

## Deanery Lay Chairs – Guidance Notes

### **Introduction**

Lay chairs are an invaluable part of the diocesan team as they bring with them enormous expertise, wisdom, and knowledge about local churches in their deanery. They bring the perspective of laity to the strategic planning of the deanery and diocese.

Under the leadership of the Bishop and together with the area dean, their task is to further the mission and ministry of the deanery, and to bring the diocese and the wider church to the deanery.

The relationship between the lay chair and the area dean is crucial to the success of the both positions.

### **Duties**

To act as joint chair of the deanery synod with the area dean.

Jointly with the area dean, to call meetings of the deanery synod, and to determine the date, place, and agenda of such meetings with the deanery standing committee

To chair meetings of the house of laity.

The lay chair acts as returning officer in the house of clergy elections.

The lay chair is ex-officio a member of the committees of the deanery synod and will be the co-chair, with the area dean, of the standing committee and the Mission and Pastoral Committee.

The lay chair is to be consulted as an interested party on all matters of pastoral re-organisation in the deanery.

The lay chair should bring to the attention of the Bishop, or Archdeacon as appropriate, any pastoral or other concerns they have in relation to their deanery.

To encourage the laity of the deanery to participate in the planning and running of the affairs of the deanery.

The lay chair may convene occasional meetings of the house of laity.

Expenses of office, as appropriate, will be provided from deanery funds.

## **Responsibilities and good practice for the lay chair:**

Lay chairs may give their views to the Bishop on a vacancy when it is announced; this entails thoughts on the plans of the deanery and the kind of appointment that needs to be made.

Lay chairs are interested parties in the process of considering suspension of presentation and deanery pastoral reorganisation and should prayerfully and carefully respond to the consultation from a deanery lay perspective. Lay chairs may also be invited to the meeting of the sequestrators at the beginning of a vacancy to offer advice from a lay perspective.

Lay chairs should attend meetings with the Bishop and Archdeacon as and when invited – sometimes these are with the area dean sometimes not. There may be specific meetings for example regarding payment of parish share.

Lay chairs should be consulted about changes in patterns of ministry within a parish or group of parishes.

Lay chairs should attend institutions and licensings, and welcome new clergy on behalf of the deanery, they should be part of the procession at the service and it is appropriate for them to read a lesson.

The lay chair should be invited to deanery confirmations, and may read a lesson.

The lay chair is expected to encourage people to stand for election to diocesan synod and diocesan and deanery committees, and to be a “talent spotter” for people with specific gifts that can be used by the wider church.

The lay chair may be involved in parish visitations with the area dean, and should be briefed on the outcome of such visitations.

Some lay chairs take the opportunity to visit another parish for Sunday worship in order to familiarise themselves with the parishes of the deanery.

They can be lay representatives of the deanery at ecumenical and other events.

If the deanery celebrates the Eucharist after the elections of its officers, it is good practice for the lay chair to be commissioned as part of the liturgy