

The Role of Rural Dean Diocese of Ely

The Rural Dean works with the Bishops and the Bishop's Staff in sharing the oversight of the mission and ministry of the church in their deanery. The Rural Dean is appointed by the Bishop (usually for a period of five years) following consultation with the chapter.

Administrative Role

- Organising (with the Lay Chair) the regular meetings of the Deanery Synod.
- Conducting, as the Archdeacon directs, the Archdeacon's triennial inspections of parishes (see Canons F17, F18).
- Fulfilling all statutory responsibilities applying to rural Deans (see Canon C23).

Pastoral Role

- Being the first point of contact for clergy in need.
- Ensuring that the deanery clergy have regular opportunities to meet together in chapter, providing a 'safe space' to share failure and successes, and support and learn with one another.
- Supporting assistant clergy and churchwardens during vacancies (see below).

Role During Vacancies and Appointment Process

- A number of Canons specify the pastoral role of the Rural Dean during vacancies. These include B12 (Lay Administration of the Holy Communion), B43 (Relationships with other Churches), E7 (Lay Workers), E4 (Readers), C11, 3 (Induction), B44 (LEP in Vacancy), B2 (Approval of Forms of Service), B65 (Language of Divine Service). In most of these the Rural Dean fulfils the role of the incumbent.
- Processing applications for churchyard memorials according to the Chancellor's directions.
- Working with the Archdeacon to manage the appointment process.
- Advising parishes about the preparation and form of the Parish Profile (Statement of Needs).
- Advising the PCC and Parish Representatives of the key involvement of the Bishop at an early stage in the appointment process.
- Assisting the Archdeacon, Parish and Patron in planning the interview process.
- Providing feedback to the Archdeacon and Parish Representatives following informal meetings between candidates and interested parties (such as ecumenical partners, lay leadership etc).
- Arranging services of institution and licensing, liaising with parishes and the Bishop's office as appropriate.

Mentoring/Consultant Role

- Offering advice and support to clergy in their ministries, especially those in first incumbencies and those who have recently taken up a post in the deanery.
- Being a 'sounding board' for new ideas, initiatives and issues.
- Working with PCCs as required to advise and encourage them in their leadership role.

Mission Enabling and Supporting Role

- Encouraging Mission Action Planning across the deanery
- Liaising with the Archdeacon and Bishop over the implementation of the Deanery Pastoral Plan.
- Ensuring the Deanery Pastoral Plan is regularly discussed and developed by the deanery and encouraging both a strategic and spontaneous approach to opportunities for mission.
- Working with Civil Authorities, being the primary link with them, as appropriate, especially in emergency planning.
- Being the link person in relating to ecumenical partners and schools in the deanery.

Communications Role

- Keeping the Archdeacon and Bishop informed when the wellbeing of clergy or their family gives cause for concern.
- Attending the regular meetings of Rural Deans with the Archdeacon and Bishop's Staff.
- Liaising with the Bishops and their staff over Deanery Confirmations.
- Acting as a conduit for communication across the deanery.