

Introduction to the Handbook for Rural Deans

Rural deans, assistant rural deans and lay chairs play key roles in the work of the diocese and in the mission of God. The work combines legal responsibilities, pastoral responsibility for those in their particular deanery and a strategic role in ministry and mission. Deaneries offer significant opportunities for clergy and laity to support one another and to learn together locally. The work done in the deaneries, formally through chapters, synods and committees, as well as informally in developing loving relationships, is where much hard work is done in providing the structures and support for confident Christian communities to grow and flourish. The leadership offered by the deanery team is crucial in enabling this to occur.

This document sets out the responsibilities of rural deans, assistant rural deans and lay chairs and deals with practicalities. It offers a summary of the current situation which is expected to change and continue to change. These guidelines will need updating as this happens and as the leadership roles within the deanery structures evolve. The most up to date version of this document is to be found on the diocesan website. We hope that it will support you and your colleagues in this ministry in the deanery and that you will be aware of God's blessing as you serve him through this ministry.

May 2014