

 THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

 DIOCESE OF  
**Bath & Wells**

Living the story. Telling the story.



## Handbook for Reader Ministry

## ***Preface from The Bishop of Bath and Wells***

In the nineteenth century Reader ministry was re-introduced to the Church of England in a manner that is similar to what is referred to as 'pioneer ministry' in our own day. It is significant that the revival of Reader ministry was on Ascension Day 1866. Ascension is when we focus our thought on the risen and ascended Jesus and where we recall the varieties of ministries which the ascended Lord has given to his Church. In Ephesians Chapter 4 we read of Christ's glory and majesty filling heaven and earth and of his grace and Spirit being poured out upon the Church. 'It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service...'

The vocation of the licensed Reader sits within this broad and exciting picture of ministry and is unique in character. 'The ministry of Readers is the only lay ministry in the Church of England which is voluntary, nationally accredited, episcopally licensed and governed by Canon<sup>1</sup>'. Readers are a wonderful and powerful force both within and outside of the Church. At one time Readers were referred to as 'The Bridge between Church and World.' Being lay members of the community Readers often have the feel of their communities in a way that is unique. I have had the privilege of being Warden of Readers in two dioceses and I have rejoiced and marvelled at all that Readers contribute to the work of building the Kingdom. Proclaiming the gospel afresh to each generation remains a particular requirement of all in Christian ministry, but it is something to which Readers commit themselves in the declaration of assent. Keeping ourselves fresh, alive and excited by the gospel is critical if we are to have a ministry which brings life and hope and joy to others.

And as Paul reminds us in that passage from Ephesians, the aim of ministry is 'to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ'. That is a high calling and a big task and is something we always need to keep before us.

This 'Handbook for Reader Ministry' is for all Readers. It offers important guidance those who have been Readers for many years, but will be of interest to those who are considering Reader Ministry. We need to keep abreast of the various different aspects of Reader life from candidature through to licensing; and from shared responsibility in good practice, to the role of the National Reader Council and the Central Structures of the Church.

Reader Ministry is under the Wardenship of the Venerable Simon Hill, Archdeacon of Taunton, and in this he is ably assisted by Archdeaconry and Deanery Wardens. No Reader should be without the required support and nurture they need to develop their ministry, and it is my hope that this valuable handbook will be studied with interest and enthusiasm.

Bless you for all that you do in Christ's name.

**+Peter Bath and Wells**

---

<sup>1</sup> Rhoda Hiscox, *Celebrating Reader Ministry*, Mowbray, 1991.

# DIOCESE OF BATH AND WELLS

## HANDBOOK FOR READER MINISTRY

It is in the nature of publications such as this that they need to be updated from time to time. If you notice something that needs amending, please contact the Secretary of the Readers' Council or the Diocesan Warden of Readers, whose contact details are in the appendix.

### CONTENTS

#### **1 Introduction**

#### **2 The nature of Reader ministry**

#### **3 Selection**

- 3.1 Hearing a call
- 3.2 General qualities of a potential reader
- 3.3 Discerning your vocation
- 3.4 Possible next steps
- 3.5 The selection conference
- 3.6 Procedure following the selection conference

#### **4 Becoming a Reader**

- 4.1 Introduction to the process
- 4.2 Theological studies
- 4.3 The Formation Years
- 4.4 Admission and Licensing
- 4.5 What do Readers wear?

#### **5 In service – good practice and practicalities**

- 5.1 The Annual Readers Service.
- 5.2 Annual Review and Return
- 5.3 Communication and Working Together
- 5.4 Conflict management
- 5.5 Continuing Ministerial Development
- 5.6 Safeguarding
- 5.7 During a vacancy
- 5.8 Expenses - working costs
- 5.9 Funeral ministry
- 5.10 Ministry specification
- 5.11 Placements
- 5.12 Reader Peer Review
- 5.13 Spiritual Direction / Soul Friend / Reader Fellowship Meetings
- 5.14 Worshipping together

## **6 Working outside the benefice**

- 6.1 Occasional services in another benefice
- 6.2 Local Ministry Groups [LMGs]
- 6.3 Secondment and regular commitments outside the benefice

## **7 Licences, PTO, and associated matters**

- 7.1 Checking your licence or PTO
- 7.2 Renewing your licence or PTO
- 7.3 Transferring from another diocese or from another benefice in the diocese
- 7.4 *there is no section 7.4*
- 7.5 On reaching the the age of 70 years
- 7.6 Becoming a Reader Emeritus
- 7.7 How to resign your Licence or Permission to Officiate

## **8 The Role of Diocesan, Archdeaconry and Deanery Wardens**

- 8.1 Ministry Specification of the Diocesan Warden of Readers
- 8.2 Ministry Specification of the Archdeaconry Wardens
- 8.3 Ministry Specification for a Deanery Warden

## **9 The Readers' Council**

- 9.1 Role
- 9.2 Membership of the Council
- 9.3 Structure of the Council

## **Appendices**

- A. Flow chart for the selection of potential Readers for training.
- B. Flow charts for renewing a licence or raising a new licence.
- C. Flow charts for PTO (Permission to Officiate).
- D. *There is no appendix D*
- E. Flow chart for Readers transferring from another diocese or to another benefice within the diocese.
- F. Flow chart for application for Reader Emeritus status.
- G. Ministry specification for Readers.
- H. Sample expenses claim forms.
- I. Constitution of Readers' Council.
- J. Current post-holders.
- K. Further reading.

## 1 Introduction

*revised September 2015*

The purpose of this Handbook is to bring together the information Readers, Clergy and benefices need about Reader ministry in the Diocese of Bath and Wells. The sections have been arranged chronologically from the moment a person feels called by God to become a Reader, through the process of selection, training and licensing to the practicalities of ministry including ongoing training, ministry review, and expenses. Details of processes, including flow charts, are given as appendices for easy reference.

## 2 The nature of Reader ministry

*revised September 2015*

The Office of Reader is one of the oldest ministries in the Church, but in its present form in the Church of England dates from 1866. Since then, the growth in Reader Ministry has been one of the great success stories of the Church of England and there are now over 10,000 Readers nationally. It is the only lay ministry in the Church of England which is voluntary, nationally accredited, episcopally licensed and governed by Canon. Readers work with the Incumbent and other members of the parish/benefice team within the terms of the licence they are given. They are accountable for the work they do to their Incumbent, their parish or benefice and the Bishop, and ultimately of course to God.

Readers are men and women, from a wide diversity of backgrounds and occupations, who recognise a call to serve God and his people through the Church of England. They are theologically trained and work in a variety of roles and situations across the Church, being authorised by the Bishop to lead worship, preach and teach. To this they bring their own unique and invaluable experiences, drawing on them in the light of biblical understanding to enrich their ministry. Yet there are many other ways in which Readers minister to God's people. Their presence, witness and listening in their places of work, at home, among their neighbours and in their local communities all provide vital links between the Church and the world. As a result Readers exercise a crucial ministry in witnessing to the unchanging love of God in a changing world.

In this Diocese we sum it up by stating a Reader is:

**'A trained lay theologian who holds a Bishop's licence to lead worship and preach in the pastoral context of the Church and who is a messenger of the Word of God to the world.'**

This definition is only the base line. It needs to be understood and expanded in the context of the work that a Reader does. This could include work in schools, prisons, hospitals, hospices, factories and shops, among seafarers or the Armed Forces, within the benefice with children and young people, the elderly, housebound and bereaved, those preparing for baptism, confirmation and marriage. No Reader undertakes all these tasks, but they give a flavour of the many ways in which Reader ministry can and may be expressed.

Increasingly all Christians are being called upon to take their share of responsibility for the life and witness of the Church and to use their gifts in parish/benefice life. Within this, however, particular ministries are recognised and it is to clergy and Readers that the Church gives authority to preach the Word of God. Training for Reader ministry therefore is essential to ensure high standards in this as well as to prepare them for the challenges that may lie ahead.

Reader ministry makes many demands on the person in terms of commitment and service, as well as testing their spiritual maturity, but, Readership should never be a burden. There are many places within this ministry for joy and laughter. It is vital for Readers to have a balanced approach to their life and ministry so that they may, through their witness, give glory to God.

### **3 Selection**

*revised December 2017*

#### **3.1 Hearing a call**

The call to become a Reader may be felt by an individual or come about as the result of a suggestion by their Incumbent, a member of the congregation where they worship, or someone who does not even attend church but recognises certain qualities in the individual which suggest they are being called by God to serve Him in the Church through this ministry.

There is no single profile for a Reader in terms of sex, age, educational background or employment; however those thinking God is calling them to Reader ministry need to consider these questions:

- Do you think God is calling you to serve him more fully in ministry?
- Are you being called to the teaching and preaching ministry of a Reader?
- How do you currently witness to Christ in your daily life? Do you pray and study the bible daily? Are you a regular communicant?
- Have you talked over the possibility of Reader ministry with your spouse and family? How do they feel about your sense of vocation?

If Reader ministry seems the right course the next step for the potential Reader is to talk this over with their Incumbent. This conversation will cover a number of areas:

- some reflection on the conclusions you have drawn from your answers to the questions above
- practical things regarding how and where you will serve as a Reader. Are there commitments in the parish or benefice and elsewhere which you would have to give up in order to train and to be able to exercise a Reader ministry?
- consideration of the following questions: Is your Incumbent willing to support your selection? Is your Incumbent willing to ask the PCC to agree to your nomination as a candidate?

In considering the above the following may be helpful.

#### **3.2 General qualities of a potential reader**

A potential Reader must be able to exhibit a maturity of Christian commitment and be able to show evidence of a sense of call from God to this work.

A potential Reader should fulfil most of the following:

- be a communicant member and regular worshipper in the Church of England, and a committed member of their local church
- be a person who has a well rounded spirituality based on a regular prayer life informed by the reading/study of scripture and other Christian literature

- have a real heart for sharing the Gospel. [Although many people feel daunted by the prospect of preaching and teaching it is necessary to realise that this is the core function of Readership so the 'heart' for this should be there]
- be a person who is a good communicator. Someone who is able to reflect their faith to their daily life outside of the Church in an integrated way
- be a wise and mature Christian able to function as part of a team
- be a person who has proved their worth in other areas of the Church's life and ministry
- someone who will be able to keep up with a fairly demanding training and be open to continued learning once licensed through various forms of continuing ministerial education
- be a person who is known and trusted by the Incumbent and congregation in general
- be somebody who has something very important to contribute within the life, worship and leadership of the Church

### **3.3 Discerning your vocation**

Discerning your vocation can be a long process and it is important that the decision reached is right from everyone's perspective. At the start of the process you will be listening carefully to what God may be asking you to do. Pray about what you are hearing and feeling. Have conversations with family, trusted friends and your Incumbent and listen to what they say. Often other people perceive a person's call to ministry more clearly than the person themselves.

If it seems right to continue the exploration, ask your Incumbent to refer you either to your Archdeaconry Warden of Readers [addresses in Appendix J] or to a Vocations Chaplain. He or she will offer you time and space to explore things further, to see what feels right and comfortable. You may also approach your Archdeaconry Warden of Readers yourself for an informal talk.

You may then be invited to a formal interview with you Archdeaconry Warden to consider your vocation in light of the selection guidelines for Reader Ministry from the Archbishops' Council - Ministry Division. Your Archdeaconry Warden may wish to have further conversations with you and will also take up your references and check that you have the full support of your parish priest and PCC. After due consideration of your application and if your Archdeaconry Warden is happy for you to proceed, you will be referred to the Selection Conference Secretary. The selection process to be followed is given in full as a flow chart in Appendix A.

### **3.4 Possible next steps**

- Suggestion to explore vocation in other directions and have further conversations to try and clarify the nature of the calling
- In the case of a person who has not yet started the Exploring Christianity course, to start the course and to see how it goes for a few months and then discuss possible vocation again
- Proceed to the formal selection process.

If a call is apparent the potential Reader should make an appointment with a Diocesan Vocations Advisor [address can be found the in Diocesan Directory or through the Diocesan office] who will help them discover whether God is actually calling them in this direction or to some other form of ministry. If the call is to Reader Ministry the process to be followed is given as a flow chart in **Appendix A**. If the call seems to be something else the Advisor will help direct the person in the right direction.

### **3.5 The selection conference**

This is a one day conference which normally takes place on a Saturday at The Diocesan Office in Wells. Each candidate will be interviewed by four Selectors. The Selection Panel is made up of ordained and lay people with an appropriate age/gender balance. Candidates are considered under the following headings.

**Vocation:** Candidates should be able to speak of their own sense of vocation to ministry and mission, referring both to personal conviction and to the extent to which others have confirmed it. Their sense of vocation should be obedient, realistic and informed.

**Faith and Mission:** Candidates should show an understanding of the Christian faith and a desire to deepen that understanding. They should demonstrate personal commitment to Christ and a capacity to communicate the Gospel.

**Spirituality:** Candidates should show evidence of commitment to a spiritual discipline which involves individual and corporate prayer and worship. Their spiritual practice should be such as to sustain and energise them in their daily lives.

**Relationships and personality:** Candidates should be people of integrity, who are sufficiently mature and stable to show that they can sustain the demanding role of a minister and to face change and pressure in a flexible and balanced way. They should show the potential to offer wise leadership in the Church community and to some extent beyond it. Candidates should demonstrate self-awareness and self-acceptance as a basis for developing open and healthy personal and pastoral relationships as ministers. They should show ability and willingness to work both as team members and as leaders.

**Potential for training:** Candidates should be capable of undertaking satisfactorily a course of study and ministerial preparation with an open and enquiring mind.

Further information on Selection is contained in the booklet '*Selection for Reader Ministry*' ABM Policy Paper No.7.

### **3.6 Procedure following the selection conference**

The decision of the Selection Conference is notified to the Archdeaconry Warden. This takes place as quickly as possible and usually within a week.

The Archdeaconry Warden notifies the Candidate and his/her Incumbent of the Selector's decision. The Archdeaconry Warden will inform the Candidate of the Selector's remarks and issues that they think should be addressed. Candidates may request to receive a copy of the full Selector's Report if they so wish.

Candidates who have been recommended for Reader Training will be contacted by the Course Leader for Reader Training to discuss the next steps in their training.

Candidates who have not been recommended for training may wish to appeal against the

decision. Notice of appeal, giving the grounds, should be made in writing and addressed to their Archdeaconry Warden. The Archdeaconry Warden will then handle the appeal and notify the candidate of the decision and the reasons for it.

Finally, it should be noted that the whole selection process will take some time. It is important that it is not rushed so that suitable time for prayer and reflection can be given to try to ensure the right discernment is made by all involved in the process.

## **4 Becoming a Reader**

*revised September 2015*

### **4.1 Introduction to the process**

The route to becoming a Reader is sometimes seen as a long process but it must be thorough, rigorous and challenging for we live in a world that owes no favours to Christianity. The modern minister must be able to witness to faith, speak up for the things of God and be able to give account of the Gospel. None of this comes quickly to anyone. St Paul took many years after conversion before he began his ministry. Jesus' public ministry did not take place until he was well experienced in the world.

In this Diocese, Reader training comprises three elements - a concentration on theological studies, the forming of practical skills such as preaching and leading worship and continuing ministerial development.

### **4.2 Theological studies**

The first element can be undertaken in a number of ways although most Readers in training opt to study the Diocesan course **Exploring Christianity**. This is a modular course, offering learning in small local groups. Other options include studying with another theological education provider, studying a course by distance learning or studying with a personal tutor. The latter may be offered to those who have already completed their theological studies but some time ago and need a refresher or to those who have undertaken the Exploring Christianity course but did not undertake the written assignments.

If a candidate already has a qualification in religious studies or theology, at certificate [1<sup>st</sup> year degree] level or higher, there is every possibility that they may be exempt from this element of the course.

### **4.3 The Formation Years**

The second element comprises three Formation Years. The first year of Formation training is an exploration of preaching, leading worship and pastoral care through units 1 - 8 of the course. Licensing normally takes place at this point. The following year concentrates on liturgical formation and leadership and will equip the Reader, through units 9- 15, to take funerals, care for the bereaved, help people learn and be fully up to date with modern liturgy. The third year is a transition year from the full programme of the first two formation years to the Continuing Ministerial Development programme. It consists of three units, one per term. Two of the units are set by the course team and the third one is chosen by the cohort.

There is also a placement element to the course, which takes place within three years of licensing. The placement will last for between four and six weeks. This placement is seen as a valuable tool to enrich both the Reader's ministry and that of the parish or benefice in which the placement is undertaken.

After Formation Year 3, Readers take part in Continuing Ministerial Development through a host of courses available through the CMD booklet which is issued each year.

We adopt a collaborative approach to training and the team is led by the Course Leader for Reader Training, who is based at the Diocesan Office in Wells. As well as members of the training team, others involved in training new Readers usually include an actor, an MA student in preaching who is also a parish priest, the chairman of the Bishop's Liturgy Group, the Diocesan Youth and Children's Work department, a funeral director and a Fellow of the College of Preachers.

Those who lead the training course for Readers give of their best in teaching, and believe fervently that every candidate deserves, and must give, of their very best for God.

#### **4.4 Admission and Licensing**

The Admission and Licensing of new Readers normally forms part of the Annual Readers Service held on the first Saturday in October in the Cathedral at 2.00pm. (See section 5.1 below for more information.) All Incumbents who have candidates to be admitted or welcomed as Readers in the Diocese should make every effort to be present at this service. As part of the Licensing service, newly admitted Readers are presented with a Bible from the Readers' Council.

Prior to the Annual Service those to be admitted as Readers attend a Retreat. This gives the new Readers the chance to relax and reflect as well as prepare for their licensing and future ministry.

#### **4.5 What do Readers wear?**

Once you receive the letter from the Diocesan Warden of Readers that you are being accepted for licensing, then this is the time to start to buy your robes.

Normal wear for Readers is black cassock, white surplice and blue scarf – the blue scarf will be provided by the Reader Council, and given to you at the Reader Licensing Service – so please don't buy this. If you already have a blue scarf, inform the secretary of the Readers' Council that you don't require one.

Traditions in churches vary but generally a cassock, surplice and scarf are worn at Morning and Evening Prayer and at Eucharistic Services. Please check however with your Incumbent about your local practice.

For Deanery and Diocesan services you will be expected to robe (cassock, surplice and blue scarf) – for example at the annual Reader Licensing Service in October. If you have an academic hood, this may be worn at services when clergy are in choir dress.

The nearest place for buying robes is probably Wippells of Exeter; however, there are many others places which you can find on the web. For instance:-

<https://www.jandmsewing.com/>

<http://www.wattsandco.com/>

<http://www.taylorsoxford.com/>

<http://www.wippell.com/>

Some places have off-the-shelf cassocks; others make them to order, so please order in sufficient time.

Readers should have their own robes.

Please note that at the Licensing service you will be presented with a Bible from the Readers' Council.

## 5 In Service - good practice and practicalities

### 5.1 The Annual Readers Service.

*revised September 2015*

This service is the key event in the Diocesan Reader calendar and is held on the first Saturday in October in the Cathedral at 2.00pm. It provides not only the formal occasion for the admission of new Readers but is also the time when we welcome those Readers who have moved into the Diocese during the previous twelve months. All Readers should consider it a matter of obligation to attend the Annual Readers Service at which they recommit themselves to the service of Our Lord and his church and demonstrate their support for new and existing fellow Readers.

Before the Annual Service there is a **Readers training morning** (sometimes known as the **teach-in**) held at the Blue School in Wells. Both the morning and afternoon occasions give Readers the opportunity to enjoy the fellowship of other Readers within the Diocese.

### 5.2 Annual Review and Return

*revised September 2015*

The completion of the Annual Review and Return, which is usually sent out by email in December each year, is a requirement of holding a Reader licence and the Bishops' Regulations for Reader Ministry. It is also available on the diocesan website. Readers who need a paper copy and cannot print their own should ask their Deanery Warden.

The Review and Return asks the Reader to reflect on their ministry during the previous year under a number of headings including the past year, support, development, spirituality and enrichment, together with details of training courses attended and a statistics page giving details of services, preachments, etc. undertaken during the previous year. Once the Reader has reflected on these they are required to discuss this with their Incumbent [or Rural Dean, where there is a vacancy in the parish/ benefice] who will add his or her comments before the form is returned to the appropriate Archdeaconry Warden by the 28<sup>th</sup> February each year.

Although there are suggestions for areas of review, Readers are encouraged to comment on any issue which is affecting their life or ministry so that they be practically and prayerfully supported by their Archdeaconry Warden.

### **5.3 Communication and working together**

*revised September 2015*

Working collaboratively and good team work is a key element in the life of a parish or benefice. This may be fostered in a number of ways, including:-

- Open and honest communication between Incumbent, Reader, members of the ministry team and church officers. Freedom to share thoughts and ideas, and willingness to listen to others, respecting different points of view, with appropriate confidentiality and loyalty to each other.
- Regular meetings between the Reader and Incumbent, and regular meetings with other members of the ministry team at times which make it possible for the Reader to attend. These meetings may include social occasions, times for prayer, discussing service/duty rotas, discussing theology, discussing parish/benefice policy, pastoral matters and sharing a vision. Team members may also undertake training together, and do something non-churchy together.
- The drawing up of a ministry specification between the Incumbent and Reader which is reviewed on a regular basis, and which establishes guidelines of accountability and support. The ministry specification should include a clear policy on the payment of expenses. There should be clear guidance regarding who may be of help in the event of Reader/Incumbent relationships failing or becoming strained.
- Agreed guidelines with regard to the expectations of roles and responsibilities undertaken by all members of the ministry team.
- Encouraging the sharing of resources.

### **5.4 Conflict management**

*revised September 2015*

The potential for conflict can come from a variety of situations, such as a lack of communication, the unwillingness to tackle a difficult situation, inflexibility, personality clashes, over or under use. Inevitably therefore a situation can occur where there is a serious disagreement or dispute between a Reader and Incumbent. The swift resolution of such is desirable as unresolved issues can lead to further resentment and difficulties. In such a situation the following course of action is recommended

- After identifying an issue, a time and date for another meeting is agreed and the intervening period should be used for reflection and prayer. The Incumbent or Reader may find it helpful during this period to talk, pray and reflect with their Deanery Warden of Readers and/or Rural Dean
- If after the next meeting the issue remains unresolved both parties agree to refer the matter to their Archdeaconry Warden for advice and/or mediation

- The Archdeaconry Warden offers a listening ear and after prayerful consideration offers potential ways forward
- If the issue cannot be resolved the matter may, in the last resort, be referred by the Archdeaconry Warden to the appropriate Archdeacon and/or Diocesan Warden of Readers

## 5.5 Continuing Ministerial Development

*revised September 2015*

Continuing Ministerial Development [CMD] is available for all who hold the Bishop's licence in the Diocese up to the age of retirement. All Readers are required by the Bishop and Warden of Readers to continue their education, development and training through the various opportunities that are offered in the Diocese and through courses and conferences that take place elsewhere. Each Reader is required by the Bishop to attend at least two CMD events per year.

The fundamental purpose of Continuing Ministerial Development is to equip and develop the church's ministers in order that they may stimulate and enable the whole Church to participate more fully in the mission of God in the world. In particular, it must help ministers to

- discern and learn how to participate in God's mission in the world
- build worshipping and ministering communities to live God's life and show it to the world
- support and equip God's people for ministry and mission wherever they are
- deepen their theological inquiry and openness to God's ever new ways of working
- help implement and support the Diocesan programme of "Changing Lives"

**Continuation Courses:** These courses cover a wide range of subjects and provide for ongoing stimulation and theological reflection. They are advertised each year in the CMD brochure which should be used as a basis for individual choice. The cost of these courses is usually minimal and may be claimed as an expense from the parish/benefice. The Reader Annual Review and Return provides an opportunity to comment on the value of these courses and to contribute to the programme of courses offered.

**Retreats/Sabbatical and Study Leave:** All Readers, like clergy, are encouraged to take regular retreats as an essential part of spiritual refreshment. It is expected that the cost of this will be met by the parish/ benefice. However, in cases of need, application may be made to the Warden of Readers for some financial assistance.

It is important to acknowledge that the word Sabbatical is derived from the same root as Sabbath. This indicates that a fundamental biblical understanding of a Sabbatical is rest and renewal so as to return refreshed in one's ministry. Readers are therefore encouraged to take time out for study and to see other places, as an opportunity for rest, renewal and recreation, away from normal parish or benefice commitments. This may take the form of visiting other churches for worship, undertaking a placement or reading a book.

## 5.6 Safeguarding.

*revised December 2015*

It is a requirement under the new Church of England Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance 2015 for everyone holding the Bishops Licence including Clergy and Readers to:

- Submit an application via the Diocesan Safeguarding Office to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for an enhanced DBS check
- Produce the DBS certificate to the Safeguarding Office at the Diocese or to a member of clergy within 14 days of receipt, or before the expiry of their existing certificate, whichever is the earlier date.
- Renew their DBS Certificate within the 5 year period for which it is valid, and at the latest before their existing certificate expires (5 years from date of issue).

If you are concerned about any aspect of this process, such as the possibility that there may be information about a caution or conviction on your DBS check, please contact Ms Glenys Armstrong, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser at the Old Deanery, telephone 01749 685135, mobile 07834514842, or email [glenys.armstrong@bathwells.anglican.org](mailto:glenys.armstrong@bathwells.anglican.org)

The DBS Certificate is required as it provides evidence that the Reader does not have the type of conviction that would automatically bar them from their role. The Church has a responsibility to provide leaders who can be trusted by children and vulnerable adults in their congregations, and the DBS check allows us to carry out our legal duty to confirm that leaders have no relevant criminal convictions.

It is also a Bath and Wells Diocese requirement that all Readers in Training complete as a minimum the Diocesan "Introduction to Safeguarding" training before Licencing.

Failure to follow these requirements could result in licencing as a Reader being delayed, or existing licences being suspended.

There is more information in a separate document: *Process for Ensuring Safeguarding Arrangements are in place for Readers 2015*, available as a download from the diocesan website

## 5.7 During a vacancy

*revised September 2015*

This can be a very positive experience for a parish or benefice particularly when there is good communication between Readers, Churchwardens and PCC. People's talents can prayerfully be used to the full to help lessen the void and a feeling of loss when a priest leaves.

It is good practice for Churchwardens and Readers to meet regularly for prayer, fellowship, support and a sharing of news. Relationships are strengthened and communication channels are opened which are both vital when the selection process begins.

Good teamwork is essential. There needs to be a clear definition of roles and responsibilities so each person feels valued and is allowed to blossom in their ministry or task. A Reader's pastoral skills in the church and the community at large may be put to use far more as well as the almost certain likelihood of taking more services. This can be a very rewarding experience, but care should be taken about doing too much.

It is normal for the Reader's ministry to continue, during a vacancy, under the supervision of, and with the support of, the Rural Dean. Churchwardens are encouraged to value and endorse the Reader's role and authority. In the event of any conflict the Rural Dean or Deanery Warden should be contacted. A potential Incumbent should be made aware of existing Readers within the benefice and be asked to affirm their willingness to work with the Reader[s] if appointed, and to accept the principles and practice of Reader ministry. When it is time to appoint a new Incumbent

for the parish or benefice the best possible involvement of Readers in the process will be sought. However because of the rights of patrons it may not always be possible to include Readers in the selection process.

## 5.8 Expenses - working costs

*revised September 2015*

The Readers' Council acknowledges the voluntary nature of Reader Ministry and recognises that in the past, there has been a wide variety of practice regarding the payment of working costs. However it is the policy of the Council that working costs should be paid to Readers for the following reasons:

- to give recognition to the invaluable ministry of Readers within the Church
- to recognise the professional nature of Reader Ministry
- to show a Reader that their ministry is appreciated
- to prevent a Reader being barred from ministry on financial grounds
- to enable the Church to know the true monetary cost of ministry

Equally it is recognised that some Readers see the non-claiming of working costs as part of their giving to the Church. As laudable as this is, a precedent is set for the future which other Readers may not be able to match. Additionally, if Readers claim their working costs they are at liberty to give them back in full to the Church and this could be done by way of Gift Aid which would greatly increase the value of their giving.

The Readers' Council has agreed Readers should be reimbursed in full for:

- Travelling expenses when taking services. *These should be at the full Diocesan rate when taking services within the benefice. Where a Reader takes a service in another benefice that benefice should offer travelling expenses in full*
- Training costs - *during Formation Training, for Continuing Ministerial Development and attendance at Diocesan and Archdeaconry training events eg. Travelling and course fees.*
- Teaching and preaching resources
- The cost of telephone calls, stationery and postage

The Readers' Council pays for an annual subscription to The Reader Magazine for all Readers (except those who have asked not to receive it).

It is good practice to give an allowance for the purchase of books, up-keep of robes and participation in Quiet Days and Retreats.

The parish/benefice is expected to pay the Reader's Annual Subscription Fee direct to the Diocesan Board of Finance for the Readers Council and the Treasurer of the Readers' Council contacts parish/benefice treasurers directly to request this.

Parish / Benefice treasurers will need documentation, for their accounts, of any payment made and therefore Readers should to keep receipts and appropriate records where required.

In Appendix H there are sample claim forms in respect of travelling expenses when taking a service outside of the benefice and for claiming working costs within the benefice.

## 5.9 Funeral ministry

*revised September 2015*

Most Readers will have received training in conducting funeral services. If the Incumbent of a Reader who has not undergone this training wishes the Reader to undertake a funeral ministry, they should contact the Archdeaconry Warden for further guidance.

Normally the Reader will conduct a funeral service at the request of the Incumbent, but during a vacancy the request may come directly from an funeral director, churchwarden, etc. In either case the Reader needs to be assured that their ministry is welcomed and supported by those responsible for arranging the service.

The Reader does not receive the minister's fee for conducting a funeral service, this goes to the Incumbent or during a vacancy to the Diocesan Sequestration Fund. However, the Reader is entitled to full expenses, including travel.

## 5.10 Ministry specification

Those being newly licensed as Readers are required to have a Ministry Specification. However all Readers are actively encouraged to have one. The object in drawing up a ministry specification is to ensure that the Reader, Incumbent, PCC, churchwardens and the whole ministry team know what the Reader is expected to do, thereby removing doubt and helping to avoid disagreements. The document also provides a basis for periodic review of experience and achievement and should be a useful tool in the conversation between Reader and Incumbent when completing the Annual Review and Return. Please see Appendix G for advice on how to draw up a Ministry Specification

## 5.11 Placements

*revised September 2015*

Several Dioceses in the Church of England, including Bath and Wells, recommend the use of placements to help and support Readers in both their initial training and their continuing development. It is a practice that the Readers' Council encourages.

The main fruit of a placement is that a Reader will be able to see a different situation and assess its strengths and weaknesses at first hand. Through doing this, and reflecting upon it, new experience of church life is gained, which enables the Reader to return to a home parish or benefice with a heightened awareness of what ministry is about. In a sense it is like emerging from the wood in order to see the trees.

Clergy are given the opportunity every few years to spend a little time out of the parish or benefice in some kind of study leave. They often find that an experience of church life elsewhere renews their vision and refreshes their spirituality. It is hoped that a Reader placement in another parish or benefice can have something of the same effect. A paper dealing with the practicalities of arranging a placement is provided through the School of Formation.

The placement is an ideal opportunity for learning and growing in ministerial leadership. It is a privilege to be invited into another church as a guest. If it is undertaken sensitively, the results will be beneficial to both the Reader and the receiving church, and constructive to the growth of ministry and church life in the area.

## **5.12 Reader Peer Review**

*revised December 2015*

As well as regular discussions with Incumbents all Readers have the opportunity to meet with a Reader who has been trained to carry out peer reviews.

The peer review (which is in addition to and separate from the Annual Review and Return) provides the Reader the opportunity to consider and describe succinctly their ministry to someone independent who usually does not know the Reader, their ministry or situation but who does know about Reader ministry.

During the peer review the existing ministry, relationships, resources, personal spirituality and developments for the future are considered and a statement may be agreed.

The discussions are confidential but the Reviewer will have contacted the Incumbent of the Reviewee. The Incumbent and the Archdeaconry Warden receive copies of any agreed statement.

A review, about 18 months after licensing, is part of the training of Readers and reviews can be requested by any Reader on the Annual Reader Return Form or by contacting their Archdeaconry Warden. In addition, reviews can be requested by any Reader on the Annual Reader Return Form, or by contacting their Archdeaconry Warden or by contacting the Peer Review Co-ordinator whose contact details are in Appendix J.

## **5.13 Spiritual Direction / Soul Friend / Reader Fellowship Meetings**

*revised September 2015*

The Diocese is committed to a policy that no one should work alone. Readers normally find themselves working with at least their Incumbent and maybe other Readers, a Ministry Team, Churchwardens, etc. with whom they meet regularly to discuss matters concerning worship, pastoral care and general parish or benefice matters. It is equally important that a Reader meets up with others to care for their spiritual life, the renewal of their ministry and generally to be able to talk to other Readers about issues which may occur in their ministry.

In addition to regular discussions with their Incumbent Readers are encouraged, and all those to be newly licensed must have, a Spiritual Director or Soul Friend with whom they meet regularly. During these meetings the Reader's existing ministry, relationships, resources, personal spirituality and developments for the future are all considered. These discussions are confidential but may be shared with others if the Reader so wishes.

It is hoped that a Reader will find their own Spiritual Director/Soul Friend, but if they can't then their Deanery or Archdeaconry Warden or the Diocesan Adviser in Prayer and Spirituality, whose contact details are on the website, will help.

Most Deaneries hold occasional meetings for Readers, organised by the Deanery Warden or another Reader, to enjoy fellowship with each other. All Readers are encouraged to attend.

## **5.14 Worshipping together**

*revised September 2015*

Often difficult decisions need to be made in a parish/benefice and these can be tense times. Sometimes leaders need to guide the direction of the vision of God, or hold a congregation to what God has already made clear. Worship and prayer are obviously crucial at times like this.

However, the daily round of prayers is a tradition that Christian people have followed for years. In both the case of special prayers and the ordinary discipline of spiritual life Readers have an important role.

In a survey of Reader opinion in the Diocese, it was clear that Readers were keen to support and share in the spiritual life of the leadership team. Meeting together with the Incumbent and other leaders was, for those who engaged in this, extremely valuable. There was no set pattern, just a common purpose to worship God together and intercede for the parish/benefice and community.

It is impossible to prescribe how Readers will develop a pattern of prayer with other leaders, but we strongly encourage each Reader to review how the duty and joy of prayer and collective worship may be expressed

## **6 Working outside the benefice**

*revised September 2015*

### **6.1 Occasional services in another benefice**

The Incumbent from another parish/benefice may directly approach a Reader to take a service in their benefice. The Reader must confirm this with their Incumbent if they wish to accept the invitation. With the introduction of Local Ministry Groups it is reasonable to expect Readers to be available to take services within the LMG when not required within their own benefice.

If a Reader is asked to conduct a service outside of the Diocese they need to be assured that they have permission to do so under the Diocesan Regulations of the Diocese in which they will take the service.

Incumbents wishing to invite a Reader from another Diocese to conduct a service or preach in their parish/benefice should ensure that the Reader is bona-fide before issuing the invitation

### **6.2 Local Ministry Groups [LMGs]**

The mission and ministry of the Church of England is expressed largely through the life of its parishes, a life which embodies the vision of a Church serving the whole of society. Parochial life as we know it today has been shaped, not so much by a carefully worked out strategy, but rather by the circumstances and indeed accidents of history, as well as by a profound awareness which the Church of England has had for over four hundred years of its unique role within English society.

Historically, each parish has had its own church building, patron, Incumbent, churchwardens, and [since the beginning of the twentieth century] parochial church council. In some places these arrangements have been modified in recent years, partly as a result of deepening ecumenical work [which, in a number of cases has led to the establishment of local ecumenical projects], and largely through the provisions of the Pastoral Measures of 1968 and 1983 which have seen parishes combining and new structures introduced.

Some aspects of our parochial system are wholly good, for instance, the provision of pastoral and spiritual care to every person who wishes to avail themselves of this ministry. However, many of our parochial structures no longer serve the Church or society in the ways which were originally intended. These need to be updated and replaced and this is happening through the creation of LMGs, benefices and other structures.

LMGs can be defined by three words, local, ministry and group.

*Local* could be geographical. It could be described in terms of the milkman, pub, paper or Council - they all serve an area and LMGs similarly serve their area. But local can also mean, similar or familiar and not necessarily have to include that which is adjacent. Some LMGs are finding their common purpose around similar or like things, including those who have the same sort of aims.

*Ministry* is of course what the LMG is called to engage in and includes mission. This is explicit in some cases, in others, more an implicit commitment to the community through supporting the school or nursing home, etc.

*Group* means being together and some LMGs have opted to work at being together, over coffee, in the pub, around the Bible, or trying a day out together.

LMGs are local groups of Christian people called to serve. Whichever way they choose to define what each of the three words mean, when they are put together, the result often exceeds the sum of the parts.

In an LMG churches will:

- provide opportunities for all to be transformed by the Gospel message of God's kingdom
- effectively equip members to seek and serve Christ in all people, through worship, nurture and discerning of gifts and abilities
- creatively engage with the local community of all ages through pastoral work, outreach and service
- acknowledge Christ's authority over all human society, in prayer, defending the weak and seeking justice and peace
- be an open fellowship; repenting of its own failings and inviting membership, proclaiming by word and example the good news of God in Christ

As LMGs are becoming more widely established, there are increased opportunities for Readers to exercise their ministry more widely, e.g. as Course Facilitators for their LMG, in preaching and teaching. Please contact the School of Formation for more details of courses which can be supplied to enable these things to happen.

### **6.3 Secondment and regular commitments outside the benefice**

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for a Reader to be seconded to another parish/benefice for a limited period. There are also circumstances where a Reader is regularly asked to conduct services in another parish/benefice. In both cases the Archdeaconry Warden should be advised.

It should be noted in all of the above the importance of a Reader having a spiritual home and to be able to worship regularly in their 'home' Church

## **7 Licences - including renewal, Permission to Officiate, surrendering a licences, Reader Emeritus status, licensing of Readers transferring into the diocese or to a different benefice**

### **7.1 Checking your licence or PTO**

*revised September 2015*

It is the responsibility of each Reader to check regularly that their Licence or Permission to Officiate [PTO] is valid and to request the renewal when necessary. All licences and permissions to officiate are valid for five years, after which renewal is necessary. The flow chart in Appendix B gives details of the process for renewing a Licence and in Appendix C are the details of how to apply for a Permission to Officiate and its renewal. If your parish/benefice is joined to/by others, you may need a new licence – see Appendix B.

### **7.2 Renewing your licence or PTO**

*revised September 2015*

Outlined below are the circumstances where action to renew a Licence or PTO is required

**Five-yearly renewal or changing from a licence to a PTO:** To renew a Licence/PTO [required every five years] or to change from a Licence to a PTO in the parish/benefice in which a Reader lives or habitually worships, the Reader must obtain a letter of support from their Incumbent, and a resolution of the PCC[s] supporting the renewal or application for a PTO. These should be sent with the Reader's current Licence or PTO to the Diocesan Warden, who will arrange for the Licence/PTO to be renewed or for a PTO to be issued.

**Change of Benefice Boundaries:** If this happens, Readers may need to have their Licence renewed, and should check with the Diocesan Warden. They will need resolutions from PCC[s] of parish[es] which have been added to the Benefice

### **7.3 Transferring from another diocese or from another benefice in the diocese**

*revised September 2015*

The course of action to be followed is given in Appendix E. Readers and Incumbents should note that this is can be a lengthy process to complete since a licence cannot be given without a satisfactory reference and the completion of the DBS process [see separate notes on this].

### **7.4 *from February 2018 there is no section 7.4***

### **7.5 On reaching the the age of 70 years**

*revised September 2015*

A Reader's licence automatically expires on their 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. Readers wishing to continue in ministry after their 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, must apply for a Bishop's Permission to Officiate [PTO]. To obtain a PTO, please follow the procedure outlined in Appendix C.

## 7.6 Becoming a Reader Emeritus

*revised September 2015*

Reader Emeritus status is given to those who have ceased to have an active ministry. It is given in recognition of a Reader's previous service to the Church by the Bishop. Incumbents who think a retiring Reader should be awarded this recognition should contact their Archdeaconry Warden. It should be noted that once emeritus status has been given it is envisaged that the Reader will cease to have an active public ministry, i.e. he or she will have ceased taking services or preaching. In extraordinary circumstances, e.g. the funeral of a long-standing friend, a Reader Emeritus may conduct the service and preach, wearing Reader robes.

## 7.7 How to resign your Licence or Permission to Officiate

*revised September 2015*

There are occasions when a Reader will need to give up their licence or PTO, for example, when they move home. Readers wishing to surrender their licence or PTO are asked to write to their Archdeaconry Warden, attaching their licence or PTO for cancellation, and giving the reason for their surrender. If the Reader hopes to have a licence or PTO in another place it would be helpful to have a forwarding address.

If you are a Reader Emeritus and do not wish to receive communications from the Diocese or Reader Council please inform your Archdeaconry Warden.

## 8 The Role of Diocesan, Archdeaconry and Deanery Wardens

*revised September 2015*

Much of the administrative and pastoral care of Readers in the Diocese is given by the Wardens. Their functions are described below and from these descriptions it should be possible to see who is the appropriate person to approach with any question regarding Reader Ministry.

### 8.1 Ministry Specification of the Diocesan Warden of Readers

*revised September 2015*

The Diocesan Warden [DioW] has a presiding role, overseeing the work and welfare of Readers within the Diocese. As a member of Bishop's Staff the DioW is the major link between the Bishops and the Readers and exercises the role of oversight on behalf the Diocesan Bishop. The emphasis is on pastoral care and good practice. Many of the DioW's tasks are in practice delegated, but include the following.

#### **Leadership**

- Chairmanship of the Reader Council, which reports to the Diocesan Council for Ministry.
- Promotes the work and profile of Readership throughout the Diocese.
- Represents the Diocese, with others, further afield at the Central Reader Council and other forums.
- Meets quarterly with the Archdeaconry Wardens and the Reader Training Team. The DioW is the line-manager in their Reader work.
- Line-manages the Co-ordinator of the Reader Support Scheme [peer review and development].
- Writes for the Diocesan *Connect* and the *Update for Readers* when appropriate and in other ways encourages, including among the clergy, good practice in the ministry of Readers.

### ***Selection and Training***

- Meets with Readers in training at the start of training and when possible during their training. The DioW attends the pre-admission retreat.  
Gives final approval for Reader Candidates to be presented to the Bishop for admission and approves their Ministry Specifications [worked out between the Readers and Incumbent].
- Meets periodically with the Course Leader for Reader Training to ensure training is in compliance with the requirements of the Central Readers Council and Archbishops' Council for Ministry
- Becomes involved when a candidate for selection for Reader training has not been recommended and wishes to make a formal appeal.

### ***Readers and their Fellowships***

- Visits Reader Fellowships when invited.
- Becomes directly involved with Readers and Clergy if called upon to do so by the Archdeaconry Wardens, who otherwise deal with administration, difficulties or conflicts. The DioW always receives copies of correspondence on the latter.
- Oversight of the Annual Readers' Service, when new Readers are admitted and Readers new to the Diocese are welcomed. A working group designs and organises the service. The DioW selects the preacher for this service and the conductor of the pre-licensing retreat.

### ***Licences***

- The DioW has authority, delegated from the Bishop, to renew licences after processing by the Archdeaconry Wardens.

## **8.2 Ministry Specification of the Archdeaconry Wardens**

*revised July 2018*

Archdeaconry Wardens [AWs] are appointed by the Bishop on the recommendation of the Diocesan Warden of Readers. They are accountable to the Diocesan Warden and normally continue in office for five years, renewable for a further term of three years.

AWs expenses are met in full by the Readers' Council. Administration expenses include the following:

use of a computer, a part-time secretary [2 hours per week], stationery, postage, phone calls, travelling expenses at the Diocesan rate, occasional entertainment costs

The role of the Archdeaconry Warden is to nurture vocation and good practice within Reader ministry in the Archdeaconry.

It can be considered under various headings:

### ***Candidates***

- responding to requests for selection by potential Readers
- recommending to the Selection Secretary candidates to attend selection conference , including the preparation of the AWs contribution to the licensing process
- following up selection conference decisions
- keeping a list of all those who have been recommended for training
- occasionally attending training events, to liaise with candidates in the Archdeaconry

### ***Promoting Reader ministry***

- talking to Clergy Chapters, Deanery Synods, PCCs and congregations to try to foster new vocations to Readership, promote Readership and encourage good practice
- encouraging fellowship within the Archdeaconry amongst Readers, by attending Reader Fellowships from time to time, by initiating new groups as appropriate, occasionally writing articles for *Connect* and the *Update for Readers*
- monitoring relationships between Readers and Incumbents, listening to any problems that occur either for the Incumbent or the Reader, suggesting referral to the Review and Support process, or other sources of help, liaising with the Course Leader for Reader Training over potential action to be taken and training which may be necessary

### ***Licences***

- to maintain a list of all Readers in the Archdeaconry
- to ensure the five yearly renewals of Licences and Permissions to Officiate
- to ensure the issue of new licences when necessary
- to arrange for Readers transferring into the Diocese to be licensed

### ***Pastoral Care***

- to monitor and respond to the Annual Reader Review and Return

### ***Annual Service***

- The AWs take it in turns to chair the working party which organises the Annual Reader Service

The role of the Archdeaconry Warden is very important in the nurture and growth of Reader ministry within the Diocese. AWs stand as advocates and reconcilers between Readers and Incumbents in times of challenges. They meet regularly with the DioW and Lay Ministries Enabler as part of the Diocesan Reader leadership team, enabling best practice to be shared and problems to be resolved. AWs also meet together as a group whenever they wish.

## **8.3 Ministry Specification for a Deanery Warden**

*revised September 2015*

The Deanery Warden [DW] is the representative of the Readers in a Deanery on the Readers' Council. The DW is elected by the licensed Readers and those holding a PTO within the Deanery according to rules and regulations agreed by the Readers' Council.

The DW is accountable to the Readers who have elected him or her, and also to their Archdeaconry Warden and the Diocesan Warden of Readers. Support for DWs in fulfilling their role will include the availability of the AW and Diocesan staff for consultation.

The role of the DW has four parts:

### ***Communication to and from the Readers' Council***

The DW is the primary channel of communication between Readers in the Deanery and the Readers' Council. This role includes:

- being aware of developments in Reader ministry in order to share information around the Deanery
- being familiar with the processes of selection and recruitment in order to encourage Reader vocation
- ensuring that Readers in their Deanery who are not on email receive hard copies of communications

### ***Service on working teams***

The day to day work of the Council in its responsibility for the promotion of Reader ministry throughout the Diocese is divided into working teams which are:

- selection of new Readers
- Reader training
- organisation of the Annual Service
- organisation of the training morning that precedes the Annual Service
- organisation of conferences for Readers in the diocese
- organisation of retreats for Readers in the diocese

It is hoped that each member of the Reader Council will join one of these. Other working teams may evolve as circumstances dictate.

### ***Ministry link***

A DW may help the Rural Dean to provide cover during a vacancy and at other times in order to provide support for incumbents and parishes.

DWs and Rural Deans should consult together, exchange news and make recommendations on the provision and placement of Readers within the Deanery and on presentation of Reader matters to the Deanery. In some Deaneries, the DW is an *ex-officio* member of Deanery Standing Committee and the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Group, and this model is to be commended.

### ***Pastoral care***

The Incumbent has responsibility for the pastoral care of Readers licensed in his or her parish/benefice but, following the best models for collaborative ministry, the DW has a share in the pastoral care of Readers in his or her Deanery and encourages them to care for each other.

The DW maintains contact with the Readers in the Deanery, including Readers in training, prays for them and is a “friend in ministry” to them.

At the November Council meeting the training team gives the names of those who are recommended for Reader training. DWs are also given the names of Readers who move into the Deanery and are informed of any changes to the licences of Readers or PTOs in the Deanery by the Diocesan Warden of Readers.

The DW should receive information about the Reader Fellowship meetings which serve the Deanery and encourage Readers to participate.

Support for DWs in fulfilling their role will include the availability of the AW and Diocesan staff for consultation

The DW is often approached in situations where a Reader experiences difficulties in their parish or benefice. The DW informs the Archdeaconry Warden if appropriate.

The DW may assist with placements for Readers in training.

Where appropriate and with the agreement of the parties concerned, the Archdeaconry Warden may give the DW feedback from the annual Reader Return of Readers in the Deanery.

## 9 The Readers' Council

*revised September 2015*

### 9.1 Role

The role of the Reader Council is to support and enhance the work of Readers within the Diocese.

The Council exercises this role through

- dealing with all the legal requirements as to the licensing and registration of Readers
- maintaining a register of Readers in the Diocese
- the selection and training of potential Readers
- the moderation of Reader training
- promoting continual ministerial education among Readers
- encouraging fellowship and mutual support among Readers,
- an Annual Service of Admission and Re-dedication

In support of this the Council publishes regular Newsletters and Information Sheets, promotes the running of conferences, training days, etc. and circulates Updates and other information. The Council usually meets three times a year. There is an administrative structure whereby an individual or small group deals with much of the day to day work including selection and training, finance and the processing of licences.

### 9.2 Membership of the Council

The Diocesan Warden (ex-officio Chair)

Archdeaconry Wardens [*one in each Archdeaconry - Bath, Taunton and Wells*]

Deanery Wardens [*one elected by Readers in each Deanery of the Diocese- 19 in total*]

The Course Leader for Reader Training

The Selection Secretary

2 Bishop's Nominees, who may or not be Readers

The Secretary and the Treasurer are elected from among the DWs, or co-opted in accordance with the constitution.

### 9.3 Structure of the Council

The day to day work of the Council is carried out by working teams covering:

- selection of new Readers
- Reader training
- organisation of the Annual Service
- organisation of the training morning that precedes the Annual Service
- organisation of conferences for Readers in the diocese
- organisation of retreats for Readers in the diocese

These teams interact with the Council, each other as necessary and with the Diocesan and Archdeaconry Wardens. The normal route for communication between the Council and the Bishop and Council for Ministry is through the Diocesan Warden of Readers.

The principal source of income of the Council comes from the Readers annual subscriptions. This together with a small grant from Diocesan Funds enables the Council to finance the work it undertakes.

## APPENDICES

**Note re “blueys”.** The flow charts mention “blueys”. This refers to email notification from the Diocesan Warden’s office of changes to contact details or other information about Readers in the diocese. This information was originally circulated on blue paper, hence the use of the term bluey”.

**Flow Chart for the Selection of Potential Readers for Training**

After potential candidate/Incumbent have discussed the possibility of a vocation, contact is made with a Vocations Advisor [VA] and/or Archdeaconry Warden [AW].

If a potential candidate directly approaches a VA,/AW, Incumbent is informed



VA and/or Archdeaconry Warden meets candidate to help them discern their call.

If VA thinks candidate's vocation is as a Reader informs appropriate AW



AW meets candidate. Candidate asked to bring prepared statement of their story so far to meeting. AW discerns call against Advisory Board of Ministry guidelines. Once AW satisfied, process is discussed - reference made to Lay Ministries Enabler re training if required. Application Form is given to candidate. AW contacts Incumbent to discuss future for candidate and to advise progress



Candidate sends AW the following : Completed Application Form, Proof of Baptism and Confirmation, PCC resolution[s], It is a requirement of the Bishops Regulations that all PCC's in the area where the Reader will serve give their approval to possible selection of a candidate, and Ethnic Monitoring Form.

AW takes copies of Baptism and Confirmation Certificates and returns originals to candidate



AW obtains references from referees and Incumbent and then prepares a report on the candidate and sends this to the Selection Secretary [SS] with all the documentation described above and the references, keeping copies for Archdeaconry file



SS invites the candidate to a selection conference.



Candidate attends Selection Conference. Training requirements are discussed with Lay Ministries Enabler



SS notifies Diocesan Warden, AW, Lay Ministries Enabler and Council Secretary of Selectors' decision and sends a copy of the Selectors' Report to each



AW informs candidate and Incumbent of decision



*IF SELECTED FOR TRAINING:* AW discusses with candidate any issue raised by the Selectors. SS notifies DW of candidate's success. Diocesan Warden's office instigates DBS process

Lay Ministries Enabler makes contact to agree training needs and likely start date



*IF NOT RECOMMENDED FOR TRAINING*

AW discusses with candidate the Selectors' decision. Consider possible appeal

## APPENDIX B

### FLOW CHARTS FOR RENEWING LICENCE OR RAISING A NEW LICENCE

#### FLOW CHART FOR RENEWAL OF LICENCE

*Licences are required to be renewed every five years*

Reader sends to Diocesan Warden [DioW] their Licence and letters of support from Incumbent and the PCC[s] of the parish/benefice in which the Reader lives or habitually worships



DioW checks documentation and renew and returns licence. DioW's office circulates information via quarterly updates ('Blueys')

The Archdeaconry Wardens make annual checks of their lists to ensure compliance with the Bishop's Regulations regarding the renewal of licences

## FLOW CHART FOR RAISING A NEW LICENCE

A New Licence is required for the following reasons

- a) When an Incumbent changes (except where the licence is to the benefice not the incumbent)- this process takes place six months after the arrival of the new Incumbent
- b) When the make up of the benefice has changed - a new licence is required immediately the changes take effect
- c) When a licence has been lost - usually comes to light when the licence is due for renewal

A fee is payable to the Diocesan Registrar for the raising of a new licence. In cases a) and b) this is paid by the parish/benefice, in case c) by the Reader

Situation A	Situation B	Situation C
Reader sends licence to DioW Letter of support from Incumbent and PCC	Reader sends licence to DioW Letter of support from PCC[s] not previously served by the Reader	DioW receives request from Reader stating licence has been lost with supporting letters from Incumbent and PCC in which the Reader lives or habitually worships.



DioW checks documentation and sends to Diocesan Registry with letter requesting a new licence. Copies of documentation are kept by DioW



Registry prepares new licence for Bishop to sign. Once signed sends licence to Incumbent



DioW's office circulates information via 'blueys'

**FLOW CHARTS FOR PTO (PERMISSION TO OFFICIATE)**

**FLOW CHART FOR THE ISSUING OF A PERMISSION TO OFFICIATE**

Soon before reaching the age of 70 the Reader contacts the Diocesan Warden [DioW] requesting issue of a PTO and supplies letters of support from Incumbent and the PCC[s]



DioW requests Bishop to issue a PTO. On receipt sends PTO to Reader with a covering letter, copied to Incumbent and AWs. DioW circulates information on a 'bluey'

---

**FLOW CHART FOR RENEWING A PERMISSION TO OFFICIATE**

*PTOs are required to be renewed every five years*

Reader or Incumbent contact DioW requesting renewal and sending existing PTO with letters of support from Incumbent and the PCC[s].



DioW renews PTO and sends PTO to Reader with a covering letter, copied to Incumbent and AW. DioW circulates information via 'blueys'

The Archdeaconry Wardens make annual checks of their lists to ensure compliance with the Regulations regarding the issue and renewal of PTOs

**FLOW CHART FOR THE LICENSING OF READERS TRANSFERRING  
FROM ANOTHER DIOCESE OR ANOTHER BENEFICE WITHIN THE DIOCESE**

Normally a Reader transferring from another Diocese or Benefice will quickly make themselves known to their new Incumbent (indeed, may already have done so). During the first six months of the Reader being in the benefice the Incumbent may invite him or her to preach and lead worship on three occasions under supervision in order that the Reader may become known within the benefice. The Deanery Warden should also be notified so that they can make contact with the potential new Reader.



The Incumbent may informally notify the Archdeaconry Warden (AW) and/or Diocesan Warden (DioW) of a potential new Reader in the benefice (alternatively this may be done by the new Reader themselves), but after a minimum of three months, assuming the Incumbent and Reader agree, the Incumbent will formally notify the DioW of the potential new Reader and request that the licensing process start. DioW requests a 'safe to receive' reference from the sending diocese. Once this has been received, DioW requests the DBS process be started by the safeguarding department.



For Readers transferring into the Diocese the AW sends the potential new Reader a Personal Details Form and Ethnic Monitoring Form. (For Readers transferring within the diocese, DioW will already have this information.) The potential new Reader returns the completed forms to the AW, with their Certificate of Admission as a Reader and their current or previous licence. AW takes a copy of these and sends them to the DioW. The AW may request a meeting with the potential new Reader (and notifies the DioW of the outcome of any meeting).

At the same time the Incumbent consults with any other Readers in the benefice, seeks a resolution supporting the licensing from the PCC of each parish in which the Reader will serve and writes their own letter of support. These are then all sent to the DioW, who may request a meeting with the potential new Reader.



After receipt of the DBS clearance and all the documentation, the DioW will ask the Diocesan Registry to prepare a licence and send it to the Reader. A fee is payable by the Benefice to the Registrar for the preparation of the licence.



DioW circulates information via 'blueys'.



Readers transferring from another Diocese are invited by the AW to attend the Annual Reader Service to be formally welcomed to the Diocese by a Bishop.

**FLOW CHART FOR APPLICATION FOR READER EMERITUS STATUS**

Diocesan Warden [DioW] receives request from Incumbent - Incumbent provides letter of support



Reader sends DioW existing PTO/Licence



DioW sends certificate to the Reader or the Incumbent (if requested this way) with a letter of thanks. Letter copied to Incumbent and AW. Information circulated via 'Bluey'

## MINISTRY SPECIFICATION

Readers in training receive detailed guidance on drawing up a ministry specification, the object of which is to ensure that the Reader, Incumbent, PCC, churchwardens and the whole ministry team [whether formally constituted or not] know what the Reader is expected to do. It provides a basis for periodic review of experience and achievement. A ministry specification should be factual, specific and concise.

A sample ministry specification is given here that may be adapted to suit local circumstances. Readers may ask the School of Formation for more detailed guidance if they wish.

### ***Specimen Ministry Specification***

#### *Preamble*

The ministry of Readers is a voluntary, nationally-accredited, episcopally-licensed role which is governed by Canon. The role of Reader is often summarised as: 'preaching and teaching in a pastoral context'. The following paragraphs describe ..... 's role in his/her ministry as a Reader in this parish/benefice of .....

#### *Purpose*

.....will exercise his/her ministry in ... by learning to serve God and all his people in those communities. In worship, he/she will endeavour to raise the hearts and minds of all people to God. He/She will persevere in prayer, Bible study, and in the understanding of our faith. He/She will encourage all people to exercise and extend their personal ministries.

#### *Accountability*

.... is licensed by the Bishop and is accountable to .... as *Incumbent/Priest in Charge*, for such tasks and responsibilities as he/she may, by agreement, allocate to him/her. The Reader and Incumbent will maintain close contact by:

- Attendance when possible at staff meetings
- A *monthly* meeting to review recent experience and make detailed plans for participation in forthcoming services and other church activities.

#### *Tasks [examples]*

*Preach not more than once a month*

*Lead, or share in leading, the worship at Morning and Evening Prayer, and other services as and when agreed*

*Share in the planning and leadership of All-Age Services*

*Read lessons, lead intercessions and distribute the Holy Sacrament, publish banns of marriage and receive and present the offerings of the people, as and when appropriate*

*Serve as co-opted member of the PCC [to be confirmed by vote]*

*Undertake Continuing Ministerial Development*

#### *Allocation of workload*

... will have no set number of hours, but will regularly review with the *Incumbent/Priest in Charge* the level of commitment with which he/she feels comfortable.

#### *Expenses*

All reasonable expenses will be reimbursed. Car mileage will be reimbursed at the full Diocesan rate. .... should submit an expenses form quarterly to the PCC Treasurer.

*The ministry specification will be reviewed annually - part of the Annual Review & Return process.*

### Sample Expenses Claim Forms

#### For Taking a Service in Another Benefice

TRAVELLING EXPENSES CLAIM FORM	
Name of Reader	
Address	
Travelling expenses in connection with taking a service on	
from home to	and return
miles @ 40 pence per mile * (or current diocesan rate)	Total Claimed £
Signed	Date
Date paid and signature of Treasurer	

#### For Working Costs Within the Benefice

Parish/Benefice of			
Claim for Reimbursement of Working Costs incurred in my Ministry as a Reader			
Name			
Address			
Period of Claim	From		To
Use of Car <i>[see attached Journey Record]</i>	miles @ current diocesan rate	£	:
Postage <i>[receipts attached]</i>		£	:
Stationery <i>[receipts attached]</i>		£	:
Telephone <i>[see list of calls made and cost]</i>		£	:
Maintenance/Replacement of Robes <i>[receipts attached]</i>		£	:
Books/Teaching & Preaching Resources <i>[receipts attached]</i>		£	:
Training/Courses <i>[excluding travel - see use of car]</i>	Fees	£	:
	Subsistence	£	:
	Materials	£	:
Quiet Days/Retreats <i>[excluding travel - see use of car]</i>	Cost	£	:
	Incidental Expenses	£	:
Other <i>[give details and receipts]</i>		£	:
		<b>Total Claimed</b>	£
Signed	Date		
Signed <i>[PCC Treasurer]</i>	Date		

**BATH AND WELLS DIOCESAN READERS' COUNCIL**  
**Constitution, approved 6th June 2000.**

Scanned and re-printed 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2014, revised and approved November 2015

1. In this document "the Council" means The Bath and Wells Diocesan Readers' Council. "Diocese" and "Diocesan" refer to the Diocese of Bath and Wells, "the Bishop" means The Bishop of Bath and Wells for the time being, and "Reader" means a person who has been duly admitted as a Reader in the Church of England and is currently Licensed in, or has the Bishop's Permission to Officiate as a Reader within, the Diocese. References to other bodies shall be construed as including references to their successors in function from time to time, and any reference to a publication shall be construed as including a reference to such other publication or publications as shall from time to time replace it.
2. **The Objects of the Council** (in pursuance of which it is in all respects responsible to the Bishop either directly or through such agency as he shall from time to time appoint) are:
  - A. To support and enhance the work of Readers within the Diocese,
  - B. To carry out all legal requirements as to the licensing and registration of Readers,
  - C. To maintain a Register of current Readers for each Deanery in the Diocese,
  - D. To select and train and to oversee and moderate the training of potential Readers to such standards as shall from time to time be set by the Bishop, the Central Readers' Conference or the Ministry Division of the Archbishops' Council of the Church of England,
  - E. To promote post-admission training for Readers, and to relate such training to initial and pre-admission training,
  - F. To encourage fellowship and mutual support among Readers and between Readers and potential Readers under training,
  - G. To hold an Annual Service of Admission and Re-dedication, and
  - H. To relieve need among Readers and former Readers and their dependants,

and in pursuance of such Objects to circulate Information Sheets, Newsletters and other papers, to run or participate in the running of Seminars, Tutorials, Courses, Study Days, Conferences, Services, Fellowships and Social and other Events, to set up and operate administrative structures and procedures, to co-operate with other bodies and agencies, to raise and expend funds, and to do all such other things as the Council may from time to time in its discretion consider appropriate.

**3(A). The Council shall consist of the following:**

(i) To be nominated by the Bishop:

The Diocesan Warden of Readers, who shall be Chairman of the Council

An Archdeaconry Warden from each Archdeaconry in the Diocese

The Course Leader for Reader Training

The Selection Secretary.

Two other people, who may or may not be Readers, as Bishop's nominees.

(ii) To be elected: one Reader as Deanery Warden from each Deanery in the Diocese, each respectively elected by the Readers within that Deanery.

(iii) To be appointed by the Council, if possible from among the Deanery Wardens, but otherwise by co-option under Clause 3(A)(iv) hereof;

The Honorary Secretary

The Honorary Treasurer.

(iv) If so required by the Council, not more than three other persons, who may or may not be Readers, to be co-opted by the Council for such purposes and such periods (not extending beyond its current term of office), with or without full voting rights, as it shall in its discretion determine.

3(B). For the purposes of Clause 3(A)(ii) hereof:

(i) (a) Full details of the **procedures for Nomination and Election** shall be circulated to all Readers not later than the 31st day of August in the last year of the term of office of the outgoing Council.

(b) Readers entitled to stand for Election, to propose or second Nominations and to vote in Elections in any Deanery shall be those registered in such Deanery under Clause 2(c) hereof on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of June in the last year of the term of office of the outgoing Council.

(ii) In the event of the resignation or death of a Deanery Warden the Council shall make such arrangements for a Bye-election as it shall in its discretion think fit, but it shall not be required to do so in the case of a resignation or death taking place during the last year of the term of office of an outgoing Council.

(iii) The Council shall appoint an independent Returning Officer to oversee the procedures in any Election.

4. **The period of office of the Council** shall be a term of three years from the 1st day of January in the first year until the 31st day of December in the third year (and so that the first, new Council to be constituted after the date hereof shall take office on the 1st day of January 2001).

5. The Council **shall meet not less than three times** in every year, and the **Quorum** at all meetings of the Council shall be fourteen. In the absence of the Diocesan Warden at any meeting the Council may elect any one of its members to take the chair at that meeting.

6. The Council shall have power to raise **Subscriptions** (either from parishes making use of the services of Readers or in such other manner as it shall consider appropriate), and to make such arrangements with the Diocesan Board of Finance or otherwise for raising and administering funds for its Objects as it may from time to time in its discretion think fit.

7. The Council shall:

(a) **Keep proper accounts** of its income, expenditure and assets on a calendar year basis,

(b) Have such annual accounts audited by a responsible and capable person (who need not necessarily be a qualified accountant), and

(c) Publish such accounts not later than the 30th day of April in every year by sending one copy thereof to the Diocesan Board of Finance and by circulating a summary thereof to all Readers together with an invitation to apply for a full copy thereof at no cost.

8. The Council shall have power to appoint such Reader as it shall think fit from among its members to represent the Diocese (together with the designated Officers) in the **Central Readers' Conference**.

9. The **Bishops' Regulations** Concerning Readers current from time to time shall be deemed to be incorporated in this Constitution.

10. **Amendments to this Constitution** shall be made only after proposals for the same shall have been circulated to all Readers and reviewed by the Council with due weight being given to any comments thereon received from Readers, and shall then have been approved by the Bishop.

**Current Post Holders***revised April 2018*

Diocesan Warden of Readers	The Venerable Simon Hill 2 Monkton Heights, West Monkton, Taunton TA2 8LU ☎ 01823 413315 fax:01823 413384 ✉ adtaunton@bathwells.anglican.org
Bath Archdeaconry Warden of Readers	The Revd Trevor Cranshaw The Vicarage, 10B Coleridge Road Clevedon, BS21 7TB ☎ 01275 871458 email: <a href="mailto:Trevcranshaw@hotmail.com">Trevcranshaw@hotmail.com</a>
Taunton Archdeaconry Warden of Readers	The Revd Robin Lodge St Andrew's Vicarage, 118 Kingston Road TAUNTON, TA2 7SR ☎ 01823 352471; M: 07772 567059 ✉ <a href="mailto:robin.lodge1@btinternet.com">robin.lodge1@btinternet.com</a>
Assistant Warden of Readers - Taunton Archdeaconry	The Revd David Weir The Rectory, Exford, Minehead, TA24 7LX ☎ 01643 831330 ✉ david.weir122@btinternet.com
Wells Archdeaconry Warden of Readers	The Reverend Graham Witts The Vicarage, 38 Rectory Road, Burnham on Sea, TA8 2BZ ☎ 01278 782991 ✉ <a href="mailto:grahamreaderwells@hotmail.co.uk">grahamreaderwells@hotmail.co.uk</a>
Secretary to the Readers' Council	Mrs Anne Sear Plumtree Cottage 1 Rodmore Road, Evercreech, Shepton Mallet BA4 6JL ☎ 01749 838843 ✉ <a href="mailto:sear.a@btinternet.com">sear.a@btinternet.com</a>
Treasurer to the Readers' Council	Mr Richard Brown Pathway Cottage, Westhay, Glastonbury, BA6 9TU ☎ 01458 860262 ✉ <a href="mailto:richardbrown5069@btinternet.com">richardbrown5069@btinternet.com</a>
Selection Secretary	Mrs Sue Kellagher Ashcombe House, Hallett Road Castle Cary, BA7 7LG ☎ H:01963 351992, M:07780 991938 ✉ <a href="mailto:susan@kellagher.com">susan@kellagher.com</a>
Lay Ministries Enabler (with responsibility for Reader training)	Ms Elizabeth Harper Diocesan Office, The Old Deanery, Wells, BA5 2UG ☎ 01749 670777 ✉ <a href="mailto:elizabeth.harper@bathwells.anglican.org">elizabeth.harper@bathwells.anglican.org</a>
Reader Peer Review Co-ordinator	Contact the Readers' Council Secretary until a new Co-ordinator is in post.

### ***Further Reading***

The following may be of interest to anyone wishing to know more about Readership:-

*Reader Ministry Explored* by Cathy Rowling and Paula Gooder. SPCK Library of Ministry ISBN 978-0-281-05981-2. This gives an overview of Reader ministry with historical, practical and anecdotal insights.

Reader Ministry Today by Charles Read & Phillip Tovey - Grove Books Limited W203

'Bishops' Regulations for Reader Ministry' published by the Ministry Division of the Archbishops' Council

Information on particular aspects of Reader Ministry are available in:

ABM Policy Paper No 7 *Selection for Reader Ministry*

ABM Ministry Paper No 19 *Servants and Shepherds*

ABM Ministry Paper No 20 *The Deployment of Readers*

### ***Websites***

Central Readers Council: [www.readers.cofe.anglican.org](http://www.readers.cofe.anglican.org)

Diocese of Bath & Wells: [www.bathandwells.org.uk](http://www.bathandwells.org.uk)