government Measure 1969 was to strengthen church organisation at deanery level. The task of the deanery synods, as set out in the Measure is as follows:

- to consider matters concerning the Church of England and to make provision for such matters in relation to their deanery, and to consider and express their opinion on any other matters of religious or public interest;
- to bring together the views of parishes of the deanery on common problems, to discuss and formulate common policies on those problems, to foster a sense of community and interdependence among those parishes, and generally to promote in the deanery the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical;
- to make known and so far as appropriate put into effect any provision made by the diocesan synod;
- to consider the business of the diocesan synod, and particularly any matters referred to that synod by the general synod, and to sound parochial opinion whenever they are required or consider it appropriate to do so;
- to raise matters, as the deanery synod consider appropriate, with the diocesan synod

Appendix 4: 10 Characteristics of Servant Leadership

The teachings and action of Jesus demonstrate to us that of a 'servant leader' and in Philippians 2.5 we are called to have this very mindset.

From the 1970s with work by Robert Greenleaf, servant leadership began to grow in influence as a contemporary leadership model. This work was developed further by Spears who drew together 10 characteristics of servant leadership.



Listening – Seeking to identify the will of the group and clarify that will, through receptive listening and periods of reflection.

Empathy – Accepting and recognising that other's unique qualities, skills and characteristics.

Healing – Helping make whole those you lead, through a shared pursuit of restoration and rebuilding.

Awareness – Understanding issues of ethics, power and values in leadership, viewing situations from integrated and holistic positions.

Persuasion – Seeking to convince others, rather than coerce compliance, building consensus within groups.

Conceptualisation – Embodying the delicate balance between conceptual thinking and day to day operational approaches.

Foresight – Understanding intuitively the lessons from the past, the realities of the present and the likely consequences of a decision for the future.

Stewardship – Assuming a good commitment to service the needs of others, holding institutions in trust for the greater good of society.

Commitment to growth of people – Explicitly resourcing and encouraging the personal and professional growth of colleagues, seeing their intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers.

Building community – Seeking opportunities to strengthen community, shared values, ideals and relationships.