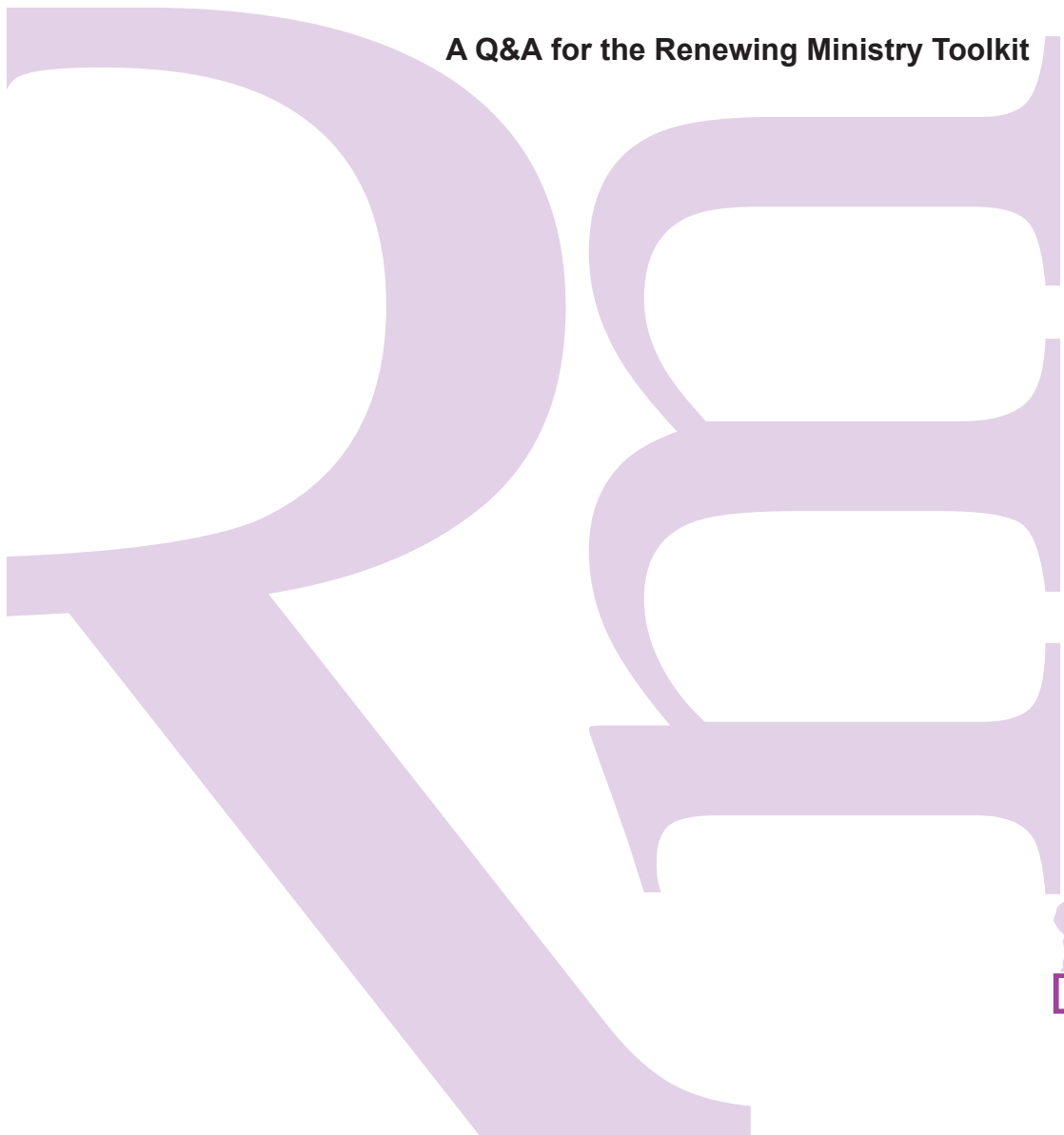




RENEWING  
Ministry

# Frequently Asked Questions

A Q&A for the Renewing Ministry Toolkit



Diocese  
of Derby



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

The following questions are ones that have often been asked during recent months either at the Deanery meetings or in conversations and correspondence. If your particular question is not here, or if you want further clarification on the answer, then please contact the Project Officer.

The questions are grouped broadly under 6 main headings, though clearly some questions will relate to more than one section.

## section 1 structure

### **1. What will be the governing body of a MMA?**

It is likely that, in the early stages, an MMA will consist of a number of parishes and they will continue to have a separate legal status. The new Pastoral Measure will give certain freedom but we might expect that, eventually, an MMA could take on the status of a PCC. This would not prevent informal Committees or Working Groups addressing particular parts of the wider MMA, but they would not be weighed down by the level of procedure currently applicable to multiple PCCs.

### **2. What will happen to PCC's?**

There is no change to the PCC at the moment, but see above for the long-term.

### **3. What will happen to Benefices?**

It is too soon to say at present, but without national legislation it is probable that benefices will have to continue, which may point to their being reordered to match the new MMA structure in time.

### **4. How will churches safeguard their particular traditions, styles, spiritualities etc. once they become part of a MMA?**

When churches come together to form a MMA, they will not be sacrificing their own particular traditions. The vision is not for each church in the MMA to offer the same, but to offer variety, which is an asset in our post-modern culture. We are looking for a form of ministry that celebrates difference, so we will want to affirm one another's particular values. But there is a challenge here too, because each church will want to demonstrate how their particular style and tradition facilitates mission, and hopefully others in the MMA can learn from this.

### **5. What kind of decisions will be made by a MMA council and what by the PCC?**

The PCC will continue to make decisions that relate to the local church. The MMA council will handle overall mission and ministry questions. There would be much strength in forming a mission strategy for the MMA in the light of the social mapping exercise.

### **6. Will Clergy and Readers be moving around the MMA every Sunday, or will local churches keep the leaders with whom they have established a personal connection?**

It is recognised factor of church growth that congregations need to have a leader that they can recognise as 'theirs' and with whom they can relate. With the fall in numbers of available stipendiary clergy these leaders will increasingly be NSM's, Readers, Retired clergy, youth pastors etc. Multi-parish Benefices are already familiar with this. Most MMA's will probably develop leadership teams where individual leaders in that team will have particular connections with local churches, yet be available to assist in other churches. Some of the staff will have specialist ministry which they will want to share in the various churches of the MMA. MMA's will give very careful thought and prayer about how all the various ministers are used, including the stipendiary minister(s). Churches need to know who their pastor is whilst at the same time enjoying the ministries of others.

### **7. How will curates be placed in a MMA?**

Curates will continue to be placed in the best training situations. Selection conferences and theological training are taking into account this wider leadership role which is being required in many Dioceses, and so in time it may be that curates who have been selected and trained with this kind of leadership role in mind would want to be placed with an Area Vicar. Curates will need to be trained where there are good models of collaborative ministry in place.

### **8. What will happen to Patronage where one church in a MMA has one patron, and another a different one etc.?**

This will have to be worked out on the way. In this Diocese we have a good track record of consulting with patrons. If we are looking for collaboration generally, it is not unreasonable to expect patrons to collaborate. There are agreed systems for the sharing of patronage or for the creation of joint patronage.

**9. Aren't we really just putting the whole Dioceses into Benefices? What's the difference between a Benefice and a MMA? Why should a MMA be easier to run and more effective for mission? In what ways is it different to the old way of running things?**

A MMA is different from an old fashioned benefice in that it expects to cover a wider geographical area and it also expects to make calls on a whole variety of ministers, ordained and lay. Whilst, as indicated earlier, there will be a stipendiary ordained structure, this will no longer be a focal point of all delivery. It is true that an MMA may well become formally a benefice. What is new, is that we are aiming to build up a team of ministers, stipendiary and non-stipendiary, ordained and lay who would follow an overall agreed strategy, rather than leaving all this to chance. An MMA should be effective for mission if it has been drawn up in relation to mission ie with a regard to where people meet. The old way of running things is that the vicar does most things with some support from others. The new way is that we set out in advance the kind of ministry team needed and set about growing it. This may mean bringing in ministry from outside the MMA, but not necessarily. Collaboration is what we have to develop – both between parishes and between clergy. We expect new initiatives for mission to develop through parishes listening deeply together to their communities and responding accordingly.

**10. If the Deanery boundaries are going to change, what will happen to the Deaneries? Will they still exist in 2008? Will we have to go to church, MMA and Deanery meetings?**

Deanery Synods have survived a major national review and appear to be appreciated at the local level. The nature, function and geographical area of deaneries may well change but this is likely to be a secondary development, consequent upon the development of the new MMAs. We do want to ensure that people are not going to endless meetings at different levels, and this will be borne in mind as the structures evolve.

**11. When we offer our plans in May/June, are we totally committed to the plan? As time goes on we may find ourselves feeling uneasy about the decision which we have had to make very quickly – will there be a chance to make a change?**

The urgency for getting plans in place is to enable the Bishop to make appointments and deploy ministry. The May/June plans will be draft plans - the next stage is for the Diocesan Pastoral Committee through its Archdeaconry Committees, to see how one plan relates to another and what staffing levels are emerging. There will be scope for change in the summer. It would be foolish to proceed with something which was manifestly flawed. The aim is to get to some steady units in accordance with the declared timetable – so that appointments can be made with some picture of how the task will develop. There must be some mechanism for “second thoughts”. However, whilst nothing is set in stone, and whilst future changes are not precluded, it remains necessary to establish the shape of the new MMAs as soon as possible.

**12. What happens if the Archdeaconry Pastoral Committee does not approve our plan?**

If the Archdeaconry Committee does not approve the plan it will ask for further consideration at the local level. If this does not produce a mutually acceptable outcome, matters may then be considered by the Diocesan Pastoral Committee. Ultimately the deployment of ministry rests with the Bishop. The Archdeaconry and Diocesan Pastoral Committee act as servants to the Bishop and ‘parishes’. This process should enable us to find the best way forward.

**13. Once an MMA has been decided, and the number of stipendiary clergy have been agreed, who decides which Vicarage they live in and which church they will have their main base in?**

Recommendations for the vicarages and churches best allocated to particular posts can form part of the local recommendations for MMAs. However, with regard to vicarages local recommendations will, of necessity, need to be viewed alongside the quality of our current property portfolio and existing recommendations of disposal or retention on grounds of suitability. With regard to church buildings as “bases” for clergy, MMAs may wish to avoid such designations in order to prevent issues of seniority arising as in question 5. Again, the first question to explore in all this is what will serve mission and ministry in this community most effectively?

**14. Is ‘Mission and Ministry Area’ a term that will stay, or is it a provisional term to describe the current task?**

MMA is a temporary term which may become permanent. Its value is that it describes just what it is. It is possible that we may end up with the simple word ‘Area’. For most people the local worshipping unit will be the most real, but the hope is that local units will benefit from a growing sense of partnership in the area. We need to remain true to local identities.

**15. When do MMA's come into being?**

It is intended that once an MMA starts to operate as such, it should start paying its Share on the new basis. Discussions are currently going on both at the Board of Finance and the Bishop's Council about the best way of transferring to the new basis of financial working. These discussions will take into account the need for parishes to have time to prepare for the efficient establishment of their MMA. During the summer we should be in a position to give clear direction about timings.

## section 2 money

**16. What do we do if we have identified a good area for mission, we've got parishes coming together, but it looks like we're not going to raise the £54,700 in 2008? Won't financial ability really be the deciding factor in the end?**

The priority is to identify the good area for mission. We then assemble the finances around that. Only financially more able parishes will be required to meet the figure of £54,700 (or equivalent) in 2008. It is likely that less able parishes will be asked to meet a minimum proportion of staffing costs, likely to be less than half of that figure although this is still to be decided.

**17. Supposing we are thinking of joining with a neighbouring parish, but that parish isn't paying its full quota – won't this mean that we will have to make up the difference when the new system kicks in?**

The current system of parish share has been worked out as being the most just and equitable and a very similar system of assessment is likely to be in place for the new scheme. Each church is therefore aware of how much it is expected to raise, and the great majority of churches in the Diocese achieve this. The new scheme could well be easier for people, because they will know that their giving is going towards the delivery of ministry locally and will make a difference to the area that the churches in their MMA serve. If a church is having difficulties in raising its share, then clearly a discussion does need to take place with the other churches. We hope that once a MMA is in place, loyalties between churches of the MMA will soon be established and a sense of mutual support will develop. Money is only one aspect of working together. Whilst one church may have difficulty in raising finance, it may be they may have wealth in other areas of ministry and witness which can be shared in the MMA.

**18. We're a church that is working fine with a NSM and Reader looking after us. We are thinking of joining with a neighbouring parish and they have a stipendiary Vicar. Our PCC is saying, why should we join with the raising of £54,700 for their Vicar, when we are quite happy with our 'free' one?**

The primary route of delivering the structure of mission and ministry is through stipendiary clergy. NSMs and Readers are likely to play an increasingly important part in the delivery, but all PCCs will be expected to make a contribution towards the stipendiary structure of ministry. They are also contributing to other vital costs of supplying ministry such as the selection and training of clergy, support and sector ministries, curates etc. There are already a number of parishes which have NSM's but readily pay their parish share.

**19. Who decides how much each church contributes to the £54,700 – is it the members of the MMA, or does the DBF tell each church its share according to assessment?**

It is likely there will be a minimum figure to be met by each MMA – with support available in line with current criteria and maybe some reward element for significant commitment to mission and unity. The figure would be one for the whole MMA, and each PCC will need to agree together how this should be allocated. The DBF, in line with Diocesan Synod policy, will give the share figure in relation to the number of stipendiary posts agreed locally.

**20. When will the DBF tell us about how the Support Fund operates? Can we be given some idea as we construct our MMA's as it clearly makes a difference to what kind of stipendiary ministry we can afford/expect?**

We are moving away from a Support Fund model to an amended version of the existing assessment system and we hope to test these ideas with the Bishop's Council and the Diocesan Synod in May.

**21. What happens to churches that currently pay more than £54,700?**

The figure of £54,700 should only be used as a working guide to the upper expectation of Share payment. Where parishes or churches combining into a new MMA would otherwise have paid above the "ceiling" figure, the current intention is that they should be relieved of further payment, following the principle that core ministry should be a responsibility of all parishes via the Share, whilst additional funding should be freed for local mission initiatives.

**22. Why don't they cut the numbers of staff working at Church House, to help save on costs?**

There have been cuts in recent years and the Derby Diocese now has now one of the most efficient ratios of Support Staff to parishes in the country. We feel it would be very unwise to make further cuts at a time when parishes are going to need extra support and help during this time of change.

**23. Why don't they cut the number of clergy working at the Cathedral?**

The Dean and the two full time staff at the Cathedral are paid for by the Church Commissioners, not by the Diocesan Board of Finance. The other clergy who are attached to the Cathedral are effectively non-stipendiary in that they all have full-time posts elsewhere e.g. chaplaincies, diocesan advisers etc. Whilst these clergy are based at the Cathedral, they are often found in other churches in the Diocese, particularly giving support to parishes in vacancy.

## section 3 leadership and collaboration

### **24. Where there are more than one stipendiary clergy in a MMA, how do we decide who is going to be the Area Vicar? Won't the Area Vicar's church feel like the 'senior' church in the MMA and therefore have more influence?**

Work is currently going on to define the nature and role of the Area Vicar. Each MMA will need to decide who will take on the role of the Area Vicar. We are very keen to move away from outdated hierarchical models of leadership and will be encouraging the development of good models of servant leadership and healthy collaboration. The church where the Area Vicar has his/her main base therefore will not be afforded any special status.

### **25. Will the Area Vicar receive training for the new role? Won't the workload be unbearable?**

The Training and Development Team will be supplying training for Area Vicars, as well as for other leaders in the team, clergy and lay. The workload for the Area Vicar need not be unbearable as it will not simply be a 'bolt-on extra' of additional responsibilities to the current role of the incumbent. The role will be adjusted, not added to. The church is not called to be a vacuum cleaner sucking up everything we are. We are called to release gifts and have a proper care one for another.

### **26. Can NSM's or Readers be the Area Vicar?**

The Bishop entrusts his cure of souls to stipendiary clergy, and therefore it is they who are charged with this responsibility.

### **27. How much influence will the Area Vicar have? We're an evangelical church, and the Area Vicar could be liberal catholic. How much influence over the style, churchmanship and ethos of our church will he/she have?**

The Area Vicar's role is to give leadership in ministry and mission in the MMA in a style which respects the traditions of each church.

### **28. What does it mean in practice to work with other non-Anglican churches in a MMA? Do the other churches contribute to the cost of the minister? Could a Methodist Minister, for example, end up being the Area Vicar?**

The aim is to develop a sense of shared mission between all the Churches Anglican and otherwise, in an MMA, and to develop opportunities for the sharing of worship and ministry. Generally speaking this will be a co-operation in kind rather than a specific financial arrangement. Where ecumenical co-operation benefits financially is when the people of an MMA decide that they can manage with less stipendiary Anglican ministry because there is a high level of input from other traditions. There is good experience of working ecumenically in the LEPs (Local Ecumenical Partnerships) in this Diocese where ministry and finance are more closely linked – that provides the model for deeper sharing. Technically, at the moment it is not possible for a non-Anglican to be the Area Vicar. This is because the Area Vicar receives the cure of souls from the Bishop and we have not yet developed a sufficiently secure pattern of joint oversight. This could emerge as the Anglican Methodist Covenant takes root. A pattern of shared ministry between different churches that does exist in the Diocese are where Anglican and non-Anglican churches have clubbed together to employ a youth or schools worker. This would clearly work well in a MMA where a number of churches choose to support a lay worker in the area.

### **29. What is the role of the chaplaincies in all of this?**

Chaplains have a key role in delivering the church's ministry and mission to 'where people are'. They are therefore an important part of the whole process. Where a MMA includes an area of chaplaincy ministry, it is expected that the leadership team of that MMA will be in dialogue with that chaplain. It would be theoretically possible to see a chaplaincy team become a MMA in its own right and this may be how God will lead us in the future, but this will probably be a little way down the line. Chaplains, like others, are being invited to listen carefully to how their particular ministry fits into this overall plan, and to offer any suggestions to the Project Officer.

### **30. Won't clergy and lay people just end up doing more and more?**

If that is the result, then we will have failed. Part of this exercise is to explore together how we can offer mission and ministry in better ways, because the old ways are no longer proving effective. In the coming years we will have to let go of some expressions of ministry that are no longer either appropriate or possible because of the changes that are taking place. This will vary from place to place, according to the particular needs of the community our MMA serves. This is where we will have to listen to God very carefully together, to 'see what God is doing and to join in', which also means 'See what God is not doing, and leave that alone'.

## section 4 support

### **31. What do parishes in vacancy do?**

At this stage of the process, parishes in vacancy need to ensure that the wardens, Readers and others in leadership are in close touch with their neighbouring parish and the Deanery for the developments of MMA's. Once the MMA is established, when one parish in an MMA becomes vacant, the major source of support for that parish will be the other parishes in the MMA. This may coincide with a reduction in staffing, so what would happen is that particular vacancy would not be filled and the group of clergy and support lay ministers would take a step forward in serving the whole area. There will be increased support for a church in vacancy, by belonging to a larger group of churches which are caring for each other.

### **32. Who is there to help us at this stage of setting up MMA's?**

There already exists a small team of people who have been trained to give support to churches in vacancy. This team will also become available for parishes that need help in getting their MMA established. If you would like to make use of this help, consult with the Project Officer in the first instance.

### **33. What happens if we really can't think of a way of forming a MMA in our area? Who can help us?**

If you are absolutely stuck, you ask for help from the Rural Dean & Lay Chair. They should be able to link you with congregations that are making progress. The Rural Dean may well consult the Project Officer – we hope to proceed by sharing good practice and supporting one another. Nobody should feel alone.

## section 5 buildings

### **34. You have asked us to be more mission-focussed, and we are trying to be, but we need to do some reordering of our church to make it more welcoming. But the DAC won't allow us to do this. Can't the DAC be more flexible now that the need for mission is so urgent?**

The DAC, more than any secular body, should be in a position to respond to mission-focused reorderings of church plant. However, it has statutory responsibilities with regard to its advice and any proposed scheme will need to be well thought through and presented in such a way that DAC is able to recommend it whilst discharging its statutory "planning authority" responsibilities. The DAC has to take into account the amenity societies and other statutory bodies. There is pressure on the Dept of Culture, Media and Sport to take away faculty jurisdiction from the churches. In order to retain it, the Chancellor and DAC have to be seen to be acting professionally. Early consultation with the Archdeacon and/or with the Secretary of the Committee is advised.

### **35. Can a church be temporarily closed or 'mothballed' to give a congregation time for consideration?**

In practice, yes, but whilst churches may temporarily fall out of use and experiments with different patterns of worship will undoubtedly be necessary, it will also be important to ensure that decisions about the future use of particular buildings are not prejudiced by artificially early closure. The Code of Practice relating to the process of redundancy of churches has always been keen to prevent premature action which precludes the whole of the affected community from being involved in the process.

## section 6 mission

### **36. Could you identify the churches that are growing in the Diocese and identify clear factors for growth?**

There is clear merit in sharing lessons of growth, and where churches feel they have discovered some key factors that have been determining growth in their church, they are invited to write to the Project Officer who is more than happy to produce a list of significant growth factors in this Diocese. The Mission Adviser and Parish Development Officer would also have involvement in this.

### **37. Is this project inspired by God, or is it just a restructuring exercise to manage church life more efficiently?**

Bishop David has written, 'I believe this project is inspired by God in the sense that God encourages us to face realities and to go forward in hope and partnership – with a commitment to mission and a desire to grow as a holy people'. Renewing Ministry is not 'just a restructuring exercise'. It is a calling. In the face of major changes both in the church and society, we are seeking to respond to God's call for us to reshape how we deliver mission and ministry to our communities. We certainly hope that a fruit of this will be a better level of efficiency, for good efficiency means that people are well cared for, and we believe God is calling us to give the best possible care to those we serve.