

GUIDANCE ON ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

The basis of this guidance has been issued by the Archbishops' Council for information and to assist the development of good practice across dioceses. It does not constitute formal guidance or directions under the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) legislation.

All documents are available on the Diocese of Oxford Website which can be found at www.oxford.anglican.org/commontenure

CONTENTS

PAGE

To enable easy access to the right section/ information you want to read about, we have created links for all items on this 'contents' list. To take advantage of this facility, please press the 'Ctrl' button on your keyboard + 'left click' on the text

INTRODUCTION

3

PART 1 – Role Descriptions

4 - 9

- 1.1 *Defining Role Descriptions*
- 1.2 *Purpose*
- 1.3 *Key principles when developing role descriptions*
- 1.4 *Contents of Role Descriptions*
- 1.5 *When is a Role Description developed?*
- 1.6 *Outline of Recommended Process and Stakeholders*
- 1.7 *Who has a Role Description in our Diocese?*
- 1.8 *Key Documents and their relationship with Role Descriptions*

PART 2 – Diocesan Role Description Template

(Section by Section Guidance)

10 - 12

PART 3 – Person Specification

13 - 16

- 3.1 *Defining Person Specification*
- 3.2 *Purpose*
- 3.3 *Contents of Person Specifications in detail*
- 3.4 *Tips for Developing Effective Person Specification*
- 3.5 *What to avoid when putting together a Person Specification?*
- 3.6 *Key Documents and their relationship with Person Specification*

PART 4 – Timeline for implementation

17

SECTION 5 – Annexes

18 – 30

Appendix A Recommended Process for Developing RDs

19

Appendix B – Role Description (Template)

20 - 23

Appendix C - Examples of Role Purpose

24

Appendix D - Preparing the 'Specific' section of RD

25 - 26

Appendix E - Examples of writing 'key responsibilities'

27 - 28

Appendix F - Examples of statements in a Person Specification

29 - 30

INTRODUCTION

Role Descriptions, although not legal documents, are an important part of clergy Terms of Service.

The Diocese of Oxford is committed to ensure that by the end of 2013 all office holders under Common Tenure in the diocese have a Role Description or a similar document. Supporting Ministers and Assistant Curates in Training will have already developed respectively Ministerial Working Agreements and Learning Agreements. Through this commitment we ensure that the diocese:

- ❖ makes clear our expectations of clergy in parochial ministry
- ❖ adopts and maintains good practice
- ❖ supports clergy in minimising stress
- ❖ complies with the national guidelines

Although incumbents in freehold posts prior to 31 January 2011 who have not opted into Common Tenure are not strictly required to have role descriptions, it is increasingly recognised to be good practice and the Diocese encourages freehold clergy to cooperate in developing role descriptions.

To prepare us for this, we have developed 'The Guidance on Role Descriptions' to advise everyone involved in the process. More specifically, this is a document that gives guidance and advice on:

- ❖ purpose of having role description/s and person specification/s
- ❖ contents of role descriptions for parochial clergy
- ❖ process for developing role descriptions
- ❖ stakeholders to be engaged in the process

It also offers a diocesan template as well as examples of various role descriptions as they start being developed.

The guidance is based on the national guidelines of the Church of England and information shared by other dioceses. It is written for parochial clergy and licensed lay workers in our Diocese. It does not, however, offer any advice to Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) who act as employers in their own right. A separate document may be put together for this purpose in due time.

The electronic version of this document is found on the Diocese of Oxford website by following the links within the pages dedicated to Common Tenure at www.oxford.anglican.org/commontenure. This version will always be deemed to be the extant and most up-to-date version and will clearly show the date it was last updated. Therefore it is important to note that although you are welcome to print a copy for your office that may soon become out of date. Any questions or points of clarification on the Diocese of Oxford policies, practices and procedures should be raised in the first instance with the Archdeacon who may then refer to Poli Shajko, Clergy HR Manager, for further advice and guidance.

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PART 1 – Role Descriptions

1.1 *Defining Role Descriptions*

A 'role description' describes a role at the time of writing. It describes what the role holder is required to do to carry out the role effectively.

Different to the Statement of Particulars (SoP), a legal document that states the obligations and rights of ecclesiastical office holders, a role description is not legally required but is seen more as a tool of good practice.

1.2 *Purpose*

Role Descriptions can be used for a variety of purposes:

- ❖ help articulate the most important outcomes needed from an individual performing a particular role
- ❖ inform Ministerial Development Review
- ❖ inform continuing ministerial development needs
- ❖ inform the appointment process
- ❖ be a communication tool to tell other individuals in the team where their role leaves off and the role of another individual starts.
- ❖ tell a clergy person where their role fits within the overall benefice/ deanery/ archdeaconry and diocesan structure
- ❖ may protect you legally when you can demonstrate why the candidate selected for a position was your most qualified and culturally suited applicant.

The purpose of the Role Description is to set out the main aspects of a role. **It is not intended to describe everything an Office Holder does or to be constraining.** It works on the basis that if these aspects are achieved, other areas of the role will undoubtedly also be covered.

1.3 *Key principles when developing role descriptions:*

There are some principles to follow when writing a role description:

- ❖ **Role – Not the person** - Describe the requirements of the role not the person in it. Describe the responsibilities and functions of the role, not how they are discharged by the current role holder.
- ❖ **Analysis – not lists** - Summarise the functions of the role; don't write a list of the tasks that are carried out by the role holder

- ❖ **Facts – not judgements** - The role description should be a clear, factual record of what the role holder is required to do. Do not under-state or over-state the requirements of the role – try to describe them objectively and accurately.
- ❖ **Length** - Role descriptions should be no more than 5 pages long. This can be achieved by taking care to describe the core of the role in *broad* terms rather than fine details. Also, take care not to repeat the same information in different sections.
- ❖ **Timing** - Describe the role being done, or required to be done, now and in the foreseeable future. It is advisable, that the role description should be confirmed once the post holder has been in office for six to nine months, and this should be clearly stated on the role description. Subsequently, it should be reviewed as required (perhaps every 3 years as part of the MDR process).

Other general tips for writing good role descriptions

- ❖ Gather the role information that already exists
- ❖ Use clear and concise language
- ❖ Use examples to clarify words that have multiple meanings
- ❖ Avoid unnecessary words such as "the," "an," and "a."
- ❖ Avoid individual names; use role titles instead
- ❖ Don't refer to specific terms that change frequently or are not understood outside your setting. If this is unavoidable, then please use footnotes to clarify
- ❖ Avoid gender-based language such as "he" and "she."
- ❖ Consider role descriptions as 'live documents' and revise them as advised especially after a pastoral reorganisation

Finally, where possible, office holders should have only one Role Description. Where additional duties are undertaken, especially in the case of an office holder with Area Dean responsibilities, these can be added under a specific section Additional Responsibilities. Also, in the scenario of 'dual roles', if the roles are linked by design, then one Role Description should be used. The lead is taken by the SoP, i.e if one SoP is issued, then this should be complemented by one role description.

1.4 Contents of Role Descriptions

The main sections of the role descriptions in our diocese are as follows:

- ❖ **Details of the Post** – This section details the title of the post.
- ❖ **Context** – Use this section to describe the diocesan vision as well as local vision and plans.
- ❖ **Role Purpose and Key Responsibilities** – This is the most important part of the role description.
- ❖ **Benefice summary** – This information is taken from the Parish Profile if you already have developed one. If not, this is a good opportunity to think about collecting key information about your benefice and write down the summary here.
- ❖ **Key contacts for the role** – This section is used to list both 'internal' and 'external' contacts that the post holder is either expected or potentially may develop as the role progresses.
- ❖ **Other** – This section maybe used to identify the other documents linked to the role description as well as to indicate the person that 'signs off' the role description.

Please note: Part 2 of this document elaborates on each of the areas identified above.

1.5 When is a Role Description developed?

There are a number of situations when a Role Description needs to be developed and/or revised when:

- ❖ A complete new role that did not exist before has been created for example when a new church has been opened; a new benefice created and so on.
- ❖ Some pastoral reorganisation has taken place and as a result, roles within the new team have changed and there is a material change in the role description.
- ❖ An office holder has left the role and as a result a vacancy has arisen.
- ❖ The MDR takes place. Every three years, as part of the review that takes place at an MDR meeting with the Bishop/ Archdeacon The role description may be referred to during the annual MDR, but should not be formally reviewed at every MDR. MDR focuses on the objectives – which would also include some personal development objectives, which would not necessarily directly relate to the needs of the benefice. However, one of the objectives that might spring from MDR could be to revise the role description and consult over how it might be amended.

1.6 (a) Outline of Recommended Process and Stakeholders (current roles)

Role Descriptions need to be developed in an inclusive way and a recommended process is provided below.

- ❖ **Step One: Decide who will be involved in drafting the Role Description**
The table below indicates who should be involved at a minimum in the development of Role Descriptions for a variety of roles. This is a guide only and is not prescriptive; you may draw on other combinations for input into writing the description as seems appropriate for the role.

Role – Post Holder	Key partner	Other (s) to be involved / support the development of the Role Description
Incumbent (Rector/ Vicar/ Team Rector)	PCC representative	Area Dean and Archdeacon
Priest in Charge	Warden(s) - Max 2	Area Dean and Archdeacon
Team Vicar	Team Rector	Warden(s) - Max 2 Other team members
Assistant Curate (not in training)	Incumbent	Warden(s) - Max 2 Other team members
Incumbent with additional Area Dean	Warden(s) - Max 2	Lay Chair and Archdeacon

responsibilities		
<p><u>Please note:</u></p> <p>1 The above table does not include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Self Supporting Ministers (SSMs) who have developed or are in the process of developing Ministerial Working Agreements with their Incumbent</i> ❖ <i>Assistant Curates in Training, who have developed or are in the process of developing Learning Agreements with their Training Incumbent</i> <p>2 Signing off (see full process in the section below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ All role descriptions should be signed off by the Archdeacon. 		

- ❖ **Step Two: Study the Role Description Template** - The Diocese has a Role Description template. This should be used as the basis of the Role Description for each individual post holder. It offers a number of generic sections that you will not need to do anything with. However, please read it carefully to identify what else you need to do to individualise your role description. It is the 'specific' areas you need to pay attention to. The post holder and others that have been identified to take part in developing the role description should study this template and any other example/s in advance of any arranged meeting.
- ❖ **Step Three: Preliminary work for a meeting to develop the Role Description** - The post holder will provide the first draft for the Role Description. However, the final document will include the input and the agreement of the key partner as well as feedback/ thoughts, suggestions from others that have been identified as involved or supporting the process (see table above). When preparing the first draft, it is helpful to consider any immediate and medium/ long term needs of the post. It will also be helpful to refer to available documents, such as the Parish Profile, any benefice or deanery planning documents, and any other information/ document considered to be relevant. Please share your first draft with everyone involved at least two weeks prior to your meeting with the key partner. This way you will ensure everyone has had an opportunity to contribute
- ❖ **Step Four: Meet to agree the Role Description** - It is best for the post holder and the key partner to meet together to complete the Role Description. Work through each section and agree what should be recorded. The post holder may feel it would be helpful for a facilitator to be there. This maybe considered but generally, it is not a 'must have'. It is important to note that the meeting is to discuss what is needed from the role. The meeting should not be used to review an individual's performance.
- ❖ **Step Five: Agree the Role Description** - After the meeting between the post holder and the key partner, the completed draft should be sent to all those involved for a final comment and to confirm that they are happy with its contents. It is essential that the post holder and the key partner agree/ reach consensus on the contents of the role description. If there is disagreement between those involved in the development of the Role Description a facilitator maybe called upon to try to resolve this informally. If consensus cannot be achieved it should be referred to the Archdeacon.

- ❖ **Step Six: Signing off the Role Description** - The agreed Role Description should be sent to the Archdeacon for signing off. If there are areas of disagreement in the document, this needs to be made clear to the Archdeacon either within the body of the document or in an accompanying note. The Archdeacon is the person that has the final say and signs off the role description.
- ❖ **Step Seven: Circulation and Storing** – Once the Archdeacon has signed off the Role Description (s)he sends the original to the Bishop’s Office to be placed in the individual’s ‘blue file’; keeps one copy for his/ her records and sends two other copies to the post holder and the key partner. The archdeacon will also save the ‘role description’ in the electronic central file at: R:\Store\Senior Staff\Clergy HR\Role Descriptions, Ministerial Working Agreements and Learning Agreements\Individual Role Descriptions\Area\ Role Title

1.6 (b) Outline of Recommended Process and Stakeholders (during a vacancy)

- ❖ If there is a vacancy, a Role Description for the vacant post will need to be developed. It is important to note that this needs to take place following appointment process good practice.
- ❖ More specifically, it is essential that the initial Role Description for the vacant post as well as the Person Specification are developed as part of the process of developing the Parish Profile
- ❖ PCC has the responsibility for preparing the Parish Profile and within that the Role Description and Person Specification
- ❖ Parish Development Advisers (PDAs) support and provide advice in this area.
- ❖ Area Deans and Lay Chairs sometimes get involved too .

Please note: The above processes for developing Role Descriptions are summarised in the flowchart – **Appendix A**

1.7 Who has a Role Description in our Diocese?

Role descriptions are recommended by the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations. Therefore we should expect each office holder with common tenure to have one.

However, in this Diocese we are working on the basis that in time all licensed ministers have a role description, apart from Assistant Curates in Training who will have Learning Agreements and Self Supporting Ministers who will have Ministerial Working Agreements.

1.8 Key Documents and their relationship with Role Descriptions

The role description should be closely derived from the *benefice needs* identified and articulated in the profile and the bishop’s statement, if there is one.

Benefice Statement of Needs - Under Section 11 (1) (a) of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986, the PCC is required to produce 'a statement describing the conditions, needs and traditions of the benefice'. These are included in the Parish Profile

Bishop's statement - If requested by the PCC under Section 11 (1) (e) of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986, the bishop produces 'a statement in writing describing in relation to the benefice the needs of the diocese and the wider interests of the Church'.

In addition, there are *general expectations of a priest expressed in:*

- ❖ The Ordinal
- ❖ The Canons
- ❖ Assessment at end of curacy based on completion of learning outcomes

Person specification - This is produced from the role description, the statement of needs, and the bishop's statement (if there is one) during a vacancy. Section 2 of this Guidance is dedicated to the 'person specification'

Advertisement - If the post is advertised, the advertisement will need to be consistent with the above. More information on advertisements may be found in other diocesan document/s for example those focussing on 'appointments'

Terms and conditions of Service (SoPs) - These will need to be agreed before the post is advertised and will provide some information for the role description. They are formally issued by the Archdeacon one month from the appointment start date.

Ministerial Development Review and objectives - The role description may be referred to, but should not be formally reviewed at every MDR, although it should be reviewed as required (perhaps at least once every 3 years). MDR focuses on reflection on what has gone well and on personal development; this may not necessarily relate to the needs of the benefice. However, one of the agreed actions that might spring from MDR could be to revise the role description and consult over how it might be amended.

PART 2 – Diocesan Role Description Template (Section by Section Guidance)

The Role Description Template in the diocese of Oxford is provided in [Appendix B](#). It comprises 6 main sections. *This should be printed out and referred to when you go through Part 2 of this guidance.*

SECTION ONE: DETAILS OF THE POST

As the headline suggests, this section details the particulars of the post.

Role title: Care needs to be taken to write down the title exactly as it is written in the licence and Statement of Particulars (SoP) and not as the role is known informally, so that consistency is achieved.

Type of Role: This section establishes whether the role is full time stipendiary/ part –time stipendiary/ house for duty. Again, this information should be retrieved from the SoP as the most accurate.

Name of benefice/ Episcopal area/ Deanery/ Archdeaconry: Name of benefice as described in the licence

Conditions of Service/ Key contact for Clergy Terms of Service/Accountability: The text for these three headlines is provided in the template. No need to do anything

Additional Responsibility: Please use this section to include subsidiary appointments such as chaplaincies and diocesan roles that **are not separate appointments** and estimate proportion of time.

SECTION TWO: CONTEXT

Wider Context

The text for this section is already provided in the template. It must feature in all role descriptions in the diocese and you should not alter its content as it has been written by Bishop John.

Local Context

Use this section to give a brief description of local context including vision and Deanery Ministry Action Plan (MAP). One or two paragraphs should be sufficient

For example: The Deanery Pastoral plan identified that in the future this benefice needs to share Ministry with a neighbouring benefice, but left open options for relationships with two different benefices because of issues of geography and church tradition.

SECTION THREE: ROLE PURPOSE AND KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

This is the most important part of the role description. This statement, which describes the main purpose of the role should be:

- brief
- normally, no more than 2 or 3 sentences in length.

The key responsibilities:

- should focus more on **‘what’** rather than on **‘how’**. So, it is not a detailed list of how the role is done
- nor is it a list of problems, tasks and activities.

General:

The text under ‘general’ is the same for all role descriptions in the diocese and should not be altered.

Whilst the generic statement would be appropriate for most parochial appointments in the diocese, the specific purpose of the role you are writing about must be an accurate and concise statement summarising the overall purpose of the role at the time of writing. These statements draw on the Ordinal and the Canons and possibly the diocesan mission strategy. They would state the relationship with the bishop, as the person with oversight with whom the cure of souls is shared.

Key responsibilities specific to the local situation:

You only need to think about writing the ‘specific’ elements of the ‘role purpose’ and ‘key responsibilities’. For more examples of how you can express the purpose and the key responsibilities of the role under each heading, please refer to [Appendix C](#)

Items should be limited to 2 for each area where possible. They should be ‘outcome focused’ rather than ‘task focused’. For example, rather than say “To attend the monthly meeting with the Local Authority Ward Coordinators” it would be better to say “Actively contribute to working with other organisations to support the development of local neighbourhood initiatives”. This allows more scope, freedom and flexibility about how to achieve the specific area of the role description. Some items will be maintenance of key areas, others may be new areas.

The key responsibilities listed above may be supported by long and short term objectives to be agreed between the post holder and the incumbent (in the case of an assistant priest) or the Church Wardens and Archdeacon (in the case of incumbents)

For a checklist of how to go about preparing the ‘specific’ section, please see [Appendix D](#)
For illustrative examples, please see [Appendix E](#)

Other responsibilities

These are generic in nature and will feature in all role descriptions in our diocese. Please do not change or alter the text already written in the template

SECTION FOUR: BENEFICE SUMMARY

This information is taken from the Parish Profile if you already have developed one. If not, this is a good opportunity to think about collecting key information about your benefice and write down the summary here. This section is very factual. Typically, it includes number of parish(es); name/s of Patron/s and numbers of Churchwarden/s; number of ministers as well as any building(s), population and the usual Sunday attendance; it states whether resolution A, B, C have been passed; any reorganisation proposals and whether there are any significant business and/ outreach community projects.

SECTION FIVE: KEY CONTACTS FOR THE ROLE

Key contacts for the role – This section is used to list both ‘internal’ and ‘external’ contacts that the post holder is either expected to develop or potentially may develop as the role progresses.

Pastoral care and oversight are ultimately the responsibility of the diocesan Bishop, who shares this responsibility with (and in some cases delegates it to) members of his staff team. The post holder might relate to different members of that team at different times. The list may include: the Archdeacon; The Area Dean; Director of IME; DDO; The Bishop’s Officer for Pastoral Care and Counselling and so on.

In addition, benefice ministry team; churchwardens and other members of the PCC, deanery chapter, synod as well as some external contacts, such as head(s) of local school(s), hospital(s), community groups, committees that the post holder will establish and develop in the course of duties. A number of these contacts have already been written in the template. However, you may need either to alter them or insert more contacts as you are aware of the local context.

SECTION SIX: OTHER

This section is used to identify the other documents linked to the role description as well as to indicate the person that ‘signs off’ the role description. The text is generic in nature and you simply need to enter the name of the Archdeacon and Episcopal Area.

PART 3 – Person Specification

3.1 *Defining Person Specification*

The person specification is the document that describes the skills; knowledge and experience; personal attributes/ qualities as well as education and training, which a person will need to have, or be able to acquire, in order to perform well in the role.

3.2 *Purpose*

Any appointment process aims to have the ‘right minister’ in the role. For this to be achieved, three elements are needed to exist: ‘*character*’; ‘*competence*’; ‘*chemistry*’ and more importantly, how the three of them relate to the specific context.

In other words, person specification defines the role in human terms. It supports the process of discernment through which candidates, patrons, benefice representatives and others involved in the appointment process discover whether someone has been called by God to serve in a particular place by:

- ❖ focussing on the attributes that are essential to carry out the duties of the post;
- ❖ listing the qualities and skills that will enable someone to carry out the duties of the post to a good standard; and
- ❖ avoiding unnecessary assumptions that might deter good candidates.

These will be assessed during a selection process. However, the expectations of what you are looking for need to be stated in the person specification document.

It is essential that a person specification is developed for every role during a vacancy.

3.3 *Contents of Person Specifications in detail*

It may be useful to list the criteria under the following categories, although they are only there to provide a general structure to help when preparing selection criteria.

- ❖ ***Qualifications/training*** - In the case of clergy, what is essential will be similar for most incumbent/ assistant priest status positions, and will include satisfactory completion of learning outcomes at the end of Initial Ministerial Education (IME)
- ❖ ***Experience*** - It is important to remember that people can be well able to carry out the duties of the post without necessarily having previous experience in that area of work. For example, someone ordained later in life, who has already run a large organisation effectively might be just as suitable as someone with many years of experience in parish ministry. Valuable experience can be gained in a variety of ways, (including before ordination) for example, through paid work in another sector, as a reader, through charity work, hobbies, bringing up a family, etc. Consider the type, level and quality of experience.

- ❖ **Knowledge, skills and competencies** - This covers the specific skills and knowledge the cleric is required to bring to the role and describes the behaviour needed for effective performance. Again, it is important to be specific. Rather than suggesting that someone needs to be an effective communicator, you should ask what kind of communication. If it is about 'leading and conducting worship' or 'preaching', further questions need to be asked about 'what kind of 'leading' or 'preaching' is needed in that particular benefice. Here is an example: ability to preach concisely and interestingly in a variety of styles and media to a range of ages.
- ❖ **General Attributes** - This section should refer to particular aspects of personality that are required to carry out the duties of the post. This area is often the most difficult to test objectively and care should be taken to avoid assumptions or stereotyping. For example, do not say: 'needs to have a good sense of humour/optimistic temperament'. It would, however, be appropriate to require qualities such as:
 - Good interpersonal skills that develop and maintain effective working relationships
 - the ability to work on own initiative
 - the ability to talk about how prayer has sustained them on their journey of faith and made them an effective minister
- ❖ **Other** - This should be used as necessary to list any criteria not covered by any of the above categories.

3.4 **Tips for Developing Effective Person Specification**

As already stated above, the person specification is essential to attract the right minister for the role. A good person specification:

- ❖ uses explicit terms to be as specific as possible about the requirements of the particular post
For example, (1) rather than referring to 'good preaching skills', write 'needs to be able to use a variety of presentation styles effectively, particularly in children's worship, in order to attract people to the Gospel and improve their understanding of it'. (2) Instead of 'pastoral experience' say 'needs to be able to provide examples of how their pastoral ministry has been effective'.
- ❖ The criteria must be specific, measurable (where appropriate), justifiable in relation to the role requirements and not be unnecessarily restrictive. Measurability does not necessarily imply something numerical, but should enable those assessing candidates to make fair comparisons
- ❖ is concise and straightforward and is drawn up directly from the role description and avoids unnecessary assumptions that might deter good candidates
- ❖ It is often helpful to specify whether a particular attribute is 'essential' or 'desirable'. However, describing a particular attribute as essential should only be done after careful consideration, as it will not be possible to make an appointment unless there is at least one candidate who meets all the essential criteria.

The criteria set out in the person specification are the only criteria against which applicants should be assessed at the short listing, test and interview stages.

3.5 What to avoid when putting together a Person Specification?

There are a number of statements that must be avoided when putting together the person specification for a role as failure to do so may potentially result in discrimination claims. Although not exhaustive, here is a list of what to avoid:

- ❖ The stipulation of length of experience should be used with caution, as quality of experience and what it enables someone to do competently is usually more important. Instead it would be better to require the ability to supervise and motivate with experience of conducting staff reviews/ appraisals, or to include overseeing the successful completion of a building project or a development appeal in the list of desirable qualities.
In any case, stipulating a length of time may be discriminatory under the age regulations. (It is possible to have had 10 years of bad experience!).
- ❖ Subjective or irrelevant criteria
- ❖ Care should be taken before including requirements that might disadvantage a disabled person. The Disability Discrimination Act imposes a duty to make reasonable adjustments to working arrangements and premises to prevent or reduce any substantial disadvantage that a disabled applicant would otherwise have. Consideration may, therefore, need to be given to making reasonable adjustments and allocating particular tasks to others. If there are physical requirements associated with the role, then be specific, e.g. 'must be able to make visits throughout a large multi-parish benefice sometimes out of normal working hours and at short-notice' and avoid broad statements that make assumptions, such as 'needs to be able to drive'.
- ❖ Theological tradition - It is not always necessary to specify in the person specification that a candidate must subscribe to a particular theological tradition. Such labels are potentially ambiguous and easily misinterpreted, and may have the effect of putting off some excellent candidates. Instead, it is better for the benefice to describe itself and what it wants the person to do. This might include requiring candidates to be supportive of the benefice's tradition or theological ethos, or to be able to operate within the theological and liturgical tradition of the benefice, as set out in its parish profile.
 - It is easy to assume that congregations will prefer someone who, as a matter of personal conviction, actively supports their own theological position rather than merely acquiesces in it. However, there are other factors.
 - Benefices often contain people with a number of different theological positions.
 - Labels can easily mislead. ('Open evangelical' may mean different things to different people.)
 - Some candidates genuinely want to broaden their experience by working in a tradition that is not their own.
 - Clergy change and develop their own theological position over time, and do not necessarily become unsuitable for their posts merely because the benefice does not change with them.
- ❖ Pastoral practice - Where the benefice has strong views on pastoral issues the role description may specify that this has been the tradition and the practice in the benefice. However, the person specification should not attempt to require support for a particular tradition or practice, as other factors will normally be involved, such as the provisions of the Canons, national guidance, policy in the diocese and the need for clergy to have a degree of freedom to exercise their conscience.

Please refer to [Appendix F](#) for an illustrative example of a person specification

3.6 Key Documents and their relationship with Person Specification

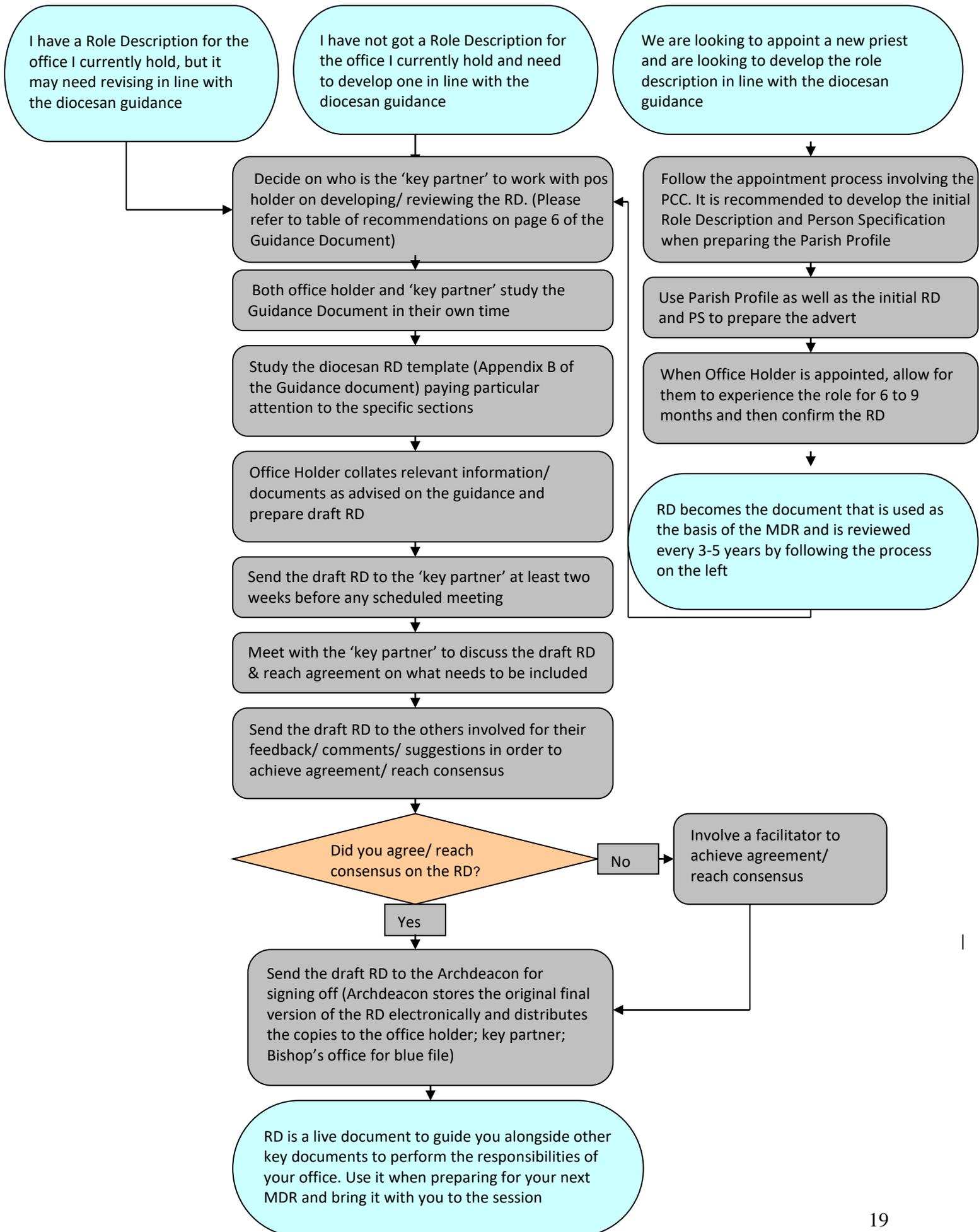
The person specification should be closely derived from the statement of needs produced by the benefice (parish profiles) and the bishop's statement, if there is one, in the same way as the role description does.

In addition, there are *general expectations of a priest expressed in:*

- ❖ The Ordinal
- ❖ The Canons
- ❖ The learning outcomes approved by the House of Bishops
- ❖ Assessment at end of curacy
- ❖ *Ministerial Development Review and objectives*
- ❖ *Advert during a vacancy*

PART 5 – ANNEXES

Appendix A Recommended Process for Developing Role Descriptions (RD)



Appendix B

ROLE DESCRIPTION (TEMPLATE)

SECTION ONE: DETAILS OF POST

Role title:	[insert the title as described in the licence and SoP]
Type of Role:	[insert one of the following: full time stipendiary/ part –time stipendiary/ house for duty]
Name of benefice:	[insert name of benefice as described in the licence]
Episcopal area:	[insert area]
Deanery:	
Archdeaconry:	[insert area]
Conditions of Service:	Please refer to Statements of Particulars document issued in conjunction with this role description
Key contact for Clergy Terms of Service: only for those on Common Tenure)	Archdeacon of [insert area]. This role falls within the Clergy Terms (use of Service formally known as Common Tenure. The Archdeacon of [insert area] is the designated person by the Bishop of Oxford to issue the Statement of Particulars for the post holder
Accountability	Priests share with the Bishop in the oversight of the Church. Whilst, as an office holder, the individual is expected to lead and prioritise work in line with the purpose of the role, they are encouraged to inform the incumbent (in case of assistant priests) and Archdeacon and Church Warden/s (in case of incumbents) about any issues exceptional or otherwise that have the potential to affect ongoing delivery of ministry
Additional Responsibility	[insert any additional responsibility here; otherwise state N/A]

SECTION TWO: CONTEXT

Wider Context

As a diocese we are committed to *holistic mission*, working through the framework of ‘*Living Faith for the Future*’. We have defined our purpose as ‘to join with God in creating a caring, sustainable and growing Christian presence in every part of the Diocese of Oxford, enabling every Christian and every Christian community to live and share the love of God, seen in the life of Jesus Christ.’

Within the Living Faith framework we are inviting every parish, benefice, Board and Committee to *paint their own unique work of art* using the colours of:

- Sustaining the Sacred Centre
- Making Disciples
- Making a Difference in the World
- Shaping Confident, Collaborative Leadership
- Creating Vibrant Christian Communities

These priorities are supported centrally by resources, training, conferences, workshops, missionaries and much more. We are inviting benefices and their priests to *share a vision* rather than demanding a response.

We encourage a priest to have a ministerial interest beyond the benefice which is a personal specialism and may be made available to the wider church – a ‘sixth day ministry’. Above all, we want all our priests to flourish in ministry and to deepen their enjoyment of God.

Local Context

[Insert Brief description of local context including vision and Deanery Ministry Action Plan (MAP)]

SECTION THREE: ROLE PURPOSE AND KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

General:

- A. To exercise the cure of souls shared with the bishop in *this benefice*¹ in collaboration with colleagues including the praying of the Daily Office, the administration of the sacraments and preaching
- B. To have regard to the calling and responsibilities of the clergy (as described in the Canons, the Ordinal, the Code of Professional Conduct for the Clergy) and other relevant legislation including
 - Bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and making him known to those in your care.
 - instructing the parishioners in the Christian faith
 - preparing candidates for confirmation
 - diligently visiting the parishioners of the benefice, particularly those who are sick and infirm
 - providing spiritual counsel and advice.
 - consulting with the parochial church council on matters of general concern and importance to the benefice.
 - bringing the needs of the world before God in intercession
 - calling your hearers to repentance and *declaring in Christ's name the absolution and forgiveness of their sins*²
 - *blessing people in God's name*²
 - preparing people for their death
 - discerning and fostering the gifts of all God's people
 - being faithful in prayer, expectant and watchful for the signs of God's presence, as he reveals his kingdom among us
- C. To of share in the wider work of the deanery and diocese as appropriate, for the building up of the whole Body Christ

Key responsibilities specific to the local situation:

[insert key responsibilities for each headline below]

- **Mission and Outreach**
- **Leadership and working collaboratively**
- **Worship and preaching**
- **Pastoral Care**
- **Stewardship and benefice organization**
- **Personal development and spirituality**

¹ This may need adaptation to Team or post, depending on circumstances

² This may need deleting for Deacons

The key responsibilities listed above may be supported by long and short term objectives to be agreed between the post holder and the incumbent (in the case of an assistant priest) or the Archdeacon and Church Wardens (in the case of incumbents)

Other responsibilities

- Participate in the Bishop's Ministerial Development Review scheme and engage in Continuing Ministerial Development
- Carry out any other duties and responsibilities as required in line with the benefice needs.
- *Take care for their wellbeing including health and safety and building a good repertoire of spiritual and psychological strategies*

SECTION FOUR: BENEFICE SUMMARY

The Benefice of

[insert information for each headline below]

Benefice:

Patron(s):

PCCs: (Names and numbers only)

Churchwardens:

Ministers:

Benefice paid staff:

Benefice unpaid staff/ volunteers (numbers)

Buildings:

Churchyard(s):

Resolution A,B,C:

Church Tradition:

Pastoral Reorganisation proposals:

For more detailed information, please refer to the Parish Profile.

SECTION FIVE: KEY CONTACTS FOR THE ROLE

Generic and specific to the role

Groups & committees

- The PCC(s)
- Deanery Chapter
- Deanery Synod
- Deanery Pastoral Committee
- [insert any other]

In the benefice

- Churchwardens
- Ministerial Colleagues
- Head teacher(s) of local school(s)
- [insert any other]

Support structures

- Area Dean
- Archdeacon
- [insert any other eg: spiritual director, work consultant, etc if they have been identified]

- Staff at The Diocesan Office with key responsibilities for various aspects of supporting parochial ministry
- Area Bishop

SECTION SIX: OTHER

Relevant Documentation

This role description is issued alongside and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

The Ordinal

The Canons of the Church of England

Guidance for the Professional Conduct of Clergy

Bishop's Licence

Statement of Particulars issued to the office-holder on successful appointment

Diocesan Clergy Handbook

Parish Profile

Ministry Action Plans (MAPs)

Any objectives discussed and agreed between the post holder and the supervising minister

Role description signed off by: The Venerable [insert name]
Archdeacon of [insert area]

Date: XX.20XX

To be reviewed next on: XX.20.XX

Appendix C

Examples of Role Purpose in Role Descriptions

The following are examples of 'role purpose' some 'generic' and others 'specific' in nature. These have been taken from role descriptions already developed in other dioceses.

- ❖ To advance the Kingdom of God in this place through leadership and:
 - in collaboration with the bishop and your colleagues to exercise the cure of souls
 - shared with the bishop in this place and carry out the ministry of word and sacrament
 - To be rooted in this community and to give its people pastoral support and service (including baptisms, weddings and funerals)

- ❖ To build up the Kingdom of God in this place by:
 - creatively using the many opportunities to develop links with local communities and to
 - be a sign of God's love to all those who come to work visit or shop in the town centre
 - building up the existing congregation through the ministry of word and sacrament and the provision of enhanced pastoral care
 - collaborating with other beneficees in the diocese in showing the love of God by responding to local needs
 - A *specific* statement, recognising the key challenges of this role for this time around.

- ❖ To share with the Bishop both in the cure of souls and in responsibility, under God, for transforming lives, congregations and communities in this benefice, in line with current priorities established by the Bishop

- ❖ To be the Parish Priest to this benefice, having regard to the calling and responsibilities of the clergy as described in the Canons, the Ordinal the guidelines for the professional conduct for the Clergy and other relevant legislation.

- ❖ To develop the ministry of the laity, through training, delegation, encouragement and support, so that they have greater involvement in the mission and ministry of the benefice

- ❖ To collaborate within the deanery in mission and ministry and, through the deanery plan, in such reshaping of ministry as resources and opportunities may require.

- ❖ To work with the PCC towards the development of the local church as described in the PCC's transformational plan and to review that vision with them.

- ❖ To ensure that a high standard of worship, preaching and pastoral care is provided so that people are more able to live and grow as disciples of Christ

- ❖ To seek ecumenical cooperation wherever possible

- ❖ To gain a good working understanding of the Diocese and the support it provides.

- ❖ To encourage Christian stewardship of people's time, money and abilities so that the ministry of the church is strengthened and enabled.

- ❖ Whilst maintaining a distinctively Christian witness, to make new positive links and develop the existing links with community and external organisations based in the benefice so that full use is made of opportunities for outreach and service to the community.

Appendix D

How to go about preparing the 'Specific' section

1 Use these questions to help you think: jot down words or phrases as they occur to you

- ❖ Look at the general list – are there any significant features of your role not included?
- ❖ Go through your diary – are you spending significant amounts of time on anything which does not come under one of the general headings?
- ❖ Do the conditions of your benefice mean that any of the general things have to be done
- ❖ When you started the role what were you asked to do? How was it summarised to you?
- ❖ If you were leaving this role and you had a chance to tell your successor what to make a priority in the next 7 years, what 4 things would you mention?
- ❖ If you were not the parish priest but the Archdeacon or Area Dean, and were making an appointment to your benefice, what would you want to see happen within 10 years?
- ❖ Have you thought about hospitals, schools, community centres, care homes, social mix, economic context, occupations, common aspirations or challenges in the benefice, resources, buildings, the concerns of PCC and congregation, recurring problems, opportunities you have never managed to take, the worship, benefice policies, the deanery, what pleases your congregations, what upsets them and so on?

2 Look at what you have written and number from 1 – 7 the most important aspects of the role you want to add under the 'specific' section.

3 Try to shape what you have come up with into between 3 and 7 bullet points which apply to your particular role. For each of these key areas, produce statements setting out:

- ❖ What is done and to what/with whom, describing a main activity that states the role holder's responsibility in connection with the activity;
- ❖ What the end results might be, giving the reasons for, or the end result of, the role.

The table below gives three possible examples for working collaboratively, worship and leadership.

	Working Collaboratively	Worship	Leadership
(i) What is done... and to what/with whom	Encouraging and enabling.... clergy colleagues, churchwardens, PCC, staff and volunteers, to participate fully in planning and decision making, tasks and activities	Planning, organising and conducting a programme of worship.... with others (e.g. Ministry Leadership Team) making appropriate use of resources, music, teaching and preaching,	Inspiring, motivating and empowering.....members of the church, individually and collectively
(ii) With what end result	to ensure that gifts and talents are identified and used effectively to encourage and build up the community of faith	to give glory to God and support the vision and needs for ministry.	so that the whole community of faith is encouraged to participate more fully in God's mission to the world

4 When the statements have been drafted, check that:

- ❖ Together they represent all the key responsibilities of the role (although the relative importance of each of these may change from year to year);
- ❖ They incorporate any specific local and diocesan issues;
- ❖ They focus on addressing the role purpose and key challenges of the role, and not tasks or activities;
- ❖ Each one is distinct from the others, and describes a specific area in which results may be achieved;
- ❖ They relate specifically to this role.

5 When you are happy with these, enter them into your template under 'Specific', ready to be discussed with the identified 'key partner' in the process of developing role descriptions.

Appendix E

Examples that may be useful when completing the 'key responsibilities'

Please note: This is a general checklist and it will be important to ensure specific local issues are picked up and included as appropriate.

Mission and outreach - Possible ways this might be expressed include:

- developing a ministry that encourages new people to Christian faith
- supporting existing Christians in evangelism and discipleship so that members of the benefice are encouraged to show God's love in action
- developing relations with community and external organisations to promote positive links with the church
- making full use of opportunities for outreach and service to the community, collaborating where appropriate with other benefices and agencies, so that assistance is provided to the community as effectively as possible
- working with other churches in the deanery to assist in implementing the Bishop's vision for the Diocese.

Leadership and working collaboratively - Possible ways this might be expressed include:

- leading the Church in setting and holding its vision
- inspiring, motivating, challenging and empowering members of the church, individually and collectively, to achieve that vision
- sharing ministry as appropriate and working collaboratively with others, (including clergy colleagues, churchwardens, PCC, staff and volunteers), so that individuals' gifts and talents are identified and used effectively in any given situation or task
- encouraging and building up the community of faith.

Worship and preaching - Possible ways this might be expressed include:

- leading worship that gives glory to God, prayerfully, competently and confidently
- planning, organising and conducting a programme of worship that supports the church's vision and needs for ministry including appropriate use of resources, music, teaching and preaching
- planning, organising and conducting a programme of teaching which supports the Church community, develops its faith and responds to the needs of different ages and levels of faith or knowledge
- reflecting, interpreting and preaching the gospel in a way that will encourage faith development, adapting content and style for different audiences, occasions and purposes.

Pastoral care - Possible ways this might be expressed include:

- identifying pastoral care needs and ensuring appropriate structures and skills to provide this to the community (for example, parish visitors, pastoral assistants and other teams)
- giving support to those in need of pastoral care as appropriate, including baptism and marriage preparation, care to the sick and dying, bereavement, individual support and visiting
- communicating effectively and appropriately in both written and verbal form with people of all ages and situations in society, inside and outside the church.
- demonstrating active listening and empathetic behaviour.

Stewardship and benefice organisation - Possible ways this might be expressed include:

- working with the PCC and churchwardens to ensure that structures and resources for benefice organisation are appropriate, including clear boundaries and accountabilities of roles
- ensuring that structures, processes and policies in relation to services, weddings, baptisms and funerals, health and safety, financial, fabric, staff management, etc meet diocesan and legal requirements.
- managing his or her time effectively through personal administration, planning and organisation, working in a team, chairing meetings, interpersonal skills and taking appropriate breaks
- following an appropriate pattern of work that enables a full spiritual and personal life, as well as meeting the demands of ministry.

Personal development and spirituality - Possible ways this might be expressed include

- continually developing personal skills and knowledge in relation to ministry through courses of study, reading, consultancy, training courses and workshops
- maintaining a prayerful spiritual life with appropriate support networks (including spiritual director or equivalent and regular retreats)
- recognising that s/he is on a life journey involving development of theological understanding and spiritual reflection
- inspiring growth in others through learning and example and by acting as a model of the love of God in action
- care and development of themselves and their personal relationships, including adequate time for family life, friendship, recreation, renewal and personal health, through taking a weekly day off and their full holiday entitlement.

Appendix F

Examples of statements included in a Person Specification

Qualifications/ Training	<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordained priest within the Church of England, or a Church in communion with it, or a Church whose orders it recognises • Have satisfactorily completed Initial Ministerial Education • Willingness to engage in further training that enhances the skills of community leadership <p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having completed a recognized course of study on Fresh Expressions/Mixed Economy Church (e.g., Mission Shaped Ministry, Ordained Pioneer Ministry etc)
Experience	<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility in a complex organisation with substantial resources (for example people and buildings) to manage • Priestly ministry at incumbent level involving vision setting and team development • Engagement with and pastoral support for people of all ages • The care, maintenance and development of buildings <p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congregations that include a number of people who worship in a different place from where they live • Leading mature and thoughtful all age worship • The liturgical tradition that is catholic, orthodox and honours the distinctive gifts of the BCP • Experience of doing forms of church in creative, engaging and imaginative ways.
Knowledge/ Skills and Competencies	<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to preach well in a variety of styles and formats to a broad range of listeners with varying outlooks, ages and understanding. • The ability to identify and respond to opportunities for mission • An ability to make and build on links with individuals and community organisations whose involvement with the Church is limited. • Leadership skills including the ability to motivate, inspire and effectively coordinate volunteers <p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative working especially with volunteers and other churches. • Ability to organise resources effectively to meet a large number of demands
General Attributes	<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy with the values of the diocese and those of the benefice • Able to work in sympathy with the Eucharistic tradition of the Benefice. • The passion for starting and leading a new congregation • An appreciation of the opportunities provided by the Church's place within the existing secular structures for developing links with those not actively involved • Evidence of a deep prayer life and ability to draw on a wide range of spiritual resources <p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ecumenical outlook and willingness to work with local churches and faith groups • A love of the arts in general and church choral music in particular and an understanding of how they can draw people to God • Good singing voice
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A passion for learning and personal development. • The ability to work to a Child Protection policy.

Model Person Specification for Rural Benefice Describing Itself as 'Open Evangelical'

Please note: This example is provided purely for illustrative purposes to show how the advice might be applied. The required criteria of a good priest can be appropriately expressed in a variety of ways, so when making use of this example, please feel free to adapt it as required. For reference, see also the role description designed for the same benefice.

E = essential and D= desirable

Qualifications and Training – Applicants for this post should:

- ❖ Have been ordained priest within the Church of England, or a Church in communion with it, or a Church whose orders it recognises (E);
- ❖ Have satisfactorily completed Initial Ministerial Education (E);
- ❖ Be able to demonstrate a willingness to engage in ongoing continuing ministerial development appropriate for this post (E);
- ❖ Be able to demonstrate a capacity to exercise priestly ministry at incumbent level(E).

Experience - Candidates equipped for the role will be able to demonstrate experience and understanding in the following areas:

- ❖ Equipping and supporting people in developing their talents (E);
- ❖ The opportunities and difficulties of ministry in a rural area (D);
- ❖ Leading and managing a team of ordained and lay people (D);
- ❖ Working with people of different traditions (D);
- ❖ Developing fresh ways of drawing people into church (D);
- ❖ Working with young people (D).

Knowledge, skills and competencies - Suitable candidates will be able to demonstrate that they possess knowledge, skills and competencies as follows:

- ❖ An ability to make - and build on - links with individuals and community organisations whose involvement with the Church is limited (E);
- ❖ Working with others – especially those in the ministry team (E);
- ❖ Leadership skills and an ability to motivate church members (E)
- ❖ Delegating to an administrator and other volunteers (D)

General Attributes - Suitable candidates will be able to demonstrate the following

- ❖ The ability to teach the Bible and communicate the Gospel to others (E);
- ❖ A personal prayer life and the ability to encourage this in others (E);
- ❖ The ability to lead and inspire others in using their own talents (E);
- ❖ The ability to relate to non-Christians (D).

Other

- ❖ Willingness to encourage a diversity of styles of worship and musical traditions (E);
- ❖ An evangelical faith, whilst being open to other traditions, to those on the fringe and to those outside the church (E).