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Developing Our Deaneries

The York Diocesan Strategy, and the recently approved General Synod Lay Leadership Task Group's paper 'Setting God's People Free' both identify a need for re-imagined Deaneries and Deanery Synods.

The Diocesan report 'Developing Our Deaneries', together with new Deanery Standing Orders, are intended to provide a supporting framework for this.

The Diocesan report describes a renewed shape and direction for our Deaneries, and also includes many examples of what is being done in different deaneries around the country (in the section on models of deaneries), and has appendices with role descriptions for those involved in Deanery Leadership.

It's planned that both of these important documents (approved by the Diocesan Synod on 11th March 2017) will be available for download from the Diocesan website, while the General Synod report can be downloaded from the Church of England website.

Synopsis of the Diocesan report

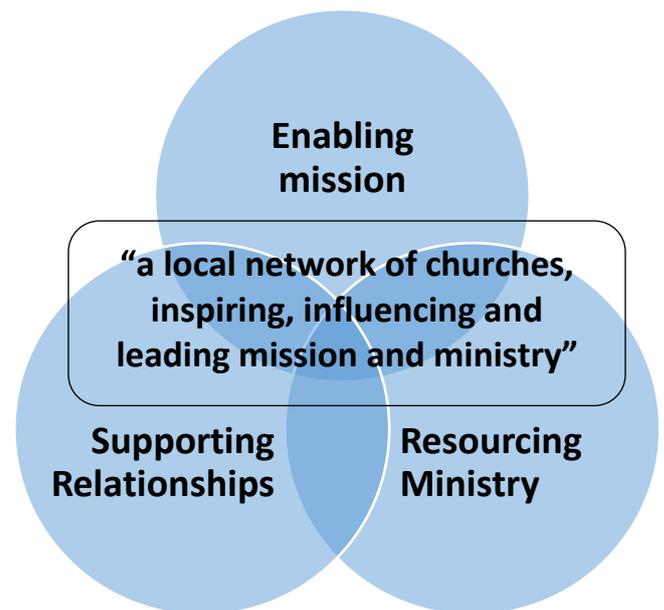
Deaneries play a significant part in the life of the Church of England.

They provide an opportunity for parishes to come together and support one another in ways that are not possible across a whole diocese. They can lift the horizon of clergy and lay people beyond the parochial into wider issues and opportunities

for mutual support and engagement in God's mission.

It is clear that our diocesan vision of '**Generous Churches: Making and Nurturing Disciples**' cannot be fully delivered through parishes working alone. If the Church is to respond to the challenges and opportunities that surround us, and be resourced effectively to do this, then breathing fresh life and purpose into our deaneries is essential.

Our vision for deaneries is that they become "**a local network of churches, inspiring, influencing and leading mission and ministry.**" In this, they will be characterised by three overlapping and complementary purposes – **Enabling Mission, Resourcing Ministry, and Supporting Relationships**. To fulfil this vision and develop the potential of deaneries is a demanding task. The Diocesan Synod is calling for changes in how deaneries function and expect us to find new ways of working together.



Whilst the parish and benefice remain key, there are times when a wider vision, larger resources, broader perspectives and recognised local leadership are needed.

The deanery is able to provide these, together with a sense of 'critical mass' for wider initiatives.

As members of the Body of Christ, we belong to the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church. God has called us to know him, not simply as individuals but in community.

The Anglican way challenges any tendency for a congregation to isolate itself. Partnership is encouraged through belonging in parishes, benefices, deaneries and the diocese. Thus the deanery has a vital place in the life of the diocese, as we seek to fulfil the three wider diocesan goals:

1. Reaching those we do not reach
2. Moving to Growth
3. Establishing sustainable finances

Few parishes have sufficient resources to engage with larger issues in their area, hence the emphasis here on the intermediate structure that deaneries provide. And the intended ethos is about enabling parishes, not top-down impositions. Deaneries are encouraged to be creative and imaginative in building networks of relationships which enable shared mission and ministry, and which are much more than the Deanery Synod or Clergy Chapter.

Our diocesan vision calls us to ensure that mission increasingly shapes our shared life and structures, and this includes the way that deaneries are shaped.

Our Deaneries are very varied in size, context and history. While 'one size does not fit all', the creation of Deanery Leadership Teams (DLTs), which provide shared leadership, should address the three key purposes of deanery life – Enabling Mission, Resourcing Ministry, and Supporting Relationships.

Deaneries are encouraged to consider their own context in determining the exact make-up of these Leadership Teams. There are no proposals to change Deanery boundaries; but if boundaries are questioned and changes suggested, this is consistent with the permission-giving set out in the diocesan report.

Shared Leadership

The sharing of leadership begins with the Archbishop and Suffragan Bishops, and cascades down to each DLT.

The report sets out clear responsibilities, together with role descriptions, for four required key roles. The DLT itself is to be led by the re-named Area

Dean and Lay Dean, and undertakes the following key tasks:

- Sharing in the creation, implementation and review of Deanery Plans for Mission and Ministry with the Bishop and Archdeacon, in the light of diocesan strategies
- Identifying new projects and initiatives
- Identifying and encouraging partnership across parishes
- Functioning as the Deanery Standing Committee, and the Mission and Pastoral Committee

Shared leadership is primarily about sharing across the parishes of the deanery, but it also extends in other directions, with the details depending on context. Some links will be more formal partnerships than others. In addition to the partnership with their bishop and archdeacon, other partners are likely to include parishes, ecumenical partners, other faith communities, diocesan officers, schools, colleges and universities, local government, businesses of all kinds, voluntary groups, police and emergency services.

The DLT of between 6 and 12 members will include the four key roles of Area Dean, Lay Dean, Deanery Financial Adviser and Deanery Secretary/Administrator. Other members may be included to represent the variety of ministries in the deanery. The Deanery Financial Partnership will continue to have a key role in supporting parishes in their Freewill Offers.

The three Deanery Purposes

Our renewed Deaneries will be characterised by three overlapping and complementary purposes.

They are all significant but different deaneries will have varying needs over time, and so work on the purposes can be prioritised as appropriate to each deanery. **Indicative** outcomes from each purpose are indicated below, and others can be seen in the models described in the main report:

Enabling Mission

- Engaging with groups and organisations which are wider than benefices, such as schools, chaplaincies in key church and secular bodies, and local councils
- Connecting with people who relate to local networks and not to places
- Identifying and facilitating partnerships among churches
- Developing specific initiatives and projects – both one off events and ongoing commitments, including the formation of new worshipping communities
- Addressing social issues across the deanery
- Working ecumenically across larger local areas

Resourcing Ministry

- Encouraging locally accessible training events for laity and clergy
- Identifying people to enable mission initiatives and offer expertise
- Sharing stories and vision which encourage change
- Assisting the Freewill Offering process through the 'Deanery Financial Partnerships'
- Finding the funds to enable deanery initiatives

Supporting Relationships

- Encouraging prayer, worship and other joint activities across the deanery
- Hosting healthy forums for different groups, including Clergy, Readers, RPAs, churchwardens, PCC treasurers and secretaries, and Parish Safeguarding Representatives
- Developing mutual support and encouragement for churches,

ecumenically wherever possible. Mutual support is of particular importance during vacancies, and when significant changes or major events are being planned.

- Encouraging the sharing of expertise, including administrative support
- Encouraging benefices in making the most of the 'Leading your Church into Growth' process.

Deanery Synod, Deanery Plan and Gatherings of Ministers

The primary role of the Deanery Synod will be to work with the DLT in fulfilling the vision and plan for the deanery.

The Deanery Plan describes how mission and ministry will be developed in the deanery, beyond the level of benefices. Whilst the DLT will facilitate its creation, the Deanery Synod will be responsible for it. In the future, deanery meetings will seek to engage those attending more fully, so that the majority make a contribution and there is something significant to feed back to PCCs.

Various Gatherings of Ministers should contribute towards the vision of the deanery, encouraging mutual support of members, learning and development, and opportunities for reflection on local and wider issues. Recognised Parish Assistants (RPAs), Readers, Clergy and ecumenical colleagues may all be involved in some way.

Resourcing

Each deanery will have £1,000 available per year for help with administrative tasks, and the Archbishop's Mission Fund will be increased to ensure that at least £20,000 is available each year to fund deanery based mission initiatives.

Training will be delivered at diocesan level for Area and Lay Deans, and locally delivered material will be made available for members of Deanery Leadership Teams, Deanery Synods and PCCs.

Ongoing Process

After the election of members of the Deanery Synods, this year, an initial 3 stage process will be followed to bring in fully function Deanery Leadership Teams:

Stage 1: First Deanery Synod of the triennium (Summer 2017). The personnel in the key required roles are either already known, or will be elected at this Synod (and every 3 years thereafter). Discussion by the new Synod of the other roles to be considered for the DLT. The Area and Lay Deans would be expected to encourage a good representation from across the benefices and between lay and ordained members of the Deanery Leadership Team.

Stage 2: Deanery Synod reps can put forward names to the Area Dean and Lay Dean for consideration for co-option. The Area Dean and Lay Dean would consider these suggestions, and meet with some of these people to assess their gifts and suitability for the roles in the DLT.

Stage 3: Second Deanery Synod (Autumn 2017). The initial DLT brings proposals for additional co-opted roles. If additional roles are agreed, the Deanery Synod co-opts appropriate individuals.

Note that details of the membership of Deanery Synod are found in the Standing Orders, as approved by Diocesan Synod in March 2017.

They include advice on who might be co-opted on to the Deanery Synod, and on inviting other participants. In addition, a Deaneries Development Group will be formed by the Diocese to help with the implementation of the new vision for deaneries.

York Diocesan Deaneries Working Party, April 2017

