Introduction

1. Rural Deans share with Lay Co-Chairs the responsibility for leadership within the Deanery, and in using these guidelines it is always useful to know those for the Lay Co-Chairs as well.

GENERAL PURPOSE AND DUTIES

2. Rural Deans will be concerned to bring together the views of the parishes on common problems, to foster a sense of community and inter-dependence among the parishes and generally to promote in the Deanery the whole mission of the Church.

CHURCH, PASTORAL, EVANGELISTIC, SOCIAL & ECUMENICAL

3. Rural Deans share the Chairmanship of the Deanery Synod with the Lay Co-Chairs, and they should meet regularly to assess and plan the work of the Deanery. They will participate in the allocation of the Deanery Shares and encourage parishes to make their contribution quarterly and fully. They will join with the Lay Co-Chairs in the visitation of the parishes, inviting lay or clerical assistants to help where appropriate, and generally collaborate with him/her in the pastoral care of the Deanery.

THE ROLE OF THE RURAL DEAN

4. The role of the Rural Dean has changed over recent years from a 'convenient post box for messages' to partners with the Bishops and the Bishop's Staff in helping to shape planning and policy. The Rural Dean has a key role in both the deanery and the diocese. Within the deanery the Rural Dean sets the pattern for leadership and pastoral care.

5. The following Job Description sets out the role of the Rural Dean:

    Sharing in the Episcope of the Bishop

    - Knowledge of and care for the life of the parishes.

    - Pastoral care for clergy and their families.

    - Expression of the unity of the Diocese of which the Bishop is the focus.

    - Adviser to the Bishop on the needs of individual clergy or parishes.

    - Reporting of irregularities (Canon C23.1; C23.2).

    - Keeping the Bishop & Archdeacons informed about the life of the Deanery.

As Representative of the Archdeacon

- Undertaking Visitations and Inspections to ensure the good order of the fabric and the general welfare of the parish. (Canon C22.5; 23.3)

Channel of Communication

- Attendance at meetings of Rural Deans (and Lay Chairs) with the Bishop and Archdeacon(s).

- Passing information about the Deanery to the Bishop.

- Passing information of the Diocese to the clergy and the Deanery.

- Liaison on matters such as confirmations, licensings, institutions and visitations.

Convenor of the Chapter

- Plan, convene and chair chapter meetings as times of fellowship, study and spiritual growth.

- Pastoral care of the clergy and encouraging clergy to take proper holiday time and days off.

- Pastoral care of lay workers and retired clergy.

Joint Chairman of Deanery Synod

- Working closely with the Lay Chair to ensure efficient conduct of synodical business (Canon C23.4).

- Encouraging the sharing and payment of Quota.

- Helping to formulate a deanery pastoral plan through a Deanery Pastoral Committee.

During Vacancies

- Participating with the Bishop, Archdeacon and Patrons in Section 12 Consultation Meetings and helping to ensure that parishes understand the workings of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure and the process for appointments.

- Working with the Churchwardens to ensure the provision of services and pastoral care.

Inductions and Licensings

- Working with the Archdeacon in informing the new parish priest about a benefice.

- Assisting in preparing and rehearsing the service of Licensing or Induction.

- Meeting with new clergy to share information about the deanery both in terms of deanery expectations and the support which it can provide.

Primary Link with Civil Authorities

- Depending on the shape and position of a deanery, the Rural Dean may be a focal contact person for civil authorities and other bodies.

Ecumenical Links

- Making contacts and ensuring effective ecumenical working where possible in the deanery.

These roles can and should be shared with others in the deanery. There is no reason why one person should have to perform all these tasks.