



RENEWING  
Ministry

# The Role of the Area Vicar

## 1. COLLABORATIVE WORKING

- a. All ministerial colleagues including the Area Vicar are there to learn from one another and co-operate with one another.
- b. Within a MMA, unless it is agreed otherwise by the Bishop and Diocesan Pastoral Committee, each Vicar (or Rector etc.) will be appointed to a church or churches for which s/he will carry primary responsibility. This responsibility includes matters such as the form and content of services, relationships with PCCs and wardens etc.
- c. Colleagues need to be mindful of the mission statements of each of the member churches, so the vision of each individual church is considered as the wider MMA vision is formed.
- d. Colleagues are likely to want to worship and pray together regularly.
- e. Each colleague has responsibility for ensuring that the team is working well and that there is a good level of mutual care and support. If one of the ministers is unhappy with any aspect of the working together, they are encouraged to share this at one of the meetings.

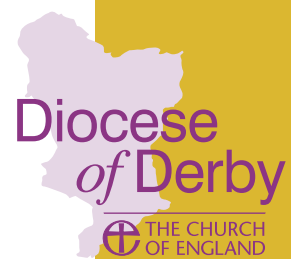
## 2. AREA VICAR RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES

- a. Where a MMA has only one stipendiary priest, then that priest is the Area Vicar. Where a MMA has more than one stipendiary priest, then one will serve as the Area Vicar.
- b. The MMA gives opportunity to develop a model of servant leadership that is suited to the culture and needs of ministry in the 21st Century.
- c. The Area Vicar has a particular responsibility to the Bishop for encouraging churches within the MMA to work together in mission and ministry.
- d. The Area Vicar will be the co-ordinator of a team of colleagues, clergy and lay, and will therefore need to be someone with listening skills, a good understanding of personality differences, ability to manage conflict, and a genuine desire and ability to make teamwork happen. The person appointed to this role will, under God, provide an over-view and identify opportunities for joint witness and the sharing of resources, as well as having responsibility for particular congregation(s).
- e. The following notes provide guidance for the various roles and responsibilities of an Area Vicar. The Area Vicar will involve individual PCCs and the MMA Council and will delegate in consultation with colleagues. The nature and role of the Council is expected to evolve in a way best suited to the local situation.

### i) The Responsibilities of the Area Vicar

In addition to his/her responsibilities for particular congregation(s) in the MMA, the Area Vicar is responsible for:

- a. ensuring a clear sense of direction for ministry and mission in the MMA.
- b. ensuring that there is a good level of communication in the MMA.



- c. fostering good relationships among colleagues in the MMA, and ensuring they have necessary support.
- d. ensuring administration is handled efficiently, including the apportionment and collection of the allocated MMA share.
- e. serving as chair of the MMA Council with a lay co-chair.

## ii) The Role of the Area Vicar

The Area Vicar's main task is to co-ordinate mission and ministry in the area. Initially this includes:

- a. meeting with colleagues to establish a pattern for working in partnership. Those involved may include stipendiary clergy, NSMs, readers, pastoral assistants, youth workers, ecumenical colleagues etc. Chaplaincy ministry may well be included. The Area Vicar then acts as convenor and co-ordinator, so that colleagues together provide appropriate ministry to the churches and communities within the MMA.
- b. agreeing with colleagues a pattern of working that will ensure a good level of collaboration in the MMA. This is likely to vary from MMA to MMA.
- c. agreeing and instituting a process for defining ministry and mission plans for the MMA, working with colleagues and the MMA Council. These will include relating to the communities around, and exploring opportunities for, fresh expressions of church.

*The outworking of these tasks includes:*

- d. ensuring that each minister (clergy and lay) has clear expectations about their roles in the MMA with a good level of mutual care in which all ministers are getting adequate time off, and that occasional offices are covered when colleagues are absent.
- e. relating to ecumenical colleagues, having a working knowledge of any ecumenical structures in the MMA, and promoting patterns of working together ecumenically wherever possible.
- f. ensuring with colleagues that adequate CME opportunities are in place for those responsible for teaching and preaching.
- g. agreeing with colleagues how many acts of public worship are desirable and manageable in the area, and how these can be staffed. This discussion will also include the staffing of occasional offices, preparing candidates for marriage, baptism and confirmation, caring for the sick and developing specialist ministries in the MMA.
- h. developing an acceptable plan for efficient administration in the MMA.
- i. encouraging the MMA Council to plan whatever meetings and patterns of charring are necessary for the workings of the MMA.
- j. being involved in new clergy appointments in the MMA by ensuring the wider vision of the MMA is taken into account.
- k. overseeing adjustments that need to be made during the period of transition when the staffing level is reduced (e.g. when a stipendiary priest retires or moves, and it has been agreed that s/he will not be replaced).
- l. discussing with colleagues how vocations can be promoted, especially for the purpose of identifying those who can serve in the MMA such as NSMs, Readers etc.
- m. meeting with neighbouring MMA Area Vicars for good communication including the sharing of vision, ideas and good practice.
- n. in collaboration with the Rural Dean, ensuring parishes in vacancy in the MMA are cared for.

## 3. PROCESS FOR SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT

- a. The appointment will be made by the Bishop after careful consultation along the lines currently followed for the appointment of a rural dean. He will notify all member parishes of his decision
- b. The Area Vicar post will be for an initial 5 year period.
- c. The Area Vicar will be commissioned on an occasion agreed by the Bishop normally by the Rural Dean, or by the Archdeacon if the Area Vicar is also the Rural Dean.