



RENEWING
Ministry

The MMA Council



Diocese
of Derby



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

The MMA Council

The task is to develop the vision of the MMA, and identify specific needs and opportunities. Renewing Ministry is about encouraging the three qualities of mission, collaboration and care. These will shape the life of the MMA Council as it addresses practical matters including sharing ministry, resources and the MMA Share as well as developing a shared life wherever possible with ecumenical partners. The following notes are designed to help guide your Steering Group as it considers this task.

1. Vision and Purpose of the MMA

Initially the Steering Group will need to gain a picture of the life and work of the MMA churches. This will involve listening to those who are in leadership in the churches and listening to God with them. How does God want the combined life of these churches to further the work of mission? Some will want to use the terms 'Vision Statement' or 'Mission Statement' etc. You use whatever suits you, but the result of this process needs to be a clear and shared understanding about how God wants to use this particular grouping of churches in your particular part of the world.

It is important to get the vision first, so that the structure serves the vision and the MMA Council can be a vibrant and imaginative group. To create a structure before the vision is a recipe for producing a bureaucratic committee that restricts life rather than releasing it.

The MMA Council will be particularly concerned with four areas:

- i. **Sharing Mission:** It will need to be aware of what each church is doing in terms of mission, keeping this as a priority item in its meetings, and prayerfully considering new mission strategies and plans, making good use of the various gifts and enthusiasms of the member churches. Where can you inspire each other? Where do you need to support each other? You may want to use the 5 Marks of Mission (see Appendix 1) and see what each church is doing under each heading.
- ii. **Sharing Ministry:** What is the current pattern of worship in the churches of the MMA? Who is involved in providing ministry in the MMA? What kind of support does the ministry team need? Are there more services than the ministry team can reasonably cope with? Are there joint services, for example at festival occasions – joint Carol Service etc.? Are there ministries (such as bereavement care, youth work or marriage preparation) that can be done together. What are the ecumenical opportunities in terms of shared ministry?

iii. **Sharing People and Resources:** What are the combined resources in the MMA (people, buildings, projects, identity)? Who is too stressed? Who has more time to give and is looking for new opportunities? Where are the gaps and are there ways these can be filled? Can pastoral care and youth work be shared? What are the administrative needs of the MMA? Is there someone who has the gift of pulling this together? What about a combined website? Can IT skills and experience be shared? Can there be a sharing of things like photocopying equipment?

iv. **Sharing the MMA Share:** The Council will not get involved in the individual finances of each member church except where joint projects have been agreed. There will be two important financial tasks that need overseeing by the Council:

- a) **The apportionment of shares** from the member churches that make up the MMA share. This may include discussion about whether any of the churches need support due to particular circumstances.
- b) **The apportionment of contributions** from member churches towards a common fund for administration and other agreed shared costs. It is recommended that a separate bank account be opened for these MMA costs with an agreed treasurer and designated signatories.

Some Councils may wish to set up particular finance task groups for these. When contributions to the MMA share is discussed, incumbents and PCC Treasurers will of course need to be involved

A MMA may wish to appoint staff and it will be the Council's responsibility to see that appropriate work agreements and supervision structures are in place. But note, while the Area Council has no legal status, it cannot employ staff, and only PCCs can act in this role. If you need guidance about work agreements, terms of employment etc. you may like to contact those parishes that are currently employing staff and Derby Church House can give you contact details for these.

2. Membership

Who is going to be a member of the MMA Council? It is up to you as there are no fixed rules. It will be better to start small and give opportunity for the building up of relationships and then expand from there if new gifts are needed by the group. Think about the tasks that the Council has to fulfil, and then consider what skills are going to be needed to fulfil those tasks. Then see who there might be who could be invited. Do remember we are aiming to give a clear mission-focus to this council, so make sure you include some mission enthusiasts. There is a real opportunity to

create a dynamic, visionary group with a lightweight structure that gives energy and leadership to your MMA. Some MMAs may want to build in ecumenical representation from the start. It will be important to ensure that someone with administrative skills is part of the council to ensure clear records are kept of the meetings and agreed actions are carried out. Larger MMAs may want to appoint task groups to manage some aspects of MMA life. The apportionment of share would be one obvious example.

3. Regularity of meetings

It is the Area Vicar's job to convene the meetings, and s/he will want to consult to see when it is best to meet and how often. Careful thought needs to be given to the planning and even spread of meetings during the year, bearing in mind there are PCCs and Deanery Synods that some members of the Council might also be attending. You will need to think carefully about how many meetings are necessary and ensure people are not overloaded. It is appropriate to look for some reduction in the number of other meetings. Diaries will need to be planned well in advance with good co-ordination.

4. Communication

It is essential that there is good communication between PCCs and the MMA Council. In the Toolkit *Communicating within a MMA*, it is recommended that someone is appointed with special responsibility for communication in a MMA and they would need to be on the MMA Council, and would be responsible for seeing that PCCs know what has been discussed at the Council, and also ensure that PCCs are communicating clearly with the Council.

5. The Status of the MMA Council

The Mission Council has no legal status. This allows for experimentation and will give you the freedom to develop the model that best serves your vision. It is an important time of listening to God and being open to the Holy Spirit showing us new ways of doing our business, earthing the life and work of the Council in gospel principles, and operating in ways where churches honour, respect and support each other in Christian love. We all carry a responsibility to hand on to future generations a lightweight and efficient structure that allows the churches to work well together in the tasks to which God has called us.

Appendix 1

The Five Marks of Mission:

1. **Tell** Proclaiming the good news of the kingdom
2. **Teach** Teaching, baptising and nurturing new believers
3. **Tend** Respond to human need by loving service
4. **Transform** Seeking to transform unjust structures of society
5. **Treasure** Safeguarding the integrity of creation, sustaining and renewing the life of the earth

