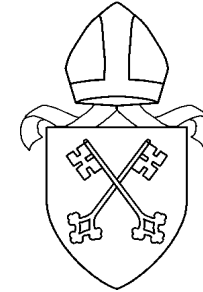


**DIOCESE OF GLOUCESTER**



**HANDBOOK FOR THE  
GUIDANCE OF  
RURAL DEANS & LAY CHAIRMEN**

**Updated August 2003**



**FUNCTIONS OF THE LAY CHAIRMAN IN  
ECCLESIASTICAL LAW**

- Paragraph 23 (1) (a) of Schedule 3 to the Synodical Government Measure 1969 provides that “..... A member of the house of laity elected by that house shall be joint chairman of the deanery synod.”
- Section 3 to Part I of the Pastoral Measure 1983 provides that as part of the procedure for making pastoral schemes and orders the pastoral committee shall so far as may be practicable ascertain the views of interested parties before deciding to make any recommendations to the bishop. Section 3 (2) defines “interested parties” as including the lay chairmen of the deanery synods of deaneries which would be affected.
- Section 12 (9) to Part II of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 provides that under the general provisions as to filling vacancies the secretary of the parochial church council of a vacant, or shortly to become vacant, benefice shall invite the lay chairman of the deanery synod of the deanery in which the parish is to attend a meeting held under Section 12 of the Measure.

**The Role of the Deanery**

1. The Deanery should be involved in strategic thinking and planning on pastoral care, finance and education; promoting mission and evangelism; and encouraging collaboration between parishes through clustering and between clergy and lay Christians through collaborative ministry. It should encourage lay participation in the workings of the Church in Synodical terms by presenting lay people with a forum to air their views and to hear the views of others, to everyone’s mutual benefit.
2. Deanery Synods and the Diocesan Synod should work closely together to enable an effective exchange of views, and to allow the Diocese to be fully aware of the feelings and hopes of the parishes. The Deanery Synod should receive regular reports from the Diocesan Synod and is encouraged, when debating issues, to forward appropriate motions to the Diocesan Synod.
3. To encourage lay participation and to enable the Deanery Synod to play its part in working effectively towards the Deanery goals, each Deanery should have a well structured and empowered Standing Committee to co-ordinate the overall work of the Deanery, and its Synod. The leadership of a deanery rests with the Rural Dean, appointed by the Bishop for a period of five years which may be renewed, and with the lay chairman who is elected by the House of Laity of the Deanery Synod for a period of three years or less, coterminous with the life of the Synod. The purpose of this note is to set guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of rural deans and lay chairmen in the Diocese of Gloucester. References to the Bishop include his senior staff.

**The Rural Dean**

4. The Rural Dean shares with the Bishop pastoral oversight for clergy and their families (stipendiary, non-stipendiary, retired, widowers, widows and deserted clergy spouses) and will support their ministry with prayer, advice and encouragement, particularly in times of difficulty. He or she is asked to inform the Bishop and Archdeacon in cases of illness and death of clergy and their families, and any other authorised lay ministers.

5. It is expected that the Rural Dean will exercise wisdom and discretion in telling the Bishops or Archdeacons of any circumstances in the deanery, whether relating to an individual or of the affairs of a parish, about which in his or her judgement the Bishop should be informed.
6. The Rural Dean will be invited to attend meetings with the Bishops and Archdeacons as required and may be asked to share with them the experience and understanding of the deanery and report to the deanery any matters which the Bishop wishes to bring to its notice.
7. In this diocese the duties of a Rural Dean include the following statement:

After consultation with the Archdeacon either he or his proxy is to inspect the fabric and content of every church in his Deanery including its Registers and Trust Deeds at least once in every three years and report to the Archdeacon any recommendation which he may deem desirable.

There are special forms available for this. When completed one copy should be left with the church, one retained for the Rural Dean's record and the other sent to the Archdeacon. Since we have the quinquennial inspection of the fabric of the building by an architect, it is suggested that the Rural Dean's inspection take place roughly half-way through the quinquennium. The Archdeacon will produce a list of churches to be covered each year. A professional opinion on the building is not expected, but it would be helpful to have attention drawn to obvious problems such as weeds growing from gutters etc. The Rural Dean's inspection is an ideal opportunity to check the inventory, particularly the items of value and also to observe the general appearance of the church and its notice boards to see if they present a clear and positive image.
8. At the invitation of the Bishop the Rural Dean will arrange dates for services of Confirmation in liaison with the Bishop's Personal Assisant and Chaplain.
9. The Archdeacon meets with Rural Deans to discuss visitations and seeks the co-operation of the Rural Deans in arranging these.

## **Hymns**

It is the new priest's duty to choose hymns for the service.

The first two hymns should be announced by the Rural Dean and all subsequent hymns by the new priest.

The new priest should receive the offertory from the sidesmen during the singing of the last hymn.

## **The Font**

No flowers should be placed in or on the font and the cover should be removed before the service. At the appropriate time the new parish priest will pour water into the font.

## **After the Service**

At the reception after the service the Rural Dean is asked to give a short vote of thanks to those who have provided refreshments.

## Service Sheets

The Rural Dean is asked to ensure that copies of the Order of Service are sent to the Bishop and Archdeacon.

## Car Parking

The Rural Dean is responsible for informing the Bishop and the Archdeacons as to where a car parking space has been reserved for them near the church.

## The Service Register

Before the service the church Register of Services should be available and correctly written up and placed in the vestry where the Bishop will be robing. After the Bishop and Archdeacons have signed the Register the Rural Dean should take it to the place where the Readers and clergy are robing for them to sign.

A new page in the Register should be entered in the following manner:

|                     |                           |                  |
|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| On this             | day of                    | (month and year) |
| The Revd            | (Incumbents name in full) |                  |
| was Instituted by   | (leave blank)             |                  |
| and was Inducted by | (leave blank)             |                  |
| in the presence of: | (Rural Dean)              |                  |
|                     | (Other clergy)            |                  |
|                     | (Churchwardens)           |                  |

When a priest is not Instituted but Licensed as a priest-in-charge, the entry should read:

|                                     |               |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| (Following date and name)           |               |
| was Licensed at Priest-in-Charge by | (leave blank) |
| and was Installed by                | (leave blank) |
| in the presence of:                 |               |

10. The Rural Dean is responsible for the arrangement of chapter meetings which are imaginative, collaborative, developmental and which provide a forum of mutual support and fellowship.
11. The Rural Dean is asked to develop links with all exercising authorised ministry in the deanery. This may involve evening chapter meetings or special gatherings to include retired clergy, Readers and members of Local Ministry Teams as part of the annual programme of meetings.
12. The Rural Dean is a joint chairman, with the Lay Chairman, of the Deanery Synod. Together they are responsible for convening and leading the Deanery Synod and its work; and, with others, share the responsibility for agreeing parochial assessments and encouraging the payment of quota.
13. The Rural Dean acts as Returning Officer for elections to the House of Laity of the Diocesan Synod.
14. During an interregnum one of the Rural Dean's first duties is to meet with the Churchwardens of the benefice concerned to agree the arrangements for the maintenance of the worship, work and mission. A calendar of special events may need to be drawn up and special attention paid to the arrangements for baptisms, weddings, the calling of banns, funerals and home communions. The Rural Dean will also need to meet with all who exercise authorised ministry in the benefice, such as local ministry teams, Readers and Church Army Officers, to offer support and advice, to warn against making changes during the interregnum and to arrange regular meetings to review the position. The Bishops and Archdeacons, together with members of the Bishop's Staff and Diocesan staff find it helpful to lead worship in parishes during an interregnum. The Rural Dean is asked to inform the Churchwardens of this. Regular contact with the Archdeacon is appreciated, especially where Pastoral reorganisation is involved. In certain situations the Archdeacon will ask the Officer for Parish Resources to work with the PCCs during an interregnum.
15. In vacant parishes where there is a curate the Rural Dean is normally responsible for the oversight of the curate, but this needs to be arranged in consultation with the Diocesan Director of Ordinands.

16. Where a priest is appointed priest-in-charge on a house for duty basis the Rural Dean may be involved in drawing up a working agreement with the priest and churchwardens. The NSM Officer will also be involved.
17. The Rural Dean will normally be invited to attend a pre-Section 11 meeting at which the Archdeacon assists the PCCs in the initial stages of drawing up the parish profile. The Archdeacon's secretary will arrange this meeting.
18. On the interview day the Rural Dean is asked to welcome the candidates on arrival, to take them and their spouse on a tour of the benefice and to be available to feedback comments to the interview panel after they have seen all the candidates. The programme for the day is drawn up in the archdeacons office.
19. The Rural Dean (and Lay Chairman) are asked to convene meetings of the Deanery Pastoral Committee, to seek information from the diocese where required, and to communicate deanery thinking back to the Diocesan Pastoral Committee. It is important that the Archdeacon is kept informed about deanery thinking on pastoral reorganisation proposals, and there may be occasions when it would be constructive for him to be invited to attend a particular meeting.
20. The Rural Dean (and Lay Chairman) will be asked to comment, under the Patronage (Benefices) Measure, on the strengths, weaknesses and needs of the parish. He or she may also be asked to meet potential incumbents to talk with them about the parish and to show them the parsonage house. On the day of the interviews the Rural Dean is asked to welcome candidates and their spouse, to show them around the benefice and generally to ensure that the programme, which will be arranged by the Archdeacons, runs smoothly. The Rural Dean is invited to stay for lunch where provided and will be given the opportunity to convey impressions of the candidates to be interviewing panel.

4. A suitable chair and kneeler should be placed on the chancel step for the bishop. In the sanctuary two chairs should be placed on the north side for the bishop and his chaplain to occupy later in the service, and two on the south side for the archdeacon and rural dean.

### **Processions**

The order for the procession is:

Crucifer  
 Choir  
 Readers  
 Visiting Clergy  
 Representatives of other churches  
 Lay Chairman and the Deanery Synod  
 Rural Dean  
 Patron of the Benefice  
 The new parish Priest  
 Archdeacon  
 Churchwardens  
 Bishop  
 Bishop's Chaplain

At the end of the service the order of the procession is the same with the exception that the new parish priest walks behind the Archdeacon.

### **The Institution or Licensing**

Before the Service a table should be placed at a convenient place near the chancel step with blotting paper, pen and a copy of the New Testament. When the declaration and oaths are taken the Rural Dean stands by the table to hand the priest the New Testament and to supervise the signing of the document.

### **Bishop's Chaplain**

The Bishop's office will inform the Rural Dean if the Bishop is bringing his own chaplain. If he is not, it is the rural dean's responsibility to appoint someone to act in this capacity.

## ANNEX B

### **DIRECTIONS TO BE OBSERVED AT A SERVICE OF INSTITUTION AND INDUCTION AND LICENSING**

The rural dean will be in charge of the service including a careful rehearsal beforehand, both as to movement and with the spoken parts. He will, of course consult the incumbent designate, the assistant curate (where applicable), the churchwardens and those responsible for the music. He will see that the hymns are rightly chosen.

Attention is drawn to the notes to accompany the Service of Institution or licensing which were circulated from Bishops court. This gives information about the reading, the involvement of other ministers in the Institution and licensing and the part played by the lay chairman in the call to worship. The information which follows contains the practical detail associated with the Service of Institution or licensing and should be worked through at the rehearsal.

#### **Seating Arrangements**

1. A pew on the south side should be reserved for the patron (or his representative) and the new parish priest. Sufficient pews behind them should be reserved for the priest's family and personal friends. Where possible seats should be reserved for the Bishop's wife, the Archdeacon's wife and the Rural Dean's spouse.
2. The front pew on the north side should be reserved for the Lay Chairman of the deanery synod and for the Churchwardens. If space permits the Lay Chairman and spouse should sit together, but if this is not possible the spouse should sit with the rural dean's spouse.
3. Those taking part in the welcome should be seated at the end of a row so that they may quickly move to the chancel step at the appropriate point in the service.

21. The Canons of the Church of England relating to Rural Deans are set out in Annex A. Notes on the Rural Deans responsibilities in respect of institutions and licensing are at Annex B.
22. Expenses incurred by virtue of being appointed Rural Dean will be met by the diocese. Receipts should accompany all claims. Expenses on single events totalling more than £50 should be checked with the Archdeacon beforehand.

#### **The Lay Chairman**

23. The Lay Chairman shares with the Rural Dean responsibility for leadership in the deanery in particular to enable a lay contribution to be made to the mission of the Church within the deanery by encouraging lay people to exercise their proper ministry in fostering the purposes for which the deanery exists.
24. The Lay Chairman is a joint chairman, with the Rural Dean, of the Deanery Synod and is an ex-officio member of the deanery standing committee and any other deanery committees which may be set up. He or she will chair meetings of the House of Laity of the Deanery Synod.
25. The Rural Dean and the Lay Chairman are actively involved together in formulating policy, setting deanery aims and objectives, preparing agendas, planning meetings and establishing a budget.
26. The Lay Chairman will act as Returning Officer for elections to the House of Clergy of the Diocesan Synod.
27. The Lay Chairman is involved in the institution or licensing of new clergy in the deanery and will be invited to attend an annual meeting with the Bishops and Archdeacons.
28. The Lay Chairman and Rural Dean share the responsibility, with others in the deanery, for agreeing parochial assessments and encouraging the payment of quota including investigating reasons for non-payment and seeking solutions.

29. The Lay Chairman will want to get to know the people in the parishes of the deanery and their needs and to promote the active exchange of ideas between parishes, encouraging lay people to bring matters of local concern to the deanery's attention.
30. The Lay Chairman represents deanery concerns from a lay perspective, advising the Rural Dean accordingly. He/she acts also as a link between the deanery and the diocese. The Lay Chairman is encouraged to seek election to the Diocesan Synod.
31. The Lay Chairman is asked to encourage lay people to represent the deanery by seeking election to diocesan boards and committees.
32. The Lay Chairman, with the Rural Dean, is expected to encourage the development of deanery resources to further the ministry and mission of the church in the deanery.
33. In carrying out these functions the Lay Chairman needs to have due regard to relevant ecclesiastical law which is set out in Annex C.
34. Expenses incurred by virtue of being Lay Chairman will be met by the deanery.

### **Resources**

35. The Rural Dean and Lay Chairmen should expect to have copies of the diocesan directory, diocesan calendar of intercession, standing orders for deanery synods and the Church Representation Rules.

### **Training**

36. Rural Deans and Lay Chairmen should familiarise themselves with the procedures on chairing meetings, conducting elections, diocesan finance including quota apportionment, conducting interregna, pastoral reorganisation and functions of diocesan boards and committee.

### **CANON C23**

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 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 is 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 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 desrepair, 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.