



## **Sabbatical and Study Leave**

The opportunity for a sabbatical is offered to all licensed ministers (lay and ordained, stipendiary and self-supporting) who are office holders, every ten years as a sustained period away from normal duties for professional development and personal enrichment. Shorter periods of study leave may be granted more often at the discretion of the area bishop. A **sabbatical** has three elements:

### **Renewal**

This is the element of personal and/or professional development, which will normally take the greatest part of your three months. It will involve some element of learning probably involving study and theological reflection. It should be designed to widen horizons or deepen thinking in a particular area, rather than simply revisiting familiar territory. It is also worth thinking carefully about the way this period of learning may not only contribute to your own ministry but also the wider mission of God in the church and society now and in the future. For this reason, it should be carefully planned beforehand.

### **Retreat**

The sabbatical should include some time set aside for you and your relationship with God. For many this will mean going on an organised retreat. This means retreating from church, work, family, and responsibility to refresh your own personal spiritual life in a way which is best for you. It is wise to discuss this element with your spiritual director.

### **Rest**

A sabbatical is not intended as a holiday, but the biblical pattern of Sabbath does include rest as a vital part of life. It is, therefore, appropriate and necessary that the three months includes some time of rest and refreshment. It is particularly wise to include a few days at the beginning of your time to adjust to a change of pace and prepare yourself to get the best from your sabbatical. You do not lose your entitlement to any of annual leave if you take a sabbatical. However, if you plan to add part of your annual holiday on to the sabbatical period, this should be carefully planned in consultation with colleagues.

It can be tempting to see the sabbatical as a time to 'put right' life's stresses and strains. However, we do not believe that this gift of time away from regular ministry should be used for dealing with issues such as serious family or personal problems or when you have been diagnosed with stress or other significant illness. If this is the case, then there are other possible responses, which you should explore with your Archdeacon or Area Bishop.

**Study Leave** covers shorter periods of leave granted to enable you to undertake or complete a focussed project with a specific outcome. This might include a period of study for a research degree or when a thesis or book/publication is being written up. It is possible that it could also be used for the completion of course work on a taught degree that would involve setting aside regular short times of study.

Permission for study leave is granted by the Area Bishop rather than by the sabbatical committee, although the archdeaconry advisers are available to provide advice about whether a particular project is better suited to sabbatical or study leave, and the bishops may wish the committee to advise them, especially if study leave is to be combined with a sabbatical. If you are thinking of study leave rather than a sabbatical, you should apply to your Area Bishop in the first instance.

## Eligibility for a Sabbatical

You may apply for a sabbatical if:

- you are a licensed minister (lay or ordained, stipendiary or self-supporting) and also an office holder; or a bishop or bishop's chaplain.
- you have fulfilled at least 10 years of service (not necessarily in the Diocese of Oxford).
- you have served at least 2 years in your current post.
- and it has been at least 10 years since your last sabbatical.

Clergy and lay ministers employed by agencies other than the diocese should agree sabbatical leave with their employer. Any funding for the sabbatical should be sought from the employer in the first instance, but the diocese may offer a grant providing the appropriate adviser has been fully consulted. The same applies to clergy and licensed lay ministers employed by churches (e.g., clergy employed by a PCC rather than the diocese). Any application made by clergy and lay ministers in these categories should provide a copy of their request for sabbatical funding from their employer and a copy of the response of the employer.

You must follow the application process even if you do not intend to request diocesan funding towards the sabbatical, as you still require the Bishop's permission to be absent from your office. Team vicars, associate ministers, and LLMs applying for a sabbatical will all need to have the agreement of their incumbent or team rector.

You may not take a Sabbatical

- within the first 2 years of a new appointment.
- during the 1st year of the training of a curate serving a title for whom you have responsibility and only in year 2 if appropriate local oversight and supervision has been negotiated and agreed with the Diocesan IME Officer.
- during the 1st year after the licensing of a Licensed Lay Minister for whom you have responsibility unless appropriate local oversight and supervision has been negotiated and agreed with the Diocesan LLM Adviser.

- in order to look for a new post.

**Please note:** *Requests for sabbaticals in the last year before retirement are to be made to the Bishop of Oxford as well as the Sabbaticals Advisory Committee and will only be approved in exceptional circumstances where there is a clear rationale. Please discuss this with your sabbatical adviser.*

## Planning Your Sabbatical

Given that this gift of time away from parish ministry is only available every 10 years, we do not wish to be too prescriptive and so offer a flexibility of approach to this process, which is fundamentally one of discernment. Each archdeaconry has appointed an adviser to work with applicants in this discernment process and it is essential that you consult your adviser at an early stage, but after you have received support from your area bishop and area dean for both the sabbatical and the proposed dates of the sabbatical (*see Appendix B for fuller details of the role of the archdeaconry sabbaticals adviser*).

You will also need to plan your sabbatical in good time, both to ensure that the learning project is appropriate and realisable; and that there is sufficient cover for absence.

**Sabbatical Aims** - It is important to establish a realistic aim. This should be modest and achievable, giving time for rest, renewal, and retreat. If you plan something too ambitious, you may not be able to achieve all you wish, leaving you feeling frustrated on your return to regular ministry.

**Cost** - When planning the outline of the sabbatical, it is important for all costs to be considered and sources of funding identified. The diocese has limited funds that it offers in the form of small grants - currently up to a maximum of £500. You need to allow enough time for the submission of applications, given that many trusts are small and only meet occasionally. You will need to include an accurate breakdown of costs in your application.

**Cover** - The timing of the sabbatical should be agreed with your incumbent (if you are an associate minister or LLM), team rector (if you are a team vicar) or the area dean (if you are an incumbent or team vicar). You must also discuss the best timing and provision for cover with the sabbatical adviser, but it is important to obtain local consent for the dates you eventually decide upon. This is to ensure continuity of ministry and avoid putting colleagues in the deanery under unreasonable pressure if a number of ministers are away at the same time. This will be particularly important in those deaneries where resources available to cover your day-to-day ministry may be stretched. You ought to consider all aspects of your ministry when arranging cover, particularly: Sunday and mid-week services, pastoral offices, charring the PCC, and ministry within the wider community. Shortage of adequate cover may mean that you will need to re-negotiate the timing of the sabbatical.

It is also vital that you communicate with your churchwardens as soon as possible about your intention to take a sabbatical.

Arrangements for sabbatical cover need to be clearly communicated with the following:

- Churchwardens and PCC/DCC
- Incumbent (if you are an associate minister or LLM)
- Team Rector (if you are a team vicar)

- Area Dean (if you are an incumbent or team vicar)
- Archdeacon (if you are an incumbent or team vicar).

This way, all can be assured that provision is in place to cover your day-to-day ministry. Please inform the Area Dean and Archdeacon of these arrangements and who should be contacted in an emergency prior to your sabbatical.

Where the **spouse** of the person planning a sabbatical is an ordained or a licensed lay minister working in the same parish, it is usually advisable for the spouse to step back from day-to-day involvement with ministry. In these cases, we recommend that wherever possible, sabbatical leave is taken together as a couple. Where the spouse has not been licensed or ordained long enough to qualify for a sabbatical, it may be possible to relax the guidelines. Please speak to your sabbatical advisor about this at the start of the process.

**Re-entering Ministry** – How one returns to ministry after a lengthy time away is as important as planning the time away. Careful thought needs to be given to the first 2 weeks of your return to avoid immediately over-working and negating all the positive benefits of the sabbatical. You may wish to consider a phased return to full time working.

On your return, it might be valuable to engage a ministry accompanier to enable any desired changes to your ministry or work pattern to be explored and implemented successfully. Details can be found on the Ministry Accompaniment page in the CMD section of the diocesan website.

## Applying for a Sabbatical

**The deadlines for applications to the sabbatical committee are published on the Sabbaticals page in the CMD section of the diocesan website.** It is expected that sabbaticals will be considered by the committee twelve months in advance of the sabbatical being taken. This gives the committee time to consider sabbatical applications fully and provide feedback and further advice if necessary. We appreciate that it may not always be possible to plan so far in advance and some degree of leeway is sometimes allowed, although if your application is late you may need to wait longer than you originally hoped for the sabbatical. (*See Appendix D for the Application Form*).

The flowchart in *Appendix A* details the procedure when applying for a sabbatical as well as those involved in the process.

The process may begin as a result of a ministry development review (MDR), a conversation with an area bishop or on the initiative of the minister. However, before proceeding further, local approval to explore the possibility of a sabbatical must be sought from your incumbent (if applicable) and from the area dean.

A limited number of grants are available from the diocese. Those eligible for consideration are:

- stipendiary ministers
- associate ministers who are giving at least 50% of their time (i.e. 3 days) to parish/benefice ministry

- house for duty ministers
- bishops and bishop's chaplains.

Please note that 'eligible for consideration' is not to be construed as 'entitled'. The maximum available grant will not exceed £500. You will also be entitled to apply as normal for your CMD grant in the year that the sabbatical is **taken but it must be used for CMD resources or activities apart from your sabbatical activities**. When considering the level of sabbatical grant to be awarded, the Committee will not take into consideration any costs relating to a holiday.

In many cases, additional sources of funding will be needed to support proposals, which is another reason for early planning. Patrons (in some cases), charitable trusts and occasionally the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group can provide funds. *Please see Appendix C for suggestions on possible sources of funding.*

## After your Sabbatical

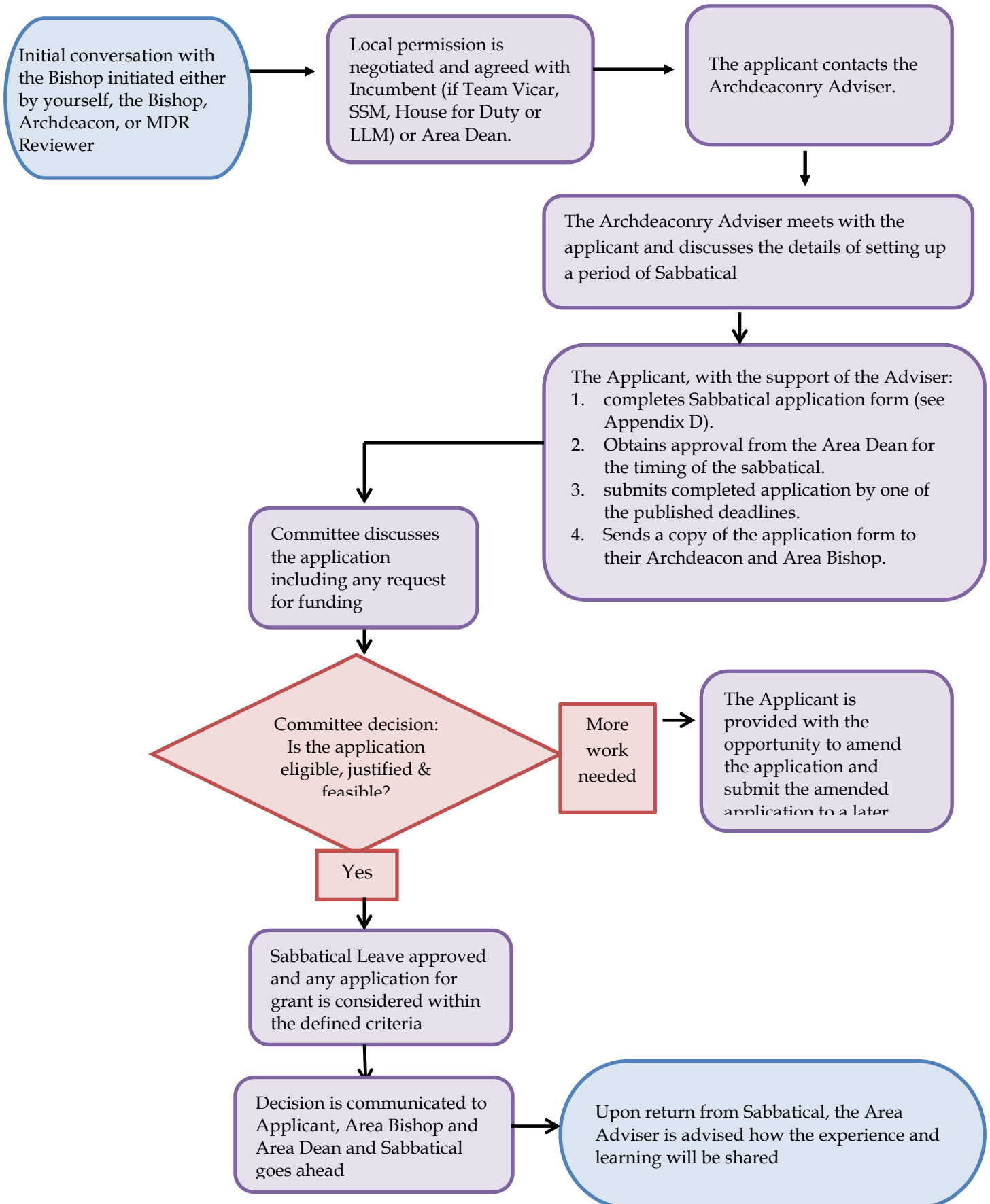
As well as sharing your experience with people in your benefice / parish, we hope the key learning and experience of your sabbatical will be something which you will also want to share with the wider church. We therefore encourage you to think how this might happen and some possibilities are:

- Sharing with your Deanery Chapter and/or Deanery Synod
- Meeting with your archdeaconry adviser for a 'debrief'
- Requesting a meeting with your Area Bishop or Archdeacon.

You are asked to complete a feedback form approximately 6 months after you return to parish ministry. This will be shared with the sabbatical committee, including your area adviser, your Area Bishop and Archdeacon (see Appendix E).

**APPENDIX A**

**Process of Applying for a Sabbatical Flowchart**



## Appendix B Archdeaconry Advisers

After being given initial approval for taking a sabbatical from your area bishop and area dean, you meet with the Archdeaconry Adviser. The role of the Archdeaconry Adviser is to support the individual in discerning how best to use the period available by:

- Meeting with the individual as early as possible in the planning process
- Being a critical friend offering feedback on proposals
- Representing the applicant on the Diocesan Committee
- Be available, if appropriate, for a debrief meeting after the sabbatical

The Archdeaconry Advisers are:

<b>Oxford &amp; Dorchester Archdeaconries:</b>	The Revd Andrew Gregory Tel: 01865 276663 Email: <a href="mailto:andrew.gregory@theology.ox.ac.uk">andrew.gregory@theology.ox.ac.uk</a>
<b>Berkshire Archdeaconry:</b>	The Revd Dr Adam Carlill Tel: 01189402202 Email: <a href="mailto:adamcarlill@me.com">adamcarlill@me.com</a>
<b>Buckingham Archdeaconry:</b>	The Revd Deiniol Heywood Tel: 01494 866530 Email: <a href="mailto:rector@htprestwood.org.uk">rector@htprestwood.org.uk</a>
<b>Chair of the Committee:</b>	The Revd Dr Andy Angel Director of Formation for Ministry Church House Oxford Tel: 01865 595244 Mob: 07823 791338 Email: <a href="mailto:andy.angel@oxford.anglican.org">andy.angel@oxford.anglican.org</a>

## APPENDIX C

### Details of Grant Making Trusts for Sabbatical Applications

Depending on your income, you may be eligible for a grant from the **Clergy Support Trust** (previously the Sons and Friends of the Clergy Corporation). Further details can be found at <https://www.clergysupport.org.uk/financial-support-grants>.

**The Ecclesiastical Ministry Bursary Awards** award bursaries for a wide range of extended leave projects and plans supporting their ministerial development. Further details can be found at <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/church/ministry-bursary-awards/>.

**The Bayne Benefaction**, administered through Christ Church, exists to help clergy within the Diocese of Oxford with the costs of study. If your sabbatical includes a recognised course of study, you may be eligible. No more than 50% of the costs can be covered. The application guidance may be found on the Grants page in the CMD section of the diocesan website.

**Culham St Gabriel's** makes grants for excellence in Religious Education. Further details are available at: [www.cstg.org.uk/how-we-help/grants/](http://www.cstg.org.uk/how-we-help/grants/).

**St George's Trust** give grants of up to £350 for clergy sabbaticals. Go to [www.fsje.org.uk/sgeorges.php](http://www.fsje.org.uk/sgeorges.php) to check whether you are eligible.

**St Boniface Trust** makes small grants to enable clergy study. Details can be found here: [Grants | St Boniface Trust | Stevenage, Luton and Bedford](#).

**The Women's Continuing Ministerial Education Trust (WCMET)** exists to further the continuing ministerial education of women in the Church of England and the Scottish Episcopal Church by means of grants to assist their work and professional ministry. It focuses its attention on supporting applications for courses/projects that clearly relate to assisting the minister in their work and professional development. Grants are not *normally* made towards retreats and sabbaticals. However, to find out if you might be eligible and to apply [www.churchofengland.org/more/diocesan-resources/ministry/wcmet](http://www.churchofengland.org/more/diocesan-resources/ministry/wcmet)