

DEANERY LAY CHAIRS – GUIDANCE NOTES

1. Background

- These notes are to offer guidance and encouragement for this important role within the life of Peterborough Diocese. The amount of time and expertise that different Lay Chairs can offer will vary greatly. Also how they work with their Rural / Area Deans will differ. It is important that Lay Chairs remember that they represent the laity of their deanery within a diocese which is seeking to grow.

2. Introduction

- Lay Chairs bring with them enormous expertise, wisdom, and knowledge about local parishes in their deanery.
- Lay Chairs are officers of their Deanery Synod, elected on a triennial cycle by the House of Laity from among its members. They are representatives of and key spokespersons for the laity of the deanery. With the Rural Dean, they have an important leadership role to help further mission and ministry in the deanery and to engage with the diocese and the wider church.
- The Lay Chairs should conduct their leadership role prayerfully and carefully, being mindful of the guidance of the Bishop.
- The relationship between the Deanery Lay Chair and the Rural Dean is crucial to the successful leadership of a deanery.

2. Normal duties

- The Lay Chair will act as joint chair of the Deanery Synod with the Rural Dean and together ensure the smooth running of the Synod.
- With the Rural Dean, the Lay Chair will call meetings of the Deanery Synod, and determine the date, place, and agenda of such meetings with the Deanery Standing Committee.
- The Lay Chair is an ex-officio a member of the committees of the Deanery Synod and will be the co-chair, with the Rural Dean, of the Standing Committee and the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee.
- The Lay Chair together with the Rural Dean is a member of the appropriate Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral committee.
- The Lay Chair has a role to play in the Archdeacon's annual Admission Service for Churchwardens.
- The Lay Chair should bring to the attention of the Rural Dean, Archdeacon or Bishop any pastoral or other concerns they have in relation to their deanery.

3. The following suggestions are intended as guidance to illustrate the range of activities that a Lay Chair may use to develop their role within their deanery:

- Lay Chairs may be asked to give their views to the Bishop on a vacancy when it is requested.
- Lay Chairs are interested parties in the process of considering suspension of presentation and deanery pastoral reorganisation.
- Lay Chairs may be part of the interview process, as appropriate, for new appointments.
- Lay Chairs should attend meetings with the Bishop and Archdeacon as and when invited.
- Lay Chairs should attend institutions and licensings, and welcome new clergy on behalf of the deanery.
- Lay Chairs may encourage people to fully engage in the synodical structure of government.
- Lay Chairs may be involved in parish visitations.
- Some Lay Chairs take the opportunity to occasionally visit other parishes for Sunday worship in order to familiarise themselves with the congregations of the deanery.
- Lay Chairs can be lay representatives of the deanery at ecumenical and other events.
- If the deanery has a deanery service after the election of its officers, it is good practice for the Lay Chair and other officers to be commissioned as part of the worship.
- It is considered to be good practice that Lay Chairs with other lay officers (Secretary/Treasurer) should review their position after two terms. Lay Chairs should be actively involved in succession planning and handover to assist smooth running of the Deanery.

September 2015