

# Discernment to Curacy



## The Journey

March 2023



DIOCESE OF  
**Bath & Wells**

Living the story. Telling the story.



## A message from our bishops

We are delighted to recommend this booklet to you as you engage with our diocesan discernment team to tease out and explore whether God is calling you to the exciting, demanding, challenging and exhilarating vocation as a deacon or priest in God's Church.

Every year we are privileged to ordain those whose calling to diaconal or priestly ministry has been tested and affirmed by the wider church. Each year we also rejoice at the Celebration of Lay Ministry as we affirm the equal validity of those whose calling lies in lay ministry. These services are amongst the highlights of our year as we confirm people's callings and send them out to do God's work in the world.

We pray that you walk with Christ as you discern your pathway to God's service, and that this booklet helps you to navigate the way ahead.

Lord God,  
who calls us to grow more like Christ in all we do  
and are  
Give us a deepening sense of our own calling.  
Help us to see where we can best use the gifts and  
talents you have given us.  
May your Spirit unite us in our desire  
to grow your kingdom  
to share in ministry  
and serve your people  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Welcome

If you are reading this guide you have already embarked on the voyage of discernment which started when you first admitted to yourself that maybe God was calling you into some form of ministry. For some this is a gradual realisation and for others it comes like a bolt from the blue. You may initially have had conversations with God, your close friends and family as you tested this idea out – or you may have hugged it to yourself as you became accustomed to the idea. You have probably met one of our Discerning Calling Mentors (Calling Chaplains, Vocations Chaplains – they’ve been called many things) who will have explored a variety of ministries with you as together you agreed that you should be exploring ordination.

This guide is intended to tell you more about how the next few years (yes – years!) could unfold...

## The Vocations Team

The team is made up of the Diocesan Director of Ordinands (DDO) currently me, Sue Rose. Being DDO is part of my role as Vocations Team Leader, in which capacity I have the privilege of overseeing everything to do with promoting and encouraging Christian vocation, from our individual calling as disciples to all forms of informal and formal ministry in the church for lay and ordained alike.

Our Vocations Advisor, Helen Weld, has the primary responsibility for promoting vocations, through events, publications and the website. She also enables the team of Discerning Calling Mentors.

I share the DDO task with a number of Assistant Diocesan Directors of Ordinands (ADDOS) who are strategically dispersed around our geographically large diocese. They each have a deep desire to see

their candidate respond fully to their calling, as well as extensive knowledge of the process.

Someone you will come across much later in the process is Sue Anderson, our Ordinand Finance Officer. If you are recommended for training, she will help you discover and receive the appropriate grants for travel, books and, for those in full time training, for family support.

Finally, the two most essential members of the team are Sue Cartmel and Ros Miles, our two admin assistants. They both have many years of experience in their roles and you will find that there are very few, if any, questions you could ask to which they don't know the answer - have their emails on speed-dial.

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We are all here to guide, challenge and support you as you travel through the various aspects of a long and intense discernment process.

## 1 The Shared Discernment Process

The Shared Discernment Process (SDP) has been designed by the National Vocations Team and endorsed by the House of Bishops and the General Synod, as the way candidate for ordination have their vocation tested and affirmed.

The SDP process is so called because it seeks to set up a dialogue between the candidate, the diocese and the national church as we work together to discern God's will for any individual candidate and the wider church. Much of the detailed work is done by the candidate, working with the diocesan team but there are crucial moments when the National team are involved in advising, notably through the Stage 1 Carousel and the final Stage 2 Panel.

It generally takes between 10 and 18 months to work through this process, depending on when in the year you join the process. But we also always emphasise that it is your journey that we are accompanying you on, so you may choose to take a longer route or even have a pause as you go – and that's absolutely fine. You may also decide that with more knowledge this is not the right path for you and again that is absolutely fine – it means the process is doing its job. Hopefully however you will get increasingly convinced of your call as the time passes and will go on to train and minister as a deacon or priest, pioneer or chaplain.

The journey you are undertaking is challenging at times and it is good to have someone alongside you spiritually outside the process. We strongly advise all candidates who do not already work with one, to engage with a **spiritual director/soul friend**. If you want help to find an appropriate person speak to your A/DDO and they will be able to point you in the right direction.

## 1.1 The Qualities for ordained ministry

At the heart of the discernment process are the Qualities for Ordained Ministry. They have been drawn up by the National Ministry Team after wide consultation. They have been endorsed by the House of Bishops and the General Synod as encapsulating what qualities the Church of England expects those who are called to ordained ministry to inhabit.

They are:

- **Love for God, Call to Ministry, Love for People,**
- **Wisdom, Fruitfulness and Potential**

Below these six phrases are a huge range of ideas, skills, attitudes and concepts that you will explore, not just over the next few months, but throughout your time in ministry.

## 1.2 Eligibility Criteria

### Age

The Church of England nationally has stated that at the point ordination candidates should normally be over the age of 23 – anyone younger than that requires an archbishop's faculty to proceed.

In this diocese the upper age limits our bishops have agreed are:

- 60 at ordination for Incumbent focussed candidates
- 63 at ordination for assistant focussed candidates
- 67 at ordination for locally deployed candidates

i.e. training training has to start a minimum of two years before ordination.”

## Associations

**The British National Party** - the Church of England has decided that you are not eligible for ordination if you are a member of the BNP.

**Freemasonry** – The General Synod has passed a resolution stating that Freemasonry is incompatible with Christianity HOWEVER this has not been followed by a similar resolution to membership of the BNP thus leaving Freemason's in an ambiguous position. If you are a Freemason you may need to be ready to justify how you hold together your 2 sets of beliefs.

## Marital status

The Church of England teaches that Christian marriage is between a man and woman for life and that sexual relations should be expressed only in marriage.

In the light of the *'for life'* element of this teaching, a C4 archbishop's faculty (permission) is required if you, or your current spouse, have previously been married to someone still living – and this has to be obtained during the discernment process. This will require you and your partner to fill in a form detailing the reasons for the breakdown of the previous marriage. You then meet with our C4 Officer so that he can gain a complete picture. He will then compile a report for the Bishop of Bath and Wells. Having read the report, the bishop will meet with you both before deciding whether he will apply to the archbishops for a faculty.

This sounds a horribly intrusive activity and although our C4 officer undertakes his meetings with utmost sensitivity, we know it can be emotionally challenging for all involved. I can however report that several of those who have gone through this process have ultimately

found it cathartic and healing.

It is worth noting that if you are divorced and single but meet someone during discernment or training you cannot start a C4 faculty process until 3 years after the date of your new marriage - and you cannot be ordained without one in place.

With regard to the *'a man and a woman'* element, the Church of England is currently involved in the 'Living in Love and Faith' process to help it come to a mind about the appropriateness or otherwise of maintaining this teaching in light of current theological, medical and scientific understandings. Whatever the outcome of that process, the current teaching stands. This means that at the present time the CofE accepts celibate single candidates, heterosexually married ones and celibate civil partners as eligible for ordination. Currently people who have entered into a same sex marriage cannot be ordained.

### 1.3 You and the A/DDO

You will be – or have been - allocated an A/DDO who knows the process and will guide you through it. In the course of these meetings, they will be asking you to explore and articulate your understanding and feelings about a wide range of issues, some of them deeply personal. We often say that we probably end up knowing our candidate better than their mother or partner – and it's not entirely said in jest!

You should probably aim to meet with them about once a month. Each time you meet they will want to explore one of the Qualities for ordained ministry in some depth. They will often ask you to read something or listen to a podcast in preparation for your meeting and/or write a reflection on what you have read.

Your A/DDO will need to write notes on what you discuss; some of us

write throughout the meeting, whilst others write them up afterwards – whichever it is, the notes are kept securely. A/DDO's use their notes to write fully and candidly about you in their parts for the papers that accompany you to your final panel.

During the whole process, and especially at the beginning, you will be asked to complete a mountain of paperwork. At the end of your exploration this is all destroyed, unless you have raised a safeguarding issue.

### 1.4 Exploring Ordination Days

Alongside your A/DDO meetings we run a series of Exploring Ordination days which we strongly encourage you to attend. At these days you have the opportunity to meet and share with other candidates who are on the same journey as yourself. At each day we attempt to 'break open' one of the Qualities with colleagues who have specific gifts and knowledge relating to the different Qualities. The days take place at the diocesan offices in Flourish House, Wells and usually run from 9.30am to 4 pm. We provide endless tea and coffee and ask you to bring your own packed lunch.

#### The 2022/23 programme:

15 October	Call to Ministry
19 November	Love for People
9-11 December	Love for God Retreat at Hilfield Friary
21 January	Potential
25 February	Fruitfulness
18 March	Diocesan Synod – encourage to attend
22 April	Wisdom - Being wise
20 May	Wisdom – Wisdom in leadership
17 June	Preparing for study
8 July	Ordinands Fellowship

## 1.5 Carousel Conversations

The SDP process falls into 2 stages. To begin with we prepare you for a Stage 1 Carousel of Vocational Conversations. The National Team run the Carousels on Zoom. Each Carousel begins with worship and prayer led by the Panel Secretary. Candidates have 6 conversations, each with a different National Advisor. The conversations lasts between 15 and 20 minutes. For each topic you are given a 'starter' such as an image or object to talk about. Each conversation is shaped around one or more of the Qualities and is designed to help the Advisors get a feel for your existing knowledge and experience. They in turn can then advise the diocesan team where to focus their preparation. They can also affirm the direction of travel.

The conversations explore the areas of:

- Priesthood/Diaconate
- The Church of England
- Communicating Christian Faith
- Practical and Pastoral care
- Living as a disciple
- Engaging with the world

Before you attend a Carousel, we will give you the opportunity to experience some 15 minute conversations in a Zoom setting. We also offer the opportunity to do your Carousel in the diocesan offices, this may be particularly helpful if you live in a part of the diocese where internet access is limited or unstable.

The Carousel Advisors write a report for the diocesan team which gives their assessment of the depth to which you already inhabit the Qualities and your readiness to move to the next stage. It helps the A/DDOs shape their support for you. The Carousel Report will be retained at the end of your discernment journey and be placed in

your official personal file.

### **1.6 Assessment for Psychological Well-being**

The National Church now requires all candidates to have an assessment for psychological well-being. Conscious of the impact of the emotional and spiritual demands of ministry and mindful of the importance of mental health they want candidates to have had the opportunity to explore aspects their resilience with a trained counsellor or therapist.

Assessors will look with you at issues that arise for many clergy such as the impact of isolation and workload, boundaries and expectations. They will also ask you to reflect on your own experiences of family and relationships, personality and resilience as well as any specific areas of vulnerability that have been identified in your conversations with your A/DDO.

The interviews normally last about 90 minutes. The assessor will then send a report to the A/DDO in which they share their reflections and offer any advice they have about possible for further development. The reports will be seen by the A/DDO and the bishop. They will be held securely by the Vocations Team up to the point of your ordination after which it will be shredded. If you are released to seek a curacy in another diocese the report would be shared with the DDO and diocesan bishop of that diocese.

### **1.7 Examining Chaplains and Bishops Interviews**

When your A/DDO thinks you are ready to go to a Stage 2 Panel they will arrange for you to meet **2 pairs of Examining Chaplains**. They will meet with you at a mutually convenient date and time. One pair of chaplains will probe into the Ministerial Formation Qualities (Love for God, Call to ministry and aspects of Fruitfulness and Potential) and the other pair will focus on the Personal Formation Qualities (Love for others, Wisdom and other aspects of Fruitfulness and Potential).

They will then write a report for the sponsoring bishop giving their opinion as to your readiness to go to the Panel. This is normally an affirming process and also serves as a practice for similar interviews you will have at your Stage 2 Panel.

In terms of preparation for the Panel we also offer the opportunity to experience a group exercise using a scenario provided for this purpose by the national team.

The A/DDOs really value the input of the EC's as by now we have normally become your advocates and getting a more dispassionate view is really helpful, especially when it comes to writing our papers to support you. We often quote EC comments in those papers as extra evidence to back up our own opinions.

Once the EC reports have been completed you will be given a date to meet the **bishop**; Bishop Ruth is our sponsoring bishop so it is normally her you will meet. However, Bishop Ruth will be having a much delayed and well-earned sabbatical this year so you may instead meet with Bishop Michael. Each candidate is sponsored by a bishop – you go with their imprimatur. As such, they expect to meet every candidate before they are booked onto a Panel. Whichever bishop you see, they will have copies of your Carousel report, the reports from the Examining Chaplains and your input for the Stage 2 form to give them the background to your sense of call.

After your sponsoring interview the bishop will advise our team about booking a Stage 2 Panel.

## 1.8 Stage 2 Panel

The Stage 2 Panel is a two-day meeting where you will share worship and meals with candidates and advisors as together you discern if you are ready to benefit from initial ministerial training. Most candidates stay at the centre for the 2 days but there is an option to be non-

residential if your circumstances would make that beneficial to you.

The Advisors will have copies of the Carousel report, the Assessment for Psychological Wellbeing and the full Stage 2 form including the A/DDO's remarks. In the papers we will also have to state what form of ordained ministry you are called to – more of this in the next section.

During the Panel you will take part in a group exercise designed to see how you interact with others. After the group exercise you will be required to write a self-reflective piece about your participation in the exercise. You will also have 2 paired interviews, each looking at specific aspects of the Qualities shaped around your particular sense of call.

After the Panel, the advisors remain behind to write up their reports. They will remain there until they are all of one mind about each of the candidates they have seen. The Panel Secretary will then compile their deliberations into one report which is sent to the bishop a week after the Panel. Your A/DDO will let you know the result as soon as they can and the bishop will write to confirm that recommendation.

And there you are – simple!

## 2 Forms of ordained ministry

There are lots of different words, titles and phrases to describe ordained ministry in the Church of England, and all of them have a back log of sometimes hidden expectations behind them. Here we attempt to unpack some of them.

**It is really important that you discuss these options and their implications with your family at an early stage in the discernment process.** Every year we find at curacy that some families have remained oblivious of the impact these decisions will have on their life. Your A/DDO will want to arrange at least one meeting ideally at your home with your family to answer any questions they may have.

### 2.1 Deacon or Priest?

#### Deacon

All clergy start their ordained ministry as deacons. The word comes from the same root as servant and reflects the servant hearted nature of Christ's ministry. In Acts 6 we are also told that there was need for more people to serve the growing church community and support the work of the apostles so seven were chosen for this task.

Service is at the heart of all ordained ministry and clergy forget this at their peril. For many clergy this is the foundation of their ministry from which they step into priesthood but for others it is to this servant ministry that they are called and they become **Permanent or distinctive deacons** who tend to express their calling as being about service and pastoral care, being bridges into the community and taking the church out into the world. In this diocese they will almost always serve in an assistant capacity.

## Priest

Priestly ministry is about a ministry of word and sacrament together. In the ordinal priests are described as shepherds, servants, stewards, sentinels and messengers. They are called to bless and to absolve, to represent Christ to the world and to bring that world before God in prayer.

## 2.2 Incumbent, Assistant or Locally Deployed?

### Incumbent

An Incumbent will be a priest with, or with the potential to develop, strategic leadership in mission and ministry. Most people associate 'incumbent' with 'vicar' or 'rector' but in fact the term is also used for lead chaplains and pioneers in different contexts. In all cases they share in the ministry of the bishop in their particular benefice, parish, chaplaincy or Fresh Expression context. They will be passionate about growing the kingdom and enabling others. Those recommended as stipendiary incumbents will be expected to be ready and willing to be deployed across the Church of England. Most incumbencies are paid and come with a parsonage house where the family are expected to live, living among those they are serving. In recent years in this diocese we have begun to see some self-supporting incumbencies, where clergy remain in their own homes.

### Assistant or Associate

Assistant or associate clergy may be deacons or priests who are called to work alongside an ordained colleague, sharing in ministry together. In Bath and Wells the majority of assistant clergy are self-supporting. They will be deployable across the diocese so that the bishop may ask them to serve in nearby parishes where their gifts are needed.

## Locally deployed

Locally deployed clergy are those whose ordained ministry has arisen out of their ministry in a particular context and whose calling is to serve those people in that place. This ministry will have been affirmed by the incumbent and PCC. It is anticipated that their ministry will be in their existing parish or benefice. Most frequently this will be in a self-supporting capacity.

### **2.3 Sector ministries— Chaplain, Pioneer, Minister in Secular Employment ,Theological Educator**

#### **An ordained chaplain (Bath and Wells recognised focus)**

Chaplaincy is a key part of the ever-growing diversity of the church. Chaplains meet people in their places of work, learning, healing or leisure and live and tell the Story of God's love there. Chaplains are distinctively Christian and utterly inclusive. At a time when only 5% have regular (monthly) contact with a local church (<https://faithsurvey.co.uk/uk-christianity.html>), chaplaincy is a missional and pioneering ministry serving the 95%. In Bath and Wells those called to this ministry will have their chaplaincy calling affirmed by our Diocesan Chaplaincy Advisor before attending a Stage 2 Panel to affirm their priesthood. Curacies are normally 'dual track' with a percentage of their time in a chaplaincy context alongside their parochial base.

#### **An ordained pioneer minister**

Pioneers are those who have the vision to spot new opportunities and the courage to step out to put flesh on the dreams God has given them to enable those outside the church to engage with God. Ordained pioneers are called to inhabit and enable sacramental ministry in new ways or among people the church doesn't normally connect with.

## An ordained minister in secular employment (MSE)

An MSE's calling is primarily to a specific and defined ministry in their place of work that is recognised and agreed by their employer. Their sacramental and missional calling is often about embodying the 5 marks of mission.

## An ordained theological educator

This focus of ministry recognises those who have the theological and academic ability to study and teach theology in a Theological Educational Institution (TEI) or in a diocesan role. They are able to acquire adult educational and communication skills so that they can enable the training and formation of others in ministry. Those identified with these gifts may be encouraged in their Stage 2 report to follow a more intensive academic training pathway. They may also need to attend an additional Candidates Panel, especially if they wish to pursue a research degree, as additional funding may be required during initial training and curacy, which may affect curacy placements.

## 2.4 Supported (Stipendiary) or self-supporting?

There are many aspects of ordained life that affect all clergy regardless of payment, but there are also particular expectations both of those offering ordained ministry as volunteers and those who are financially supported by the wider church (given stipends).

Under Common Tenure (the legal basis for ordained ministry) every cleric will be given a Statement of Particulars that set out these expectations, such as:

- All clergy are expected to be available for all the major Christian festivals and on Sundays (in Bath and Wells we encourage clergy to take 6 Sundays off a year but this not universal across the CofE)

- All clergy should have a sabbath day every week and a 48 hours period of sabbath each month. Annually they should also take the inside of a week for spiritual refreshment/retreat .
- All clergy should have their working expenses met in full by their benefice.

### Supported (Stipendiary) Ministry

Most ministry in the Church of England is provided free of charge by an enormous number of lay and ordained ministers but throughout the time that the church has existed, it as has also chosen to support a few to give them more time to do what God requires of them for God's mission. Jesus and his disciples themselves received support. In this diocese stipends are provided for some of those offering for incumbent focused parochial, pioneer or chaplaincy ministry. They receive a stipend which is intended to 'set them free to minister' – it is not payment for service. To receive a stipend (currently around 25k) you and your family must be ready and willing to move. This could be anywhere in the Church of England.

If you remain in Bath and Wells you would be expected to live in a house provided by the diocese. The house will be in, or close to, your benefice and will either have 3 bedrooms and 3 reception rooms, one of which will be a small study for personal study OR it will have 4 bedrooms and 2 receptions in which case one of the bedrooms should be used for personal study. The diocese will pay the council tax and water rates and are responsible for the maintenance of the house. Internal decoration is the responsibility of the clergy family. In exceptional circumstances a curate may remain in their own home in which case the diocese pays a Housing Allowance (currently around 8 ½ k). This is intended to contribute to the costs of council tax, water

rates and any external repairs. It is not expected to cover your mortgage costs.

### Self-Supporting/Non-stipendiary/Voluntary clergy

Self-supporting ministry has an honourable pedigree. St Paul spoke in his letters of his commitment not to be a burden in the places he ministered through earning his living as a tent maker. You follow in his footsteps.

You may be training for incumbent or associate focused parochial, pioneer or chaplaincy ministry. You will be ready and willing to serve in the diocese, whilst continuing to live in your own home. For incumbent focussed or associate clergy your curacy is likely to be served in a neighbouring parish, whilst locally deployed clergy will serve their title in their sending parish.

During curacy the diocese will expect you to be able to give at least Sundays plus a day a week to parochial ministry. You will need to consider if there are changes you will want to make in your current work pattern to ensure you can do this in a healthy way. Having offered to serve in a self-supporting capacity you will not be eligible for a stipend during curacy.

Post curacy, incumbent focussed clergy will be able to look for stipended incumbency posts in the same way as those who were financially supported during curacy, whilst those continuing as assistant self-supporting or locally deployed clergy will need to develop a working agreement with their incumbent clarifying what they believe God is calling them to offer in the way of ministry.

### 3 Training Pathways

Once you have been recommended you will need to decide, with your A/DDO on the right pathway to pursue your training. Your A/DDO will discuss this with the bishop who has the final decision. Your time at college or on a course is also known as Initial Ministerial Education Phase1 (IME1)

The Church of England has made the decision that it will pay for the tuition of all those who are recommended for training through the national Shared Discernment Process. Some dioceses have their own internal discernment schemes. These are often used for those candidates who have significant ministerial experience and who anticipate their ordained ministry will all take place within their sending context. St Mellitus College is also piloting a fast-track route for similar candidates. Currently dioceses that use these in-house or St Mellitus discernment paths then have to fund the subsequent training themselves. At present Bath and Wells does not subscribe to such a scheme.

#### 3.1 Types of IME1 Training Pathway

There are three main pathways. The Church of England considers that all three pathways offer good quality training and formation but recognises that the different circumstances of particular candidates may suggest one pathway rather than another. Here is an overview of the 3 options:

##### Part time Regional Courses

This is an increasingly popular pathway which requires a constant interplay between the theological concepts taught at college and the realities of living as a disciple in your home and work. The courses tend to have a broad range of church traditions represented both among the student body and within the teaching staff.

Learning and Formation on a course has the additional advantage that it also reduces the disruption to the family of several moves in a relatively short number of years.

Most ordinands on this pathway in Bath and Wells will attend our regional centre at Sarum College in Salisbury. The teaching there is delivered through blended learning; a combination of learning in community at Summer School and residential weekends, personal learning and learning in context in your local church. It is suitable for both incumbent and associate focus training.

Ordinands on this pathway will normally include all those over 39 on 1st September of the year they start training. It may also be particularly appropriate for younger candidates whose family circumstances make it desirable for them not to undertake a move to a residential TEI.

### Full Time Non Residential/Mixed Mode/Context Based

Different TEI's use different names to describe this pathway, but essentially it is a pathway that involves the candidate spending half their time in academic study with the other half learning in context. An appropriate context will be agreed in consultation with diocese and TEI, reflecting the learning needs of the ordinand.

Ordinands on this pathway will normally be under 39 on 1st September of the year they start training. It may exceptionally also include some older candidates who have been discerned as having potential for incumbent focused ministry and who the diocese believe would benefit from additional experience in context.

### Full Time Residential

As the name suggests this pathway involves you and your family

moving to a theological educational institution (TEI) to pursue your initial theological formation and training. This is usually for 2 years, unless you have been discerned as being a potential theological educator or you are under 32 and do not already have a theology degree.

Ordinands on this pathway will normally be under 39 on 1<sup>st</sup> September of the year they start training.

### **3.2 Which Theological Education Institution (TEI) should you attend**

Explore the Options! We encourage ordination candidates and ordinands to look carefully at a wide variety of college and course websites (further details on the next pages) and attend open days (which may be offered virtually). Try not to opt for the most comfortable – this is a time to stretch your wings, theologically speaking. We like to see a variety of colleges and courses represented amongst incoming curates.

Whilst it is good to speak to your ADDO about your preferences, you will need to book a meeting with Sue Rose, the DDO to explore options in more depth, who will then discuss your thoughts with the bishop. Please be aware that the final decision about training pathways rests with the bishop!

#### **3.2.1 Part-time Regional Training Courses**

The majority of our part-time ordinands go to:

**Sarum College, Salisbury** <https://www.sarum.ac.uk/>

Sarum offers blended learning comprising 3 elements:

- learning in community beginning with Summer School (3<sup>rd</sup> week of August) and 6 weekends a year,

- personal learning supported by on-line teaching and directed self-study, with an on-line tutorial group once a week
- learning in context at your local church.

Occasionally for specific reasons we may suggest an ordinand look at one of these other options:

### **SWMTC, Devon**

This is particularly good for those called to distinctive diaconal ministry. This is delivered through an evening a week in Crediton or Plymouth plus 6 residential weekends + Easter School (week).

### **Trinity College, Bristol** <https://www.trinitycollegebristol.ac.uk/>

This is delivered in Bristol on Tuesday evenings and some Saturdays when you can join with the residential and dispersed learning communities.

### **WMTC, Gloucester**

This is delivered through an evening a week in Gloucester and 6 weekends at Ripon College, Cuddesdon just outside Oxford

## **3.2.2 Full-time Context based/Mixed Mode courses**

Students on the full-time context-based courses are generally expected to spend three days in study and three days in a parish context (including Sunday) each week.

The colleges most applicable for our ordinands are the following:

### **Trinity College, Bristol** <https://www.trinitycollegebristol.ac.uk/>

Delivered though 6 block weeks (Monday lunch-time – Friday lunch time) and weekly virtual tutorial group (this can be attended in person).

## **Sarum, Salisbury** <https://www.sarum.ac.uk/>

As with the part-time course this is delivered via blended learning comprising:

- learning in community beginning with Summer School (3<sup>rd</sup> week of August) and 6 weekends a year,
- personal learning supported by on-line teaching and directed self-study, with an on-line tutorial group once a week
- learning in context at your local church.

NOTE: Sarum's context-based training assumes four days of study and two in the parish.

## **St Mellitus: South-West (Plymouth) or London** [https:// www.stmellitus.ac.uk](https://www.stmellitus.ac.uk)

This is delivered through one day a week learning in community; in the South-West this is on Tuesdays, from 9.30 to 4.30 and in London on Mondays, 9.30 – 4.30 plus 5 weekends in a year.

It assumes 2/3 days of study a week and 3 days learning in context.

### **3.2.3 Full-time Residential Colleges**

Each Residential college has its own particular flavour (often of church tradition or theological leaning). To find out more about these training options, look at their websites (links provided) and contact the colleges/ courses – details on websites. If you discover that any of the information provided in this document is not correct, please let us know. So, in alphabetical order:

Cranmer Hall, Durham	<a href="https://www.cranmer.hall.com">https://www.cranmer.hall.com</a>
College of the Resurrection, Mirfield (Leeds)	<a href="https://college.mirfield.org.uk/">https://college.mirfield.org.uk/</a>
Queen’s Foundation, Birmingham	<a href="http://www.queens.ac.uk/">http://www.queens.ac.uk/</a>
Oakhill College, London	<a href="https://www.oakhill.ac.uk/">https://www.oakhill.ac.uk/</a>
Ridley Hall, Cambridge	<a href="https://www.ridley.cam.ac.uk/">https://www.ridley.cam.ac.uk/</a>
Westcott House, Cambridge	<a href="https://www.westcott.cam.ac.uk/">https://www.westcott.cam.ac.uk/</a>
Wycliffe Hall, Oxford	<a href="https://www.wycliffe.ox.ac.uk/home">https://www.wycliffe.ox.ac.uk/home</a>
St Stephen’s House, Oxford	<a href="https://www.ssho.ox.ac.uk/">https://www.ssho.ox.ac.uk/</a>
Ripon College, Cuddesdon, nr Oxford	<a href="https://www.rcc.ac.uk/">https://www.rcc.ac.uk/</a>
Trinity College, Bristol	<a href="https://www.trinitycollegebristol.ac.uk/">https://www.trinitycollegebristol.ac.uk/</a>

### 3.3 Pastoral support during IME1

Your primary pastoral support whilst you are in IME1 comes from your course or college via your personal tutor. The courses and colleges are very good at consulting with me and informing me of any significant changes, but it is always good to hear from you. I usually visit all the colleges and course where we have ordinands in the early spring and can catch up with you then. We also invite you to an Ordinands Fellowship Day in July (8<sup>th</sup> July 2023) when we bring you up to date with developments in the diocese and hear how you are getting on.

### 3.4 Funding IME1 training and formation

There are 2 elements to IME1 funding; Tuition and Family Support.

## Tuition

The good news is that tuition is paid for all ordinands. This includes **travel costs** for those following a part-time or Mixed Mode course plus a small **book grant**.

The national church has set out funding age bands which dictate the size of the block grant the diocese will receive to pay for the tuition costs of all its ordinands. The Diocese of Bath and Wells is guided by these funding bands, but not constrained by them, so that we may occasionally suggest higher cost pathways when we consider this to be in the best long-term interests of the Church.

## Family Support

Family Support is the grant made to those who are following a full-time training pathway. It is intended to enable people to follow such a pathway, but it does assume a return to somewhat spartan student style living. It is means tested and it is expected that your partner will also contribute to the household costs through their employment or through claiming any relevant state benefits.

Where there are dependent pre-school children, extra Family Support may be given.

Sue Anderson is our Ordinand Support Grant Officer. She will talk you through the complicated national formula through which the amount of family support your particular family will receive is calculated. In these straightened financial times Family Support is not available for ordinands who will be over 50 at the point of ordination.

## 4 Curacy or Initial Ministerial Education Phase 2 (IME2)

After college or your time on a course you will need to start a curacy. All ordinands are required to Serve their Title (do a curacy) to complete their training. In Bath and Wells curacies are normally 3 years and 7 months long (an odd period we know but it means no-one should finish at Christmas). Most curates are 'signed off' in the January 18 months after their ordination as priests, giving them a year's grace in which to find their first post.

### 4.1 The matching process

In February each year we ask those who will finish their IME1 training 18 months later, for their thoughts about where they believe God may be leading them for their curacy. These thoughts are collated and taken to the curate placing meetings.

We expect to enable all our self-supporting and locally deployed ordinands to have a curacy in the diocese. Locally deployed candidates will normally serve their Titles in their sending benefice. Self-supporting ordinands will be encouraged to spread their wings in a nearby context that will extend their experience and learning.

For supported/stipendiary ordinands Bath and Wells has the first call on their subsequent deployment, however in recent years we have become an exporting diocese. This means we have put forward more candidates for ordination than we have paid curacy places to offer.

Most years in God's good provenance this is balanced by those who want to look elsewhere for a variety of reasons but occasionally we are in the situation of having to tell candidates we love and care for that they will either need to become self-supporting to remain in the diocese or look elsewhere for their curacy.

## 4.2 The Curate Placing Group

At the Curate placing Group meetings the bishops, archdeacons, the Ministry Training Team Leader and Vocations Team Leader come together to decide who we will invite to be training incumbents for the following year. Our choice is shaped by the priorities and needs of the diocese as well as the particular gifts and callings of our ordinands. Those so identified are asked to produce a benefice profile and come to a meeting to help our discernment of the best matches.

## 4.3 Differing approaches

Locally deployed ordinands obviously already know that they are going to serve their title in their sending benefice.

We expect to offer all our self-supporting ordinands curacies which will extend their experience but are within a reasonable distance of their homes.

Looking ahead we anticipate having 7 supported (stipendiary) curacies to offer each year. Again we are looking to find contexts that will extend each individuals experience and knowledge and prepare them to take on their first incumbency – we are not trying to train them to be curates!

## 4.4 Matching

Once we have identified the possible matches, I send the potential curate the relevant benefice profile and the potential TI the curate's CV and college reports. If having read these they both think there are possibilities, they meet and explore what is involved until they either agree this is the place God has prepared for them or that it is not. If it is, there is a formal process of offering and accepting the Title post. If it's not right, then we have to look again at what else might be a

better match.

Once the formal letters have been exchanged the curacy has been agreed and the decision is considered binding, except in exceptional circumstances. We will send you dates for your ordination and the dates for the IME2 programme. I will also continue to work with the Properties team to identify suitable houses for the supported (stipendiary) curates.

## 5 Ordinations and Licensing

Diaconal ordinations in Bath and Wells take place at Wells Cathedral on one of the weekends closest to Peter-tide (29<sup>th</sup> June). It is preceded by the ordination retreat which begins with a family lunch at the Bishop's Palace and a rehearsal at the cathedral. The retreat is a time set apart for you by the bishops. It is intended to give opportunities for encounter with God and fellowship with your fellow ordinands. It will include silence and conversation. The bishops will have chosen a retreat director who will enable you to think more deeply about aspects of your vocation and ministry. Towards the end of the retreat the bishops will come and deliver their Charge – this combines advice and instruction from them for your future ministry and it is a requirement that you attend the Charge before you are ordained.

The actual service is a major diocesan occasion with the cathedral full of supporters and well-wishers, many of whom will have shared your journey and supported you on it. At the service your vocation will be affirmed and endorsed by the wider church. It combines momentous liturgy with symbolic actions. For most people it is a hugely significant moment that will live with them for the rest of their ministry.

The ordination service also marks the moment when you move from the Vocations Team into the care of the Ministry Training Team and so concludes our role in your life – and this guide!

Please check the web-site for the most up to date version

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