

# Deanery Synod Lay Representatives

## -an opportunity to serve the wider church

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Deanery Synods exist to serve the witness and mission of the wider Church and so need to be able to take strategic decisions to advance mission and ministry in the Deanery and the Diocese.
2. Deanery Synod meetings are concerned with seeking God's will for the mission of the Church in the Deanery and so they need to be Christ-centred, prayerful and open to the Spirit speaking through all.
3. It is important that the Deanery Synod, as any representative body, broadly reflects the diversity of all the congregations – in gender, ethnic origin, age, experience etc.
4. It is important for APCMs/PCCs to think carefully and pray hopefully about who they choose, using principles of succession planning - including looking for the leaders of the future and playing to people's strengths and potential. Deaneries are entering a new phase and need fresh ideas.
5. It is important that Deanery Synod representatives are enthusiastic about the potential for changing the role and effectiveness of Deaneries and have the commitment and energy to attend and participate in the meetings and be active between them.

### AS A LAY REPRESENTATIVE DO YOU HAVE OR COULD YOU DEVELOP SOME OF THE FOLLOWING QUALITIES?

- A vision and passion for the wider church to flourish
- Committed to work with others in prayer, listening and study to seek God's will for mission in the Deanery
- Able to think and act strategically – able to see the role of your own parish within the bigger picture and understand and accept differences of view
- Committed to mission, growth and engagement across boundaries
- Open to new/different approaches and willing to listen to and learn from others, share ideas and experience and embrace change
- Able to speak confidently and challenge in a respectful way
- Able to provide inspiring feedback to your PCC/congregation
- Committed, reliable and able to see things through
- Dynamic and energetic and able to lead others to shape the future
- Excited about 'breathing new life into Deaneries'

### Background

Deaneries are groups of Anglican parishes in a geographical area – the size of the area and the number of parishes varies widely. Parish Clergy in the Deanery are called together by the Area Dean for mutual support in the Deanery Chapter. All Licensed Clergy in the Deanery are automatically members of the Chapter and Deanery Synod.

Deanery Synods also have Lay Members, i.e. those who are not Clergy. Deanery Synods are formal meetings, which are mainly for information and discussion about mission and ministry in the area. Occasionally they are required to take formal decisions, sometimes by means of a vote. Every three years, Annual Parochial Church Meetings (APCMs) elect their Lay representatives to Deanery Synods.

Crucially, the Lay representatives form the electorate for the House of Laity on the Diocesan and General Synod.

In all of these matters it is important to be clear about the distinction between Deaneries and Deanery Synods – Deaneries are much more than their Synods, although the Synod forms a crucial focus for the activity within the Deanery. Deaneries form an important bridge between parishes and the wider church, including the Diocese.

**The role of APCMs**

APCMs may select/elect up to six Deanery Synod representatives, depending on the number of people in the congregation (for our parish this is currently 3 members), so it is a question of looking for a range of qualities amongst a team of representatives. The list of qualities and attributes of effective Deanery Synod members shown above is offered so that, across the whole of the Synod, there are the skills, experience and enthusiasm to make change happen and move things forward.

*Deanery Synod lay representatives are ex officio members of the PCC, so they will bring these skills to the PCC too.*