

Developing our Deaneries

Following extensive consultation during 2020, a new Deanery structure will be launched on 1 February 2021. This leaflet summarises our thinking and outlines how we might re-imagine Deaneries and Deanery Synods.



What is a deanery for?

Deaneries play a significant part in the life of the Church of England. A fully functioning deanery is so much more than the work of the Deanery Synod.

Deaneries 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 and even multi-benefice groups to wider issues and opportunities for mutual support and engagement in God's mission.

As we grow as Kingdom People – breathing fresh life and purpose into our deaneries is essential if the Church is to respond to the challenges and opportunities that surround us.

Our hope for deaneries is that they strengthen to become local networks of churches, characterised by mutually supportive relationships, collaborating together on mission planning and joining up to serve their communities.

Whilst the parish, benefice and group 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.

Being Anglican challenges any tendency for a congregation to isolate itself. Partnership is at the core of our life together as parishes, benefices, deaneries and the diocese. Together we are the Church of England, together we serve and reach out to every person in every community.



Shared Leadership

The sharing of leadership begins with the cure of souls in each parish being shared between the Bishop and the incumbent. It continues with each PCC sharing responsibility for the life of the parish with the incumbent.

The Deanery Leadership Team will have between 4 and 6 members including the four key roles of Area Dean, Lay Chair, Deanery Secretary and Deanery Treasurer.

The Deanery Leadership Team should also model shared leadership. It is to be led by the re-named Area Dean with support from the Lay Chair, and undertakes the following four key tasks:

- Enabling churches across the deanery to collaborate and support one another, sharing in mission and ministry across your area.
- Helping churches across the deanery understand what it means to be healthy and sustainable and to work towards this, facilitating local discussions as appropriate to ensure thinking is not limited to within existing parish boundaries.
- Being effective as a Deanery Synod –engaging with Deanery wide mission and ministry planning, building relationships and effective collaboration whilst managing business efficiently and carrying out necessary business.
- Acting as a conduit to and from the wider diocese, reflecting your local needs, joys and challenges within the diocesan context.

The Deanery Purposes

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

Different deaneries will have varying needs over time, and will look and feel different, but our hope is that each deanery is characterised by:

Mutually Supportive Relationships

- Churches collaborate in offering a range of opportunities for worship – including new and creative ones. Diversity is seen as encouraging. Mutual support is of particular importance during vacancies.
- Hosting healthy support forums for different groups – not just Clergy chapters, but as appropriate for Readers, PCC treasurers and secretaries, or Parish Safeguarding Representatives.
- Developing mutual support and encouragement for churches, including establishing good ecumenical relationships.
- Encouraging the sharing of expertise, including administrative support.
- Encouraging locally accessible training events for laity and clergy.

Effective Mission Planning

- Taking an area view of the deanery to consider churchgoing and community; and to develop plans at a deanery level. These plans honour and encourage effective local initiatives, and identify ways of enabling them to be even more effective on a wider canvas.
- Developing specific initiatives and projects – both one off events and ongoing commitments, including the formation of new worshipping communities.
- Finding collaborative ways to engage with groups and organisations which are wider than benefices, such as schools and local councils.
- Enabling the Church to connect with people who relate to local networks and not to places.
- Identifying and facilitating partnerships among churches.

Serving and Transforming Communities

- Understanding and addressing social issues across the deanery, for example through food-banks, debt services, dementia support.
- Supporting parishes and benefices with the tools and training to engage effectively with local communities and their specific needs, in both rural and urban settings.
- Enabling straightforward partnering opportunities with local councils and other agencies working for regional community transformation.



Deanery Synod

The primary role of the Deanery Synod will be to work with the Deanery Leadership Team in enabling the deanery to flourish in these three purposes.

Deanery Synods have business that they are legally required to do – but not that much! An effective Deanery Synod will be the coming together of a church across an area – sharing joys and sorrows, finding new ways to collaborate and support one another, and mapping out the road ahead.



Resourcing

As well as meeting expenses of office, each Deanery Leadership Team will be offered a contribution towards the cost of administrative support.

Additional support will be available to help with training and deanery based mission initiatives. This will come from trust funds and from reallocating budgets so there is no additional cost to Parish Share.

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

