



**Diocese of Chichester**

**Guidelines for  
Lay Chairs  
of Deanery Synod**

*Updated April 2009*



## **GUIDELINES FOR LAY CHAIRMEN & CHAIRWOMEN OF DEANERY SYNODS**

Lay chairmen (Lay Chairs) are officers of the deanery synod, elected on a triennial cycle by the house of laity of the deanery synod from among its members. They are representatives of, and key spokespersons for, the laity of the deanery. With the rural dean, who is appointed by the Bishop, they lead the synodical *Life Together* of the deanery and need to become aware of the issues that are foremost on the minds of the people of each parish.

For the formal constitution and functions of deanery synods please see Appendix (an extract from the Synodical Government Measure 1969). See further *Recommended Standing Orders and Model Rules for Deanery Synod* available from Church House.

### **Statutory duties**

- 1.1 In accordance with the standing orders laid down by diocesan synod, the lay chair and rural dean jointly chair meetings of the deanery synod. In the absence of either, the other takes the chair.

*In practice this means that they should work together to determine how the responsibilities are shared out. It is probably best if one or other is given the responsibility for management and chairmanship of the whole business of a meeting rather than the chair changing during the meeting depending upon the subject matters. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century Church, laity and clergy should be jointly responsible at deanery level for all matters, pastoral, liturgical and financial, and particular skills of the individuals, rather than office, should perhaps determine who presents individual items. It is helpful if they endeavour to ensure that the time taken in the chair is evenly allocated between them over a period.*

- 1.2 Similarly, the rural dean and lay chair jointly chair meetings of the deanery standing committee, a pastoral committee finance committee and other sub-committees established by deanery synod.
- 1.3 The lay chair convenes and takes the chair of any meeting of the house of laity of the deanery synod.
- 1.4 S/he will be consulted by the bishop for his/her personal view when he is considering the suspension (or renewal of) suspension of the right of presentation to a living within the deanery.
- 1.5 S/he will be consulted under the Pastoral Measure for a personal view when matters of pastoral reorganisation and the future of parish church buildings etc are being formally considered.

### **Other duties**

The lay chair:-

- 2.1 should be invited to all services of institution of incumbents and of licensing of priests-in-charge held in the deanery, representing the lay members of the parishes of the deanery and may be asked to offer a public welcome to the incoming parish priest on behalf of the deanery during the service or at a reception afterwards.

- 2.2 with the rural dean, may be invited by a PCC to attend any PCC meeting held under section 12 of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 during an interregnum in a parish in the deanery.
- 2.3 offers advice to the diocesan Bishop, when he seeks it, in connexion with the appointment of a new rural dean.
- 2.4 acts as the independent returning officer in synodical elections held within the deanery's house of clergy or for posts to which the house has appointment, and to this end ensure that the requirements of the current Church Representation Rules, the Bishop and the diocesan synod, respectively, are followed. (Advice in this connexion is available from the Diocesan Secretary and Registrar)
- 2.5 should endeavour as far as possible to attend, chair or participate in any periodic consultations held by diocesan officers with representatives of deanery synod (eg autumn consultation meetings) to give a lay perspective.
- 2.6 shall ensure that the deanery synod (and where applicable all parishes in the deanery) consider issues formally passed from General Synod or diocesan synods for consideration within the required time limits.

### **Other responsibilities**

The lay chair:-

- 3.1 should meet together regularly with the rural dean - probably at least every two months. Such a meeting might be expected to include prayer, exchange of information, consideration of the life of the deanery and the monitoring of prior agreed objectives.
- 3.2 should provide support to the rural dean in his/her role as rural dean and encouragement in his/her parochial and/or other responsibilities.
- 3.3 should ensure that s/he understands diocesan policies so that s/he can explain them within the deanery. In this connexion the lay chair should ascertain the range of services that are available from diocesan administration at Church House Hove to support parishes in their work.
- 3.4 with the rural dean, will help to formulate deanery policy - planning, generation of ideas and evaluation of action, helping to prepare agenda and determining deanery budgets. S/he should endeavour to make the deanery synod a dynamic body which considers creatively the full range of matters laid down for such bodies in Section 5 Synodical Government Measure 1969 (see appendix).
- 3.5 with the rural dean, should ensure that the parishes of the deanery are addressing the development of deanery operation and that the deanery synod has before it any strategy document or parish revitalisation paper for regular review and that the deanery is forward looking in its approach to the needs and mission of the deanery and its parishes.
- 3.6 shall attend where possible any special events and services held within the deanery as and when invited, and if unable to attend and lay representation from the deanery should be present s/he should appoint a deputy to stand in.

- 3.7 should try to visit parishes within the deanery, other than his/her own, for worship. S/he may, sometimes with the rural dean, visit meetings of PCCs in the deanery with the prior agreement of PCCs and incumbents to hear about local problems and successes.
- 3.8 shall be invited to attend annual meetings called by the Bishop for lay chairs and rural deans (usually during May/June). This is an important opportunity to meet with colleagues and those responsible for the pastoral care of clergy and parishioners.
- 3.9 shall encourage parishes to pay their parish contribution promptly working with the deanery treasurer and any deanery finance committee.
- 3.10 shall encourage potential lay leaders of the future to offer service in the parishes of the deanery and beyond.
- 3.11 shall manage the handover of the office of lay chair, so that a successor is aware of aims, contacts, issues and past actions.

### **Further considerations**

- 4.1 will support the rural dean in ensuring that the clergy chapter plays a full role in the life of the deanery and deanery synod.
- 4.2 may on occasions receive privileged information, as do rural deans, and must treat this in an appropriate manner when taking action based upon it.
- 4.3 with the rural dean, should consider regularly whether an occasional act of worship and an occasional social function held within the deanery would help to foster better understanding between representatives of parishes and a greater collaborative and supportive working.
- 4.4 These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Guidelines for Rural Deans

### **Support**

- 5.1 Diocesan Office in Hove, the area bishop's office, archdeacon and the rural dean shall all provide practical support to the lay chair.
- 5.2 The area bishop and archdeacon should meet with a new lay chair as soon as practical after their election.
- 5.3 It is useful soon after appointment to meet other lay chairs in the archdeaconry to share in their experience and knowledge.
- 5.4 On appointment the Diocesan Secretary will invite the lay chair to Church House Hove to discuss current policies and expected future synodical matters.

### **Expenses**

- 6.1.1 The expenses of office actually incurred in respect of internal deanery business should be reimbursed from deanery synod funds by the deanery treasurer. Other expenses, eg attending diocesan meetings etc should be reimbursed by the appropriate department at Diocesan Church House.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Extract from the Synodical Government Measure 1969**

#### **The functions of a Deanery Synod**

5.- (3) The functions of a deanery synod shall be:

- (a) to consider matters concerning the Church of England and to make provision for such matters in relation to their deanery, and to consider and express their opinion on any other matters of religious or public interest;
- (b) to bring together the views of the parishes of the deanery on common problems, to discuss and formulate common policies on those problems, to foster a sense of community and interdependence among those parishes, and generally to promote in the deanery the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical;
- (c) to make known, and so far as appropriate put into effect any provision made by the diocesan synod;
- (d) to consider the business of the diocesan synod, and particularly any matters referred to that synod by the General Synod, and to sound parochial opinion whenever they are required or consider it appropriate to do so;
- (e) to raise such matters as the deanery synod consider appropriate with the diocesan synod:

Provided that the functions referred to in paragraph (a) hereof shall not include the issue of any statement purporting to declare the doctrine of the Church on any question.

5.- (4) If the diocesan synod delegate to deanery synods functions in relation to the parishes of their deaneries, and in particular the determination of parochial shares in quotas allocated to the deaneries, the deanery synod shall exercise those functions.

In this subsection 'quota' means an amount to be subscribed to the expenditure authorised by diocesan synods.

5.- (5) The General Synod may by Canon or Regulation extend, amend or further define the functions of deanery synods.

7.- (1) The rules contained in Schedule 3 to this Measure, which may be cited as the Church Representation Rules, shall have effect for the purpose of providing for the constitution and proceedings of diocesan and deanery synods and making further provision for the synodical government of the Church, including the matters hitherto provided for by the Rules for the Representation of the Laity:

Provided that that the said rules may at any time be amended by a resolution of the General Synod passed by a majority in each House of not less than two-thirds of those present and voting.



