

Area Dean Role Description: with Commentary

November 2019

This document has been developed following the new approach to deanery life proposed in Developing Our Deaneries. It is based on the role description for Area Deans and incorporates information and guidance from previous versions of guidance for Area Deans, as well as insights and advice from existing Area Deans.

The role of Area Dean is based first of all on certain Church of England Canons, which you will find in an appendix at the end of this document. Other resources to which it will be useful to refer are:

- Church Representation Rules, particularly Part 3: Deanery Synods
- Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy, particularly Section 14: Care for the Carers

Area Dean Role Description from Developing Our Deaneries Report	Notes and additions
<p>The Purpose of the Role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To share with the Archbishop and Suffragan Bishop in their ministry of oversight across the deanery• To lead the deanery, working collaboratively with the Lay Dean and Deanery Leadership Team, to fulfil the vision of the deanery as “a local network of churches, inspiring, influencing and leading mission and ministry”• To fulfil the canonical expectations of being Area Dean	<p>Area Deans hold a ministry of pastoral care and leadership under the Archbishop, for which their own continuing growth as a disciple and minister of Christ is essential.</p> <p>They share in the episcopal care of the Church both by representing the needs and thinking of the clergy and laity of the deanery to the Archbishop and Bishop, and also by representing the mind of the Diocese to the people.</p> <p>The Lay Dean is able to share in the vast majority of the tasks and responsibilities – this should be encouraged as it enables collaboration and also reduces some of the Area Dean’s workload.</p>

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<p>Primary Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead and co-ordinate the Deanery Leadership Team, in conjunction with the Lay Dean. • Ensure a Deanery Plan for Mission & Ministry is created and implemented, working closely with the Deanery Leadership Team and Deanery Synod. • Chair the Deanery Synod jointly with the Lay Dean • Exercise the canonical responsibilities of an Area Dean (see C23 of the Canons) and those expected during Parish Vacancies • Ensure that an appropriate structure for Gatherings of Ministers is established, and take a leading role in those which involve Ordained colleagues 	<p><i>A word of advice from a Bishop who has also been an Area Dean:</i></p> <p><i>'I was told very clearly when I became a Rural Dean that my parochial work <u>always</u> was my primary function. You cannot be a good Rural Dean if you are not being a good parish priest, and this will be very clear to others in the Deanery.'</i></p>
<p>Key Tasks</p> <p>Working collaboratively with the Lay Dean and the Deanery Leadership Team, you will ensure:</p>	<p>Time commitment: How much time will being area dean take up? It varies widely according to what is happening in your Deanery at a particular time, but experienced Area Deans suggest it takes up, on average, around one day per week.</p> <p>If you are under Common Tenure, meet with your Archdeacon to discuss how your existing Role Description will need to be modified in order to accommodate the extra work-load.</p> <p>Ensure that your churchwardens and PCC(s) are aware of the changes. Being Area Dean will affect how you conduct your parish ministry, and this will help you to avoid unrealistic expectations from the parish. On a more positive note – it will take you out of your parish, but the benefits are that it can help to put your own parish stresses in perspective better, and will inevitably offer you and your people a wider vision, as well as develop and widen your gifts and insights.</p>

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a) The Deanery Leadership Team meets regularly and has a membership which is appropriate for the deanery	See Developing Our Deaneries report for details of membership and expectations. https://dioceseofyork.org.uk/uploads/attachment/3358/deaneries-report.pdf
b) A Deanery Plan for Mission & Ministry is created with the full involvement of the Deanery Synod and following consultation with PCC's; the Plan will have engaged with the three stated purposes of a deanery: 'Enabling Mission', 'Resourcing Ministry' and 'Supportive Relationships'	The process of developing a deanery plan varies across the archdeaconries. The plan should relate closely to the diocesan strategy. It can be helpful to use the Five Marks of Mission and the Five Marks of Growing Churches to inform the plan.
c) The Deanery Synod has an engaging agenda and develops a pattern of meetings which encourages involvement, creativity and meaningful outcomes; ordinarily sharing in the chairing of these meetings with the Lay Dean.	Work collaboratively with the Lay Dean and DLT to ensure the efficient conduct of synod business. Ensure that updates on finance, strategy and items from diocesan synod are cascaded down to synod and from there to parishes. Ensure that responses are sent back to diocesan synod where requested.
d) The administrative needs of the Deanery Synod, Area Dean and Lay Dean are identified and appropriate support is put in place	See below, section 2 of Commitment, resourcing and support.
e) Participation in the mission and life of the deanery is encouraged amongst the laity and the clergy, and that training is made available where appropriate	Encourage good practice and shared initiatives (e.g. informal clustering) between parishes. Encourage and develop gifts, skills and resources available in the deanery. Make use of diocesan resources (e.g. training team) in offering training and enable the deanery to provide their own.

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The following tasks are specific to the Area Dean, and may be shared with an Assistant Area Dean :	Having an Assistant Area Dean will provide support and cover for you, as well as helping to share the work-load. For the Assistant Area Dean, it acts as an opportunity for personal development. For the Deanery, it provides possible succession planning.
f) Be aware of the general well-being of the clergy; informing the Bishop of any particular causes for rejoicing or concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take pastoral care of yourself as area dean • Regularly visit or check-in with the clergy and layworkers in the deanery • Encourage clergy to take proper holiday time and time off in the week • Support clergy and benefice during long term illness of clergy, working with the churchwardens to ensure that cover is provided • Ensure that the bishop and archdeacon are aware of matters such as illness and stress of the clergy and their family members • In the case of sudden illness or inability of clergy to undertake their role, the area dean is the first port of call for arranging cover
g) Inform the Bishop and Archdeacon of any legal or practical concerns arising from the parishes	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vacancy and the measures taken by the sequestrators (normally the Diocesan Secretary and churchwardens) to secure ministry during the vacancy • any minister from another diocese officiating in a way that is not permitted by Canon C8 • if a parish does not prepare and maintain an electoral roll, form a PCC or hold an annual meeting <p>The area dean is an “interested party” for the purposes of the Pastoral Measure and will be formally consulted by the Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee on proposals for pastoral change or re-organisation.</p>

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h) On occasions, to act as the 'local' representative for the Bishop and/or Archdeacon where issues at (i) and (j) arise	
i) Ensure that the Clergy Chapter, and/or any other Gatherings which involve the Clergy, is shaped and led in a manner which serves its membership and encourages an active participation	<p>Clergy gatherings, when working well, can be times of fellowship, study and spiritual growth.</p> <p>Enable and encourage the clergy to work as a team.</p> <p>Explore how chapter works best in your deanery and who is involved. Are readers included? Retired Clergy?</p> <p>The training document "The Life of the Chapter" (available from https://dioceseofyork.org.uk/uploads/attachment/4353/the-life-of-the-chapter.pdf) is useful for discussing these questions</p>

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<p>j) Support parishes through times of vacancy which includes : the formal shared responsibility, with the Church Wardens , for the day to day oversight of the parish; attending the PCC's Pre-Vacancy meeting; advising on issues as they arise; handling applications for churchyard memorials and playing an active role on the interview day.</p>	<p>Assist the leaving incumbent in planning a good exit strategy, including handover for vacancy and planning for a successor.</p> <p>Visit the outgoing priest and ensure that the parish records are in order and they have made reasonable preparation for the initial phase of the vacancy.</p> <p>Attend pre-vacancy meeting with Bishop and Archdeacon, and Section 12 meeting if one becomes necessary.</p> <p>During vacancy, tasks can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide pastoral care and support for churchwardens, SSMs, Readers, Recognised Parish Assistants and other lay leaders as needed • To provide help and advice in maintaining the worship, life and work of the church, ensuring that agreed patterns of service and names of officiants are adhered to. (It is important that provision of services is realistic and sustainable for the long term, and assists the vacant parishes in making a smooth transition to a new incumbent) • The Area Dean is not required to produce a rota for services • In the case of disagreement, then the bishop's or archdeacon's advice should be sought and his/her directions followed
<p>k) Oversee arrangements for Services of Licensing, Institution or Collation and acts as a focus for the deanery's initial support of new Incumbents and their families</p>	<p>Visit and welcome new incumbents (and family) when they have moved in, and encourage the parishes to provide a warm welcome.</p> <p>Supervise the arrangements for the Licensing or Induction Service, including taking a lead at the rehearsal before the licensing service.</p> <p>Work with the Archdeacon in informing the new incumbent about the parish.</p> <p>Provide ongoing support and encouragement for the new incumbent. Suggestion: meet after three months and six months to aid in planning and reviewing for the parish.</p>

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l) Support the Archdeacon in his/her Parish Visitations	<p>Advice will be given by your archdeacon before these are commenced and, if they have the capacity, the task can be shared with the Lay Dean.</p> <p>Canon C23 requires the reporting to the archdeacon of serious defects in fabric.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blocked gutters • shrubs and trees growing near to foundations • failure to care for the churchyard, or to observe the Churchyard Memorial Rules • repairs, additions and alterations to fabric and furnishings without a faculty • inadequate storage for registers • security of silver and other valuables • failure to maintain an up-to-date inventory or terrier
m) Be aware of the Freewill Offers within the deanery and, as a member of the Deanery Partnership, actively seek to encourage financial generosity and commitment	Use the Generous Giving and Stewardship Team to support the deanery
n) Be the local link, where appropriate, with Civic, Ecumenical and Inter-Faith partners	
o) Attend regular meetings with the Bishop and Archdeacon	<p>Area Deans meet regularly in their Archdeaconries, usually with the Bishop and Archdeacon, sometimes with Lay Deans; and twice a year meet together at Bishopthorpe for the Archbishop's Leadership Team Meeting.</p> <p>Contact the bishop's or archdeacon's PA for details of programme of meetings</p>

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<p>Key Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Archbishop, Suffragan Bishop and Archdeacon • The Lay Dean • The Deanery Leadership Team and Deanery Synod • The Gatherings of Ministers, especially the Clergy • Churchwardens, especially of parishes in vacancy 	<p>Also: readers, retired clergy, wardens of readers</p>
<p>Commitment, Resourcing and Support</p> <p>The role of Area Dean is stimulating and stretching; it develops clergy and gives them a wider perspective on ministry. It can also be very demanding, especially when a deanery has a number of vacancies or particular issues arise. The time commitment varies from week to week but is likely to average around 1 day a week, depending on the size and complexity of the deanery.</p> <p>It is recognised that resources are required and, whilst different contexts will be able to express this in different ways, the following are being explored and considered during this period of consultation :</p>	<p>It is useful to have a working knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canon Law • Church Representation Rules • Pastoral and Mission Measure

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<p>1. Ministerial Support. On the assumption that the Area Dean is an Incumbent, it is envisaged that if their benefice does not already have a team of Ministers (RPAs, Readers, self-supporting or stipendiary Clergy) to share the demands of authorized and licensed ministry, then an attempt would be made to identify colleagues who could minister in the benefice.</p>	<p>Ask the Archdeacon or Bishop to recommend a serving area dean to act as mentor</p>
<p>2. Administrative Support. Being Area Dean brings extra administrative demands, though these are not regular or predictable in nature. Support may be provided by various means, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) An administrator might offer time voluntarily b) An administrator might be employed on a sessional basis; or an existing parish administrator might be paid for these additional hours c) An alternative, would be to explore if the Area Dean could be provided with administrative help to support them in their parish role. <p>Each deanery will have up to £1000 a year available to offer support to the deanery and/or the Area Dean. It might be that deaneries are in a position to contribute further to this..</p>	<p>Guidelines for appointing an administrator can be found here: https://dioceseofyork.org.uk/uploads/attachment/3708/deanery-administrators-guidelines-for-appointing-november-2017.doc</p>
<p>3. Expenses. Clear guidelines for expenses will be provided, with an explicit encouragement for expenses to be claimed</p>	<p>Guidelines for claiming expenses can be found here: https://dioceseofyork.org.uk/uploads/attachment/3367/expenses-guidelines-for-area-deans-amp-lay-deans-2017.pdf</p> <p>Your archdeacon will provide you with a claim form.</p>

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4. Study Leave. A month's funded study leave during every five years as Area Dean (this would be separate from the ideal of clergy taking 3 months every 10 years)	<p>Application process: Apply to your bishop for permission, agreeing dates and how cover will be done. The Diocesan Training Team have an application form which should be used.</p> <p>Funding: An application can be made via your archdeaconry Training Adviser for a grant of up to £300, for example, towards conference fees or accommodation costs.</p>
5. Training. Diocesan delivered training for Area Deans and Lay Deans will be provided. The diocesan Deanery Development Group also exists to offer support and advice.	<p>The National Deaneries Network provide various resources, including a biennial conference. https://www.nationaldeaneries.net/</p> <p>The Diocesan Training Team will also provide training where needed.</p>
6. Collegiality and Collaboration. It is hoped that Area Deans will benefit from the shared ministry with the Lay Dean, the Deanery Leadership Team, and through regular meetings with the Bishop and Archdeacon	

Appendix: Useful Canons

Church of England Canon C 23 Of rural deans

1. Every rural dean shall report to the bishop any matter in any parish within the deanery which it may be necessary or useful for the bishop to know, particularly any case of serious illness or other form 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 C 8.

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 his 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, he shall report the matter to the archdeacon.

4. The rural dean shall be a joint chairman (with a member of the House of Laity) of the deanery synod.

C 22 Of archdeacons

1. No person shall be capable of receiving the appointment of archdeacon until he has been six years complete in holy orders and is in priest's orders at the time of the appointment.

2. Every archdeacon within his archdeaconry exercises the jurisdiction which he has therein as an ordinary jurisdiction.

3. Such jurisdiction is exercised either by the archdeacon in person or by an official or commissary to whom authority in that behalf shall have been formally committed by the archdeacon concerned.

4. Every archdeacon shall within his archdeaconry carry out his duties under the bishop and shall assist the bishop in his pastoral care and office, and particularly he shall see that all such as hold any ecclesiastical office within the same perform their duties with diligence, and shall bring to the bishop's attention what calls for correction or merits praise.

5. Every archdeacon shall within his archdeaconry hold yearly visitations save when inhibited by a superior Ordinary; he shall also survey in person or by deputy all churches, chancels, and churchyards and give direction for the amendment of all defects in the walls, fabric, ornaments, and furniture of the same, and in particular shall exercise the powers conferred on him by the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955; he shall also, on receiving the directions of the bishop, induct any priest who has been instituted to a benefice into possession of the temporalities of the same.

F 17 Of keeping a record of the property of churches

1. Every bishop within his diocese shall procure so far as he is able that a full note and terrier of all lands, goods, and other possessions of the parochial churches and chapels therein be compiled and kept by the minister and churchwardens in accordance with instructions and forms prescribed from time to time by the General Synod.
2. Every archdeacon shall at least once in three years, either in person or by the rural dean, satisfy himself that the directions of the preceding paragraph of this Canon have been carried out in all the parishes within his jurisdiction.

F18 Of the survey of churches

Every archdeacon shall survey the churches, chancels, and churchyards within his jurisdiction at least once in three years, either in person or by the rural dean, and shall give direction for the amendment of all defects in the fabric, ornaments, and furniture of the same. In particular he shall exercise the powers conferred upon him by the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955.