

## Associate Archdeacons in the Diocese of Oxford

### Summary

**Following a two year period of consultation, the Bishop's Council proposes to appoint three new full-time Associate Archdeacons for the Episcopal Areas of Dorchester, Buckingham and Reading. The appointments will be for three years in the first instance, renewable for a further three years.**

**The aim of the posts is to take forward our common vision to be a more Christ like Church by offering better and proactive mission and pastoral support to parishes and deaneries.**

**The posts will be funded until 2023 from Common Vision funds and thereafter (if renewed) from anticipated reductions in the costs of the clergy pension scheme.**

### Why do we need Associate Archdeacons?

The Diocese of Oxford is one of the largest Dioceses in the Church of England and we have only half the national average number of archdeacons. Each of our three large episcopal areas is the size of an average diocese (which are often served by two bishops and two archdeacons).

The following statistics (excluding the Oxford Archdeaconry) emphasise this under-resourcing:

- Population per Archdeacon: Oxford Diocese 1:740,000 National 1:410,000
- Churches per Archdeacon: Oxford Diocese 1:258 National 1:125
- Stipendiary and House for Duty Clergy Per Archdeacon: Oxford Diocese 1:115 National 1:60

The Archdeacon of Oxford is principally funded and housed by Christ Church, looks after chaplains across the Diocese and leads on new congregations.

The role of Archdeacon in the Church of England has increased in recent years with the introduction of Common Tenure, the Clergy Discipline Measure, and better safeguarding and recruitment practice. The present workload of our archdeacons is not sustainable. There is little if any capacity to deliver Common Vision.

Our excellent archdeacons are overstretched, battling the statutory demands of their work, constantly firefighting, but having only limited capacity to engage in the parish, deanery and area support.

## **Associate Archdeacons**

Over the past three years, the diocese has deployed part time archdeacons' commissaries (with powers delegated by Deed), currently known locally as assistant archdeacons. There are assistants in all four archdeaconries who are either giving time in addition to the parish responsibilities they are paid for (Buckingham, Dorchester and Oxford), or, in receipt of a part stipend allocated at area level (Berkshire).

There are very few duties which cannot be delegated by deed (principally the CDM, DAC and Trustee roles of the archdeacon). A variety of responsibilities are undertaken by associate archdeacons including

- contribution to the mission and pastoral reorganisation work
- attendance at mission and pastoral committees as well as other committee meetings
- taking on the resolution of a pastoral/ parish dispute
- visiting sick clergy
- conducting MDR's
- taking the lead in advising or supporting a clergy person facing a difficult time
- deputising on DAC visits
- leading on recruitment for a vacant post
- working alongside the parish development advisers to support parishes in vacancy
- installing an incumbent
- handling complaints at parish level including any investigation work

The experience of archdeacons sharing work with associate archdeacons in the diocese has been a very positive one. This experience has strengthened the support the archdeacons have been able to give on the ground. In addition, the assistant role presents an opportunity for development. However, these part-time roles are not sustainable (in one case, the time allocated as assistant archdeacon is just 7 hours a week) and now is the time for us to go further.

## **Looking at the alternatives**

We looked carefully at the possibility of creating three new archdeaconries with new full time archdeacons. This would have been much more expensive and complex, creating new committees and the need to service them. We have also looked at ongoing part time roles, but these do not offer the same capacity for developing Common Vision.

## **The detailed proposal**

Three Associate Archdeacons roles will be created for Dorchester, Buckingham and Reading.

The roles will be designated as *interim* under Regulation 29 (1) (j) of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure 2009 (informally known as Common Tenure). An initial designation for three years with the option for a further period of up to three years is permissible. Bishop's Council have requested that the roles are reviewed in any case after five years against their financial cost and missional impact. After six years we would need to make a decision for or against permanent associate archdeacons.

The stipend level will be that of a residentiary canon. The cost per associate archdeacon including on-costs will be £67,205 per annum. An opportunity cost of investment return as Glebe funds used for House purchases of £70,000 brings the overall annual cost per associate archdeacon to £271,616. Appendix B attached gives a detailed break-down of the costs involved. It is intended that these posts will initially be funded from Common Vision funds, until 2023, when current national predictions suggest that there will be a reduction in the cost of the clergy pension scheme which would offset this additional cost.

The associate archdeacons will be a member of the area team within the archdeaconry but will not be a member of Bishop's Staff or Bishop's Council.

Associate archdeacons and archdeacons sharing both the "load" of day to day work in the respective archdeaconries and some of the important vision and leadership functions, represents a natural growth of what is already happening. While not carrying the full statutory responsibility portfolio, the role of Associate Archdeacon reflects a significant ministry that serves the work in the parishes and deaneries in a more hands-on-way.

It is proposed that a common core role description will be used across the three areas, while anticipating that there would be minor variations in how the associate archdeacons were deployed in each area.

It is anticipated that if this proposal, which I warmly commend to Synod, is agreed, that at least the first associate archdeacon can be in post by Easter 2020.

+Steven Oxford

21<sup>st</sup> October, 2019.

## The Legal Duties and Responsibilities of Archdeacons

Whilst the Archdeacons' duties and powers exercising an ordinary jurisdiction are laid down in Canon Law and in a variety of other legal instruments, the essential nature of the role has been described as 'being a good steward so that others are freed to be the worshipping, witnessing and ministering Church'. The principal areas of statutory responsibility are summarised below:

1. **Diocesan Governance** (ex officio of: Synod, Bishop's Council, Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), Parsonage Board, Mission and Pastoral Committee)
2. **Parish Governance** (Visitations, PCC disputes, Recruitment, Inductions)
3. **Property and Buildings** (Temporary Reordering Licenses, List B permissions, bridge role between parish, DAC and Chancellor holding the mission portfolio central, Inspection powers)
4. **Pastoral Reorganisation** (an interested party in all reorganisations but frequently the initiator of new schemes)
5. **Clergy: pastoral care and discipline** (assisting the bishop to discharge his/ her duty of care in the pastoral care of the clergy including bringing to their attention any issues that need attention as well as examination of candidates for ordination.)
6. **Additional Responsibilities Accruing to the Role of Archdeacon**

Besides the "traditional" expectations of the role set out above, in recent years the following additional duties and responsibilities have become increasingly central to the ministry of archdeacons:

### a. Safeguarding

- i. Offering advice and support to parishes in conjunction with the specialist safeguarding team
- ii. Participating in and chairing safeguarding Core Groups as well as following up any actions
- iii. Sharing in ensuring compliance with safeguarding legislation at parish level
- iv. Detailed involvement on a day to day basis in complex safeguarding cases alongside the safeguarding team.

### b. Clergy terms of service (Common Tenure)

Working closely with the HR team, the archdeacon is:

- i. The Bishop's nominated role to prepare and issue statement of particulars or any statement of change letters to clergy on Common Tenure
- ii. Responsible for signing off role descriptions for licensed stipendiary clergy
- iii. A ministerial development reviewer and follows up any actions deriving from them
- iv. Appointed by the bishop to oversee an enquiry into the capability of a licensed clergy
- v. Usually responsible for overseeing the formal stages of the grievance

**c. Clergy Discipline Measure Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Complaint Handling**

- i. Act as a complainant when appropriate including: compiling, organising and lodging a complaint where a serious shortcoming in standards of clergy conduct has been alleged
- ii. Investigating complaints made against clergy or parish officers, which fall short of CDM issues, which can be complex and time consuming
- iii. Work in situations of pastoral/ relationship breakdown is significant

**d. Advice to Parish Clergy** As the amount of necessary secular legislation re health and safety, data integrity, finance and charity governance increases and finds its application at parish level, the need for expert advice to those “on the ground” grows – often archdeacons are the first port of call for advice on these issues as well as the more familiar agendas around church buildings and churchyards.

**e. “Growth Agenda”** - the need for advice and leadership in mission and reorganisation for mission grows in a changing world – often archdeacons are in the position of helping the diocesan vision to be translated into practise on the ground at deanery and parish level. It is anticipated that this will apply in Oxford’s case to various aspects of the implementation of Common Vision at parish and deanery level.

**f. Clergy Wellbeing** - Care for clergy wellbeing has always been a primary responsibility of archdeacons. As the number of clergy decreases and clergy stress increases archidiaconal time to visit and care for the clergy is becoming ever more necessary and ever more precious.

**Proposal to create 3 FTE Associate Archdeacons From January 2020 onwards****COSTS AS FULL STIPENDIARY OFFICE HOLDER****Housing**

Purchase of 3 houses (Vicarage quality)                      Around £2M  
 (Opportunity cost of interest foregone @ say 3.5% = £70K pa)  
 ( £700K + £700K + £600K)

**Costs for each Associate Archdeacon:****Salary costs**

Stipend	29,779	£29,339 Jan to March + £29,926 April to Dec (+2%)
Pension contributions 39.9%of NMS	9,883	(April 2019 NMS = £24,770)
NI contributions	2,600	
	<u>42,262</u>	

**Housing recurring costs**

At 2019 share level	<u>10,313</u>	2020 share allocation figure
---------------------	---------------	------------------------------

**Working costs and expenses**

Mileage and Travel expenses	3,000	Say, 6000 miles + other travel (£300)
Other expenses	600	
	<u>3,600</u>	

**Administrative assistance**

12 hours per week 0.33FTE	8,826	Say Band O, FTE £26,222, (2019) +2%
Pension contribution	1,104	
NI contributions	100	
	<u>10,030</u>	

**Office costs (Home)**

Printing/ copying/stationery/postage	500	Say
Heating , lighting and cleaning	500	Say
	<u>1,000</u>	

**COST PER ASSOCIATE ARCHDEACON                      67,205**

**Opportunity cost of investment return  
 as Glebe funds used for House  
 purchases (see above)**

**70,000**

**ANNUAL COST OF THE PROPOSAL                      271,616**