

# **THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS OF DEANERY MISSION AND PASTORAL COMMITTEES**

## **Background**

Deaneries have an important role in the diocese of Liverpool. The Diocesan Review in 2001, affirmed by Responding to the Call in 2006, both strongly argued for the primacy of Deaneries in deciding appropriate pastoral and mission strategy, including how and where clergy should be deployed, within each Deanery. Between 2001 and 2006 Deanery Pastoral Committees have been at the forefront of thinking openly and creatively about pastoral re-organisation and the deployment of clergy into the future. This thinking has been derived from and informed the Deanery Mission planning process, a process which must continue as we address the threefold questions:

1. What is the mission of God in our locality (parish/cluster/team/group/deanery)?
2. What ministries are needed to fulfil this mission?
3. What resources are needed to fulfil these ministries?

The role of the Deanery Pastoral Committee needs to consider all aspects of mission planning as well as to look at issues around clergy deployment. In particular, the Deanery Pastoral Committee is expected, as clergy posts become vacant, to take a view as to whether and how these posts should be filled.

The Deanery Pastoral Committee, therefore, needs to hold a number of guiding principles in tension. These include:

- The mission thinking of the Deanery, as expressed in the Deanery Mission Plan.
- The aspirations of individual parishes/teams/clusters.
- The opportunities to explore fresh expressions so as to encourage a genuinely 'mixed economy' of church
- The need to remain faithful to parochial commitments which guarantees a worshipping and witnessing presence in every community in the Deanery and, indeed, in the Diocese.

## **Role of the Deanery Pastoral Committee**

The basic role of a Deanery Pastoral Committee is therefore:

### ***1. To consider the whole mission strategy of the deanery***

- To determine God's Mission within the deanery will need a wider consensus than a small Deanery Pastoral Committee can provide, but the committee should oversee the process of discernment, through consultation and prayer, of what the spiritual priorities might be.

- There should be a realistic assessment of current mission and ministry in the deanery taking into account the balance of existing resources, such as people (including their leadership and skills) and buildings (churches and halls etc.), against the perceived mission and pastoral needs of the whole community. Here it is important to include ecumenical partners as well as representatives from all the Anglican churches in both the assessment of those needs and how far they are being met.
- It is very easy to be creative about everyone else's church. It is equally easy when on the receiving end of someone else's creativity to feel hard done to or that decisions have been made over your head. Therefore it is vital that Deanery Pastoral Committees involve individual churches in thinking about change, especially the changes that directly affect those churches. This can be done by inviting leaders from those churches to Deanery Pastoral Committee meetings or going to meet with the leaders or the PCC. The more engaged in the thinking the more likely people are to go with the proposals.

## ***2. To monitor the development and application of the Deanery Mission Plan***

- Once good information has been obtained, the Deanery Pastoral Committee makes a judgement as to whether new structures or resources are required to meet specific needs or whether there is scope for development of the existing pattern. There may be a need for radical change, or simply to build on what is there by doing certain things differently or better. In all these cases, the mission priorities and proposals would be established by the deanery, and expressed through the Deanery Mission Plan. But subsequently every assistance would be given by diocesan personnel to achieve the necessary stated objectives.
- The Deanery Mission Plan will evolve as people and communities change, so it is essential that the scope and effectiveness of the plan should be kept under constant review.

## ***3. To advise the Diocesan Pastoral Committee on matters of clergy appointments***

- When a post becomes vacant the Deanery Pastoral Committee needs to discuss whether and how this post should be filled, taking on board the guiding principles mentioned above. It needs to communicate this advice to the Diocesan Pastoral Committee which then, in turn, advises the Bishop of Liverpool on appointment matters.
- One of the key issues facing Deanery Pastoral Committees is the ongoing decline in clergy numbers, to the extent that in the Diocese of Liverpool we are likely to have

more stipendiary posts available than stipendiary clergy to fill them. Therefore, Deanery Pastoral Committees must take a realistic and creative view of the future context for mission and ministry in the area and be mindful of this when offering their advice to the Diocesan Pastoral Committee.

#### **4. To maintain close liaison with Deanery Synods and PCCs/DCCs**

- It is important that the Deanery Pastoral Committee does not operate in isolation, but rather connects very strongly to the Deanery Synod and to individual PCCs and DCCs. There is a clear danger for a degree of mistrust on the part of individual parishes that other people are deciding their future on their behalf. It is important that this is mitigated as far as possible by good, clear feedback to Deanery Synods and ensuring that deanery representatives in turn feed this back to their own parishes. That way we get informed and engaged discussions at different levels in the Deanery.

#### **Membership of the Deanery Pastoral Committee**

The Deanery Pastoral Committee is made up of the following members:

- Area Dean
- Lay Chair
- Diocesan Pastoral Committee representatives
- 2 clergy elected from Deanery Synod
- 2 lay members elected from Deanery Synod

The Committee can also co-opt other members if it wishes. When thinking about co-options bear in mind the following:

- (i) The bigger a committee gets the harder it is to make decisions.
- (ii) Some deaneries choose to have representatives from each parish. We certainly recommend that members from any parish being discussed by the Deanery Pastoral Committee should be in attendance for that discussion.
- (iii) Should you bring in an ecumenical voice?
- (iv) Who should chair the committee? There are no rules for this, although the Area Dean or Lay Chair is often the most obvious candidate.

#### **Commitment of members**

The commitment of Deanery Pastoral Committee members is follows:

1. To attend meetings (generally quarterly) to look at current and emerging pastoral reorganisation and clergy deployment issues.
2. When doing that, to take a clear and informed view of the mission task and try to ensure that deployment supports mission planning and thinking.
3. To ensure an appropriate balance between representing individual parish thoughts and interests on the one hand, but not being unduly bound by them on the other. Although Deanery Pastoral Committee members are members of individual churches they are not there just to represent the interest of their church but, rather, to act in the best interests of the Deanery.
4. To be good advocates for deanery mission planning and thinking.
5. To pray about God's mission in the Deanery and see how best we engage in that.

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