



## A. THE LAY CHAIR

### 1. SELECTION

The Lay Chair is elected every three years, by and from the elected members of the House of Laity of the Deanery; qualifications: Anything which is enabling for the tasks below:

### 2. OVERALL TASK

**The joint chairing of Deanery Synod, with the Rural/Area Dean.**

In this role to provide leadership, direction, imagination and encouragement for the whole work of the Deanery, and to be a channel of two-way communication between the Deanery Standing Committee, the members of the Deanery, the parishes, the Diocesan Synod and the central authorities of the Diocese.

### 3. SPECIFIC TASKS

a) Lay Chairs will be more effective if they also participate in Church affairs at diocesan and even provincial and national level; but this is by no means essential. A key part of the Lay Chair's task is to study Reports from these levels - e.g. of Diocesan Synod and of Diocesan Boards and Working Groups – and make sure they are communicated to the Deanery.

b) Regular, frequent and close consultation between the Rural/Area Dean and the Lay Chair will thus be essential. This is a vital element in the running of the Deanery.

c) The Lay Chair is expected to meet the Bishop regularly each year, usually with the other Deanery Lay Chairs, often with all the Rural/Area Deans, but occasionally simply with his/her own Rural/Area Dean.

d) Increasingly the Lay Chair is expected to visit churches and/or attend meetings in various parishes.

e) A growing knowledge of the parishes in the Deanery is necessary so that the Lay Chair is better able to undertake the developing task of providing advice and guidance for pastoral re-organisation, staffing and recommendations for the future of vacant parishes. In fact, this is becoming one of the most important tasks of the Lay Chair, as Deaneries are increasingly taking on a pivotal role in the organisation of the Diocese.

### 4. SKILLS AND TRAINING

a) Lay Chairs will benefit from having some knowledge or experience of the organisation and government of the Church of England, possibly through previous service as a Churchwarden, or as a member of the Deanery Synod or one of its Committees.

b) Given the sensitive roles sometimes exercised by the Deaneries, a valuable skill will be that of handling conflict.

c) For both a) and b) training should be available for Lay Chairs, through diocesan resources.

## B. THE TWO SECRETARIES

### 1. SELECTION

Two Deanery Synod Secretaries are elected every three years: One by the House of Clergy (sometimes he or she is also the Chapter Clerk, but need not be); one by the House of Laity. One of them then functions as "assistant secretary".

### 2. OVERALL TASK

To share with the co-chairs the leading of the Synod's work, especially by providing information and documents.

### 3. SPECIFIC TASKS

a) To keep Minutes of meetings (or have someone else do it).

b) To keep an up-to-date list of members.

c) To provide information required by the diocese, especially for elections to the Diocesan and General Synods (thus a synod secretary will sometimes be the returning officer for elections). To process motions from and to the Diocesan Synod.

d) To circulate Agenda and papers at the correct time before meetings.

### 4. SKILLS AND TRAINING

A good secretary will be well-versed in legal and procedural rules, and ready to prompt the meeting (or chair). He or she is able to provide an efficient service for meetings and committees and be continually aware of ways to ensure that meetings run smoothly and enjoyably. Often this is done quietly and behind the scenes. The best secretaries are never noticed, until they're gone!

Basic computer and e-mail skills are almost essential. It should not be assumed, however, that the secretaries of the Synod will also take on the wider responsibilities that really belong to a Deanery Administrator in a Deanery office.

## C. THE TREASURER

### 1. SELECTION

The Deanery Treasurer is elected by the Deanery Synod every three years. He or she is not necessarily a member of the Synod, but is often a member of the House of Laity.

### 2. OVERALL TASK

To keep the Synod's accounts

### 3. SPECIFIC TASKS

a) To collect agreed contributions from parishes, etc.

b) To pay agreed expenses, including dealing with any deanery property and staff. See separate briefing on 'the Deanery as an Employer'.

## 4. SKILLS AND TRAINING

It is helpful if the Treasurer can be known and trusted by parish treasurers. In practice, an existing parish treasurer is often the right person to take on the deanery role.

## 5. QUOTA / PARISH SHARE / DIOCESAN APPORTIONMENT

Some deaneries have responsibility for allocating and/or collecting payment of the Parish Share to the Diocese. It should not be assumed that the Deanery is the right person to manage this as it will usually involve the convening and chairing of meetings of parish treasurers and maybe others.

Any further devolution of power to deaneries is likely to increase the need for a more sophisticated management structure.

### NOTE:

*Some deaneries have started a system whereby elections of synod officers are postponed for a year after a new synod is elected. Existing post-holders remain in post for the first year. This allows the new Synod members time to get to know potential candidates before the election is due.*

**In contrast to these elected officers, the clerical Chair of the Deanery Synod is appointed - and consequently cannot easily be removed!**

## D. DEAN (RURAL / TOWN / BOROUGH / AREA)

### 1. SELECTION

Appointed by the bishop, probably after some consultation with deanery clergy and the lay chair (at least). Sometimes the bishop will conduct a "secret ballot" of clergy. Employed by the diocese, usually paid an additional salary. Normally appointed for a 5 year term, with the possibility of re-appointment. Often admitted to office in a public ceremony, perhaps at a meeting of Deanery Synod. Legally, the Rural/Area Dean is the officer of the Bishop, and may be removed from office by the Bishop at any time.

### 2. OVERALL TASK

To be the leader of the clergy, chairing the Chapter, and joint chair of Synod.

To provide pastoral care, initiative, support, and ideas for the deanery. This kind of leadership is not susceptible to clear description, because the management of 'professionals' is never a simple matter. See separate briefings on 'the Role of the Rural/Area Dean'.

### 3. SPECIFIC TASKS

a) Canon C23 'of Rural Deans' sets out what the Rural/Area Dean is legally supposed to do. Most deans treat the resulting list of tasks with a mixture of scepticism and amusement. Thankfully, nowadays communications are somewhat better than they used to be when such definitions were drawn up.

**Note:** For the text of Canon C23 visit [www.churchofengland.org/media/35580/ministers.pdf](http://www.churchofengland.org/media/35580/ministers.pdf)

b) To meet regularly with the bishop. Usually meetings of Rural/Area deans will be two or more times a year, often with Lay Chairs.

e) To meet the Archdeacon at his annual visitation, and often to arrange it. To deputise for the Archdeacon, when asked, at visitations, swearing-in of churchwardens, and institutions of clergy in the deanery.

Under the Synodical Government Measure (1969), the Rural/Area Dean receives notice of appeal against the allowance or disallowance of enrolment on the Electoral Roll, or of a vote, or against the result of any election at parochial or deanery level.

d) To support churchwardens during a vacancy (as the sequestrators), maintaining the worship and work of a parish, supervising the arrangements for an institution and taking part in it.

e) To lead (and often to chair) deanery pastoral (or other) committees, providing recommendations for the future of any parish or ministry within the deanery.

f) To visit parishes, inspect churches and vicarages and to check inventories and terriers etc.

## 4. SKILLS AND TRAINING

a) Most people require some training (increasingly provided through CME in the diocese or region).

b) The Rural/Area Dean is leader by consent, so skills of handling people and of handling conflict are needed. Could do well to be a listener, but not a 'threatener'!

c) The Rural/Area Dean will deal with a great deal of information. Experience in ministry (especially parish ministry) is helpful, but it is more important to know where to find information and how to encourage others to find it for themselves.

d) The role of Rural/Area Dean is often undertaken by someone already doing a 'big job'. It can take anything from one session a week, to being a full-time job (e.g. in a large deanery, or one with many vacancies).

e) The Rural/Area Dean need not be an incumbent. Since most are, the administration associated with the role is often hidden within that of a large parish. Many deaneries would therefore benefit from the appointment of a Deanery Administrator.

## A FOOTNOTE ON EXPENSES

a) No one should be prevented from taking on the task of Deanery Lay Chair because of any cost involved. Resourcing the officers of a Deanery Synod is part of the total resourcing of the Deanery Synod itself. In fact it should be seen as part of the resourcing of the organisation and government of the Diocese and of the Church of England generally.

b) Expenses covering, for example, stamps, telephone calls and travel costs should always be paid – and accepted. If an individual chooses to regard the work and the expense involved, including the travelling, as part of their contribution to the Church, the expenses received can always be returned privately as an anonymous contribution. **This principle should apply to all office-holders in the Church.**

For more extensive guidance on the roles of Rural/Area Dean and Deanery Lay Chair, Parish and People publishes 'Leading a Deanery' by Peter Croft and Nicolette Fisher ISBN 0 9512432 2 5 – visit [www.parishandpeople.org.uk](http://www.parishandpeople.org.uk)