



Making it Easier to run a parish during a vacancy and beyond

Parishes approach a forthcoming vacancy with a range of emotions. There can be sadness at the departure of your incumbent; there is often trepidation about what the future holds; there can be concerns over the number of tasks that parishes need to do.

Yet the time of vacancy can also be an opportunity for parishes. A time to review a parish's mission and purpose, strengths and weaknesses, role and vision. Above all it's a time to discern God's will for the parish.

The vacancy process can seem complex, daunting and frustrating. We hope that our guidance – and the additional support you can get from the Archdeacons and St James' House staff - will enable your parish to thrive and discern the will of God during this time.

To make it easier to understand the process and your role in it we've created seven steps. This guide gives an overview of each step with what you need to do. For each *stage we have useful information and supporting forms on our website.*

www.liverpool.anglican.org/Vacancies-Processes

Note: Where private patrons or patronage societies have the right of presentation, some of these processes will be under their control and they may require a different process. The archdeacon will offer full co-operation and support in those circumstances.

Step one Our Diocese prepares

We want to make sure that diocesan staff and the parish are able to plan fully for a smooth vacancy

1. Outgoing clergy notify Bishop of the date they will leave the parish
2. Bishop declares vacancy
3. Archdeacon consults deanery over the nature of appointment
4. Vacancy forms sent to parish (and patron/s)
5. Archdeacon carries out Exit Interview with incumbent
(*form available*)

Step two The Parish prepares

A parish needs to look at a number of matters and the legislation requires some formal meetings (Section 11 and 12)

1. Area Dean (and Lay Chair) meets Church Wardens to plan vacancy
2. The Archdeacon, Area Dean and Lay Chair hold informal meeting with the church wardens & PCC to look at all aspects of the future (*Pre Section 11 Meeting - sample agenda available*)
3. PCC hold a formal Meeting (Section 11) to consider:-
 - Appointing 2 lay members as Parish Representatives in selection process
 - Resolutions on the Ordination of Women (*guidance available*)
 - Preparation of Parish Profile (see step 4)

Step three Running a parish

During your vacancy you will still need to keep your parish functioning. This is often a time when different people's gifts come to the fore. Our guide "Your responsibilities during a vacancy" helps make it easier to carry out all the tasks.

1. Area Dean meets Church Wardens to discuss tasks and support during vacancy
2. Parish roles maintained with support of Area Dean, Archdeacon and St James House staff

Step four Preparing a parish profile

The parish profile is the key document to discern the right person for your parish. It is your opportunity to state clearly what you are like, the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead and how the new priest will fit in. Our guide to "preparing a parish profile" gives plenty of support and advice

1. Communications Team, Area Dean and PCC Representatives meet to discuss needs of parish for draft parish profile
2. PCC Representatives oversee the draft and production of your parish profile
3. Archdeacons draft the Person Specification and Role Description and Benefice Summary

Step five Advertising the vacancy

We want all parties to be satisfied that we have the best information in order to attract the right person to your parish

1. PCC, Patrons, Archdeacon, Area Dean and Lay Chair meet - *Section 12 meeting (4-6 weeks after Section 11)*
2. At this meeting they
 - Agree the Parish Profile, Person Specification and Role Description, Benefice Summary
 - decide mechanics of interview and organise any training
 - agree advertising process
3. Communications Team draft advert for diocesan website.
4. Archdeacons confirm advert and timeframe – this goes live and is advertised on the web and through the Bulletin. *Press advertising – normally the Church Times - is agreed if necessary*
5. All applications are initially managed through the Archdeacons' office

Step six Interview and appointment

We know that many people want to have a say in appointing a candidate but we also know the process works better with a carefully selected group managing the process. We aim to limit the numbers involved in interviews to 4/5 and manage the interview day so it offers the best possible experience for parish and candidate.

1. An interview panel is selected with appropriate representation
2. All application forms are sent to the Panel and Bishop's Core Group
3. Candidates are shortlisted
4. The Panel arranges and conducts the interviews
(we have guidance, checklists and sample questions so a parish can conduct a successful interview)
5. Bishop's Lodge arranges post interview legal checks for successful candidate
6. Archdeacon debriefs unsuccessful candidates
7. If there is no successful candidate the Archdeacon and Panel agree appropriate way forward.

Step 7 Settling in new incumbent

We believe the first 100 days of a new ministry can make or break a priest's time in parish. It is important that we do all we can to settle in a new priest.

1. Parish and Bishop's Office agree arrangements for licensing
2. Meetings arranged with Archdeacon, Area Dean, SJH staff
3. Parish and wardens arrange suitable induction into parish
4. Archdeacons and SJH staff organise suitable diocesan induction