



## Diocese of Bath and Wells



## Handbook for Reader Ministry

## ***Preface from The Bishop of Bath and Wells***

The vocation of the licensed Reader is an important ministry within Changing Lives, Changing Churches for Changing Communities. Readers being lay members of the community very often have the feel of their communities in a way that is unique. Proclaiming the gospel afresh to each generation remains a particular requirement of all in Christian ministry, but it is something to which Readers commit themselves in the declaration of assent. Keeping ourselves fresh in the gospel is critical. Our life and our values need to have integrity – or to put it another way – ‘If you ain’t walked the walk you can’t talk the talk.’

People today are looking for authenticity. If you cannot make the connections that people around you are seeking as they wrestle with faith and life, then, to quote St. Paul, we are little more than ‘sounding gongs or clanging cymbals.’ And this takes discipline. When I was a child I remember a chorus that offered the following *bon mot*; ‘Read your Bible, pray every day, if you want to grow.’ There remains much wisdom in that, and to it we might say, keep the Office and seek everyday to live your life in the Spirit of the one who promises to dwell with us, and not forsake us.

This ‘Handbook for Reader Ministry’ is for all Readers. It offers important guidance those who have been Readers for many years, but will be of interest to those who are contemplating Reader Ministry. We need to keep abreast of the various different aspects of Reader life from candidature through to licensing; and from shared responsibility in good practice to the role of the Reader Council and Structures.

Readers Ministry is under the Wardenship of the Venerable John Reed, Archdeacon of Taunton, and in this he is ably assisted by Archdeaconry and Deanery Wardens. No Reader should be without the required support and nurture he or she needs to develop their ministry, and it is my hope that this useful handbook will be studied with interest and enthusiasm.

Bishop Peter of Taunton joins me in offering the assurance of the thoughts and prayers, together with our thanks for all you do in Christ’s name.

***+Peter Bath and Wells***

# DIOCESE OF BATH AND WELLS

## HANDBOOK FOR READER MINISTRY

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## ***Introduction***

The purpose of this Handbook is to bring together the information Readers, Clergy and benefices need about Reader ministry in the Diocese of Bath and Wells. The sections have been arranged chronologically from the moment a person feels called by God to become a Reader, through the process of selection, training and licensing to the practicalities of ministry including ongoing training, ministry review, and expenses. Details of processes, including flow charts, are given as appendices for easy reference.

## ***The Nature of Reader Ministry***

The Office of Reader is one of the oldest ministries in the Church, but in its present form in the Church of England dates from 1866. Since then, the growth in Reader Ministry has been one of the great success stories in the Church of England and there are now over 10,000 Readers. It is the only lay ministry in the Church of England which is voluntary, nationally accredited, episcopally licensed and governed by Canon. Readers work with the incumbent and other members of the parish/benefice team within the terms of the licence they are given. They are accountable for the work they do to their parish priest, their benefice and the Bishop, and ultimately of course to God.

Readers are men and women, from a wide diversity of backgrounds and occupations, who recognize a call to serve God and his people through the Church of England. They are theologically trained and work in a variety of roles and situations across the Church, being authorised by the Bishop to lead worship, preach and teach. To this they bring their own unique and invaluable experiences, drawing on them in the light of biblical understanding to enrich their ministry. Yet there are many other ways in which Readers minister to God's people. Their presence, witness and listening in their places of work, at home, among their neighbours and in their local communities all provide vital links between the Church and the world. As a result Readers exercise a crucial ministry in witnessing to the unchanging love of God in a changing world.

In this Diocese we sum it up by stating a Reader is:

**'A trained lay theologian who holds a Bishop's licence to lead worship and preach in the pastoral context of the Church and who is a messenger of the Word of God to the world.'**

This definition is only the base line. It needs to be understood and expanded in the context of the work that a Reader does. This could include work in schools, prisons, hospitals, hospices, factories and shops, among seafarers and in the Armed Forces, and within the benefice with children and young people, the elderly, housebound and bereaved, and those preparing for baptism, confirmation and marriage. No Reader undertakes all these tasks, but they give a flavour of the many ways in which Reader ministry can and may be expressed.

Increasingly all Christians are being called upon to take their share of responsibility for the life and witness of the Church and to use their gifts in parish/benefice life. Within this, however, particular ministries are recognised and it is to clergy and Readers that the Church gives authority to preach the Word of God. Training for Reader ministry therefore is essential to ensure high standards in this as well as to prepare them for the challenges that may lie ahead.

Reader ministry makes many demands on the person in terms of commitment and service, as well as testing their spiritual maturity, but, Readership should never be a burden. There are many places within this ministry for joy and laughter. It is vital for Readers to have a balanced approach to their life and ministry so that they may, through their witness, give glory to God.

## ***The Selection of Candidates for Reader Training***

The call to become a Reader may be felt by an individual or come about as the result of a suggestion by their incumbent, a member of the congregation where they worship, or someone who does not even attend church but recognizes certain qualities in the individual which suggest they are being called by God to serve Him in the Church through this ministry.

There is no single profile for a Reader in terms of sex, age, educational background or employment; however those thinking God is calling them to Reader ministry need to consider these questions:

- Do you think God is calling you to serve him more fully in ministry?
- Are you being called to the teaching and preaching ministry of a Reader?
- How do you currently witness to Christ in your daily life? Do you pray and study the bible daily? Are you a regular communicant?
- Have you talked over the possibility of Reader ministry with your spouse and family? How do they feel about your sense of vocation?

If Reader ministry seems the right course the next step for the potential Reader is to talk this over with their incumbent. This conversation will cover a number of areas:

- some reflection on the conclusions you have drawn from your answers to the questions above
- practical things regarding how and where you will serve as a Reader. Are there commitments in the parish and elsewhere which you would have to give up in order to train and to be able to exercise a Reader ministry?
- consideration of the following questions: Is your parish priest willing to support your selection? Is your Incumbent willing to ask the PCC to agree to your nomination as a candidate?

In considering the above the following may be helpful.

### ***General Qualities of a Potential Reader***

A potential Reader must be able to exhibit a maturity of Christian commitment and be able to show evidence of a sense of call from God to this work.

A potential Reader should fulfil most of the following:

- be a communicant member and regular worshipper in the Church of England, and a committed member of their local church
- be a person who has a well rounded spirituality based on a regular prayer life informed by the reading/study of scripture and other Christian literature
- have a real heart for sharing the Gospel. [Although many people feel daunted by the prospect of preaching and teaching it is necessary to realize that this is the core function of Readership so the 'heart' for this should be there]
- be a person who is a good communicator. Someone who is able to reflect their faith to their daily life outside of the Church in an integrated way
- be a wise and mature Christian able to function as part of a team
- be a person who has proved their worth in other areas of the Church's life and ministry
- someone who will be able to keep up with a fairly demanding training and be open to continued learning once licensed through various forms of continuing ministerial education
- be a person who is known and trusted by the Incumbent and congregation in general
- be somebody who has something very important to contribute within the life, worship and leadership of the Church

### ***Possible next steps:***

- Suggestion to explore vocation in other directions and have further conversations to try and clarify the nature of the calling
- In the case of a person who has not yet started the Exploring Christianity course, to start the course and to see how it goes for a few months and then discuss possible vocation again
- Proceed to the formal selection process.

If a call is apparent the potential Reader should make an appointment with a Diocesan Vocations Advisor [address can be found in the Diocesan Directory or through the Diocesan office] who will help them discover whether God is actually calling them in this direction. If the call is to Reader Ministry the process to be followed is given as a flow chart in [Appendix A](#). If the call seems to be something else the Advisor will help direct the person in the right direction.

### ***The Selection Conference***

This is a one day conference which normally takes place on a Sunday at The Diocesan Office in Wells. Each candidate will be interviewed by four Selectors. The Selection Panel is made up of ordained and lay people with an appropriate age/gender balance. Candidates are considered under the following headings.

#### ***Vocation***

Candidates should be able to speak of their own sense of vocation to ministry and mission, referring both to personal conviction and to the extent to which others have confirmed it. Their sense of vocation should be obedient, realistic and informed.

#### ***Faith and Mission***

Candidates should show an understanding of the Christian faith and a desire to deepen that understanding. They should demonstrate personal commitment to Christ and a capacity to communicate the Gospel.

#### ***Spirituality***

Candidates should show evidence of commitment to a spiritual discipline which involves individual and corporate prayer and worship. Their spiritual practice should be such as to sustain and energise them in their daily lives.

#### ***Relationships and Personality***

Candidates should be people of integrity, who are sufficiently mature and stable to show that they can sustain the demanding role of a minister and to face change and pressure in a flexible and balanced way. They should show the potential to offer wise leadership in the Church community and to some extent beyond it. Candidates should demonstrate self-awareness and self-acceptance as a basis for developing open and healthy personal and pastoral relationships as ministers. They should show ability and willingness to work both as team members and as leaders.

#### ***Potential for Training***

Candidates should be capable of undertaking satisfactorily a course of study and ministerial preparation with an open and enquiring mind.

Further information on Selection is contained in the booklet '*Selection for Reader Ministry*' ABM Policy Paper No.7.

### ***Procedure following the Selection Conference***

The decision of the Selection Conference is notified to the Archdeaconry Warden. This takes place as quickly as possible and usually within a week.

The Archdeaconry Warden notifies the Candidate and his/her incumbent of the Selector's decision. The Archdeaconry Warden will inform the Candidate of the Selector's remarks and issues that they think should be addressed. Candidates may request to receive a copy of the full Selector's Report if they so wish.

Candidates who have been recommended for Reader Training will be contacted by The Assistant Director of Reader Studies to discuss the next steps in their training.

Candidates who have not been recommended for training may wish to appeal against the decision. Notice of appeal, giving the grounds, should be made in writing and addressed to their Archdeaconry Warden. The Archdeaconry Warden will then handle the appeal and notify the candidate of the decision and the reasons for it.

Finally, it should be noted that the whole selection process will take some time. It is important that it is not rushed so that suitable time for prayer and reflection can be given to try to ensure the right discernment is made by all involved in the process.

## ***The Route to Readership***

The route to becoming a Reader is sometimes seen as a long process but it must be thorough, rigorous and challenging for we live in a world that owes no favours to Christianity. The modern minister must be able to witness to faith, speak up for the things of God and be able to give account of the gospel. None of this comes quickly to anyone. St Paul took many years after conversion before he began his ministry. Jesus' public ministry did not take place until he was well experienced in the world.

In this Diocese, Reader training comprises three elements - a concentration on theological studies, the forming of practical skills such as preaching and leading worship and continuing ministerial development.

The first element can be undertaken in a number of ways although most Readers in training opt to study on the Diocesan course **Exploring Christianity**. This is a modular course, offering learning in small local groups. Other options include studying with another theological education provider, studying a course by distance learning or studying with a personal tutor. The latter may be offered to those who have already completed their theological studies but some time ago and need a refresher or to those who have undertaken the Exploring Christianity course but did not undertake the written assignments.

If a candidate already has a qualification in religious studies or theology, at certificate [1<sup>st</sup> year degree] level or higher, there is every possibility that they may be exempt from this element of the course.

The second element comprises two **Formation Years** - with an optional third year. The first year of Formation training is an exploration of preaching, leading worship and pastoral care through units 1 - 7 of the course. Licensing normally takes place at this point. The following year concentrates on liturgical formation and leadership and will equip the Reader, through units 8 - 14, to take funerals, care for the bereaved, help people learn and be fully up to date with modern liturgy. In the third year, two days are offered on ethics and pastoral care.

There is also a **placement** element to the course, which takes place within three years of licensing. The placement will last for between four to six weeks. This placement is seen as a valuable tool to enrich both the Reader's ministry and that of the parish in which the placement is undertaken.

After Formation Year 2, Readers take part in **Continuing Ministerial Development** through a host of courses available through the CMD booklet which is issued each year.

We adopt a collaborative approach to training and the team is led by the Assistant Director of Reader Studies (ADRS), who is based at the Diocesan Office in Wells. As well as members of the training team, others involved in training new Readers usually include an actor, an MA student in preaching who is also a parish priest, the chairman of the Bishop's Liturgy Group, the Diocesan youth and children's work department, a funeral director and a Fellow of the College of Preachers.

The candidate's guide **Becoming a Reader**, which sets out the details of the Formation Years, is available to the Readers in training.

Those who lead the training course for Readers give of their best in teaching, and believe fervently that every candidate deserves, and must give of their very best for God.

## ***Admission and Licensing***

The Admission and Licensing of new Readers normally forms part of the Annual Reader's Service held on the first Saturday in October in the Cathedral at 2.00pm. This service is the key event in the Diocesan Reader calendar and provides not only the formal occasion for the admission of new Readers but also the time to welcome those Readers who have come into the Diocese during the previous twelve months. This occasion also gives Readers the opportunity to rededicate themselves in their service to God and his Church. Consequently all Readers in the Diocese are encouraged to attend the service to play their part in the welcoming process in renewing their own commitment as well as enjoying the fellowship of other Readers within the Diocese. All incumbents who have candidates to be admitted or welcomed as Readers in the Diocese should make every effort to be present at this service.

Prior to the Annual Service those to be admitted as Readers attend a Retreat. This gives the new Readers the chance to relax and reflect as well as prepare for their licensing and future ministry.

## ***In Service - Good Practice and Practicalities***

### ***Annual Return***

The completion of the Annual Return, sent out in December each year, is a requirement of holding a Reader licence and the Bishops' Regulations for Reader Ministry.

The Return asks the Reader to reflect on their ministry during the previous year under a number of headings including the past year, support, development of ministry, spirituality and enrichment, together with details of training courses attended and a statistics page giving details of services, preachments, etc. undertaken during the previous year. Once the Reader has reflected on these they are required to discuss this with their incumbent [or Rural Dean, where there is a vacancy in the benefice] who will add his or her comments before the form is returned to the appropriate Archdeaconry Warden by the 28<sup>th</sup> February each year.

Although there are suggestions for areas of review, Readers are encouraged to comment on any issue which is effecting their life or ministry so that they be practically and prayerfully supported by their Archdeaconry Warden.

### ***Communication and Working Together***

Open and honest communication is an essential element in team work and the development of collaborative ministry.

The following will be key components in a Reader's relationship with their incumbent, members of the ministry team, church officers and within the parish and need to be developed:

- Regular meetings between the Reader and incumbent. Regular meetings with other members of the ministry team at times which make it possible for the Reader to attend.  
    These meetings may include times for:
  - prayer
  - discussing service/duty rotas
  - discussing theology
  - discussing parish policy and pastoral matters
  - undertaking training together
  - social occasions.
- Establishing guidelines of accountability and support. These to include clear guidance regarding who may be of help in the event of Reader/Incumbent relationships failing or becoming strained.
- Agreeing guidelines with regard to the expectations of roles and responsibilities undertaken by all members of the ministry team. This also to ***include clear policy on the payment of expenses.***
- Encouraging the sharing of resources
- Freedom to share thoughts and ideas.
- Willingness to listen to others, respecting different points of view.
- Confidentiality
- The drawing up of a ministry specification between the Incumbent and Reader which is reviewed on a regular basis.
- Willingness to engage in a process of reflection and review on a reasonably regular basis.

## **Conflict Management**

The potential for conflict can come from a variety of situations, such as a lack of communication, the unwillingness to tackle a difficult situation, inflexibility, personality clashes, over or under use. Inevitably therefore a situation can occur where there is a serious disagreement or dispute between a Reader and Incumbent. The swift resolution of such is desirable as unresolved issues can lead to further resentment and difficulties. In such a situation the following course of action is recommended

- After identifying an issue, a time and date for another meeting is agreed and the intervening period should be used for reflection and prayer. The incumbent or Reader may find it helpful during this period to talk, pray and reflect with their Deanery Warden of Readers and/or Rural Dean
- If after the next meeting the issue remains unresolved both parties agree to refer the matter to their Archdeaconry Warden for advice and/or mediation
- The Archdeaconry Warden offers a listening ear and after prayerful consideration offers potential way forwards
- If the issue cannot be resolved the matter may, in the last resort, be referred by the Archdeaconry Warden to the appropriate Archdeacon and/or Diocesan Warden of Readers

## **Continuing Ministerial Development**

Continuing Ministerial Development [CMD] is available for all who hold the Bishop's licence in the Diocese up to the age of retirement. All Readers are required by the Bishop and Warden of Readers to continue their education, development and training through the various opportunities that are offered in the Diocese and through courses and conferences that take place elsewhere. Each Reader is required by the Bishop to attend at least two CMD events per year.

The fundamental purpose of Continuing Ministerial Development is to equip and develop the church's ministers in order that they may stimulate and enable the whole Church to participate more fully in the mission of God in the world. In particular, it must help ministers to

- discern and learn how to participate in God's mission in the world
- build worshipping and ministering communities to live God's life and show it to the world
- support and equip God's people for ministry and mission wherever they are
- deepen their theological inquiry and openness to God's ever new ways of working
- help implement and support the diocesan program of "Changing Lives"

## **Continuation Courses**

These courses cover a wide range of subjects and provide for ongoing stimulation and theological reflection. They are advertised each year in the CMD brochure which should be used as a basis for individual choice. The cost of these courses is usually minimal [see [Expenses - Working Costs](#)]. The Reader's Annual Return provides an opportunity to comment on the value of these courses and to contribute to the programme of courses offered.

## **Retreats/Sabbatical and Study Leave**

All Readers are encouraged to take regular retreats as an essential part of spiritual refreshment. It is expected that the cost of this will be met by the parish or benefice. However, in cases of need, application may be made to the Warden of Readers for some financial assistance.

The principles for sabbatical and study leave for Readers are the same as for the clergy, but need to be applied as appropriate and as circumstances permit.

It is important to acknowledge that the word Sabbatical is derived from the same root as Sabbath. This indicates that a fundamental biblical understanding of a Sabbatical is rest and renewal so as to return refreshed in one's ministry. Readers are therefore encouraged to take time out for study and to see other places, as an opportunity for rest, renewal and recreation, away from normal parish commitments. This may take the form of visiting other churches for worship, undertaking a placement or reading a book.

### **CRB Process**

All Readers must undergo Criminal Records Bureau [CRB] checks before they can be given a Bishop's licence to serve in a parish. This is Diocesan policy, and licences will be withdrawn if an individual fails to undergo a CRB check.

### **Why CRB is necessary**

The primary impetus for introducing CRB checks for licensed ministers is for child protection purposes. The Church needs to be able to demonstrate that we have taken all possible steps to ensure that children will be cared for and kept safe while in church or during church-related activities.

The 2004 edition of the report *Protecting All God's Children* put it this way:

“(a) We are committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of the children within our church community.

We will carefully select and train ordained and lay ministers, volunteers and paid workers with children and young people, using the Criminal Records Bureau, amongst other tools, to check the background of each person.”

For this reason the Diocese always ask for 'enhanced' CRB checks, and include Vulnerable Adult checks alongside child protection checks. [Readers should be aware that the check will reveal any criminal matters which have been recorded against them, but these will not necessarily be a bar to Reader ministry]

Some people feel resentment that after many years faithful service to the Church, they are now asked to undergo these checks. Readers may find it helpful to consider that the Diocese insists on them, not because anyone in the Diocese doubts your integrity, but in order to demonstrate to the wider world that the Church takes this matter seriously.

## How CRB works for Readers

Detailed instructions on how to fill in the forms are given with the form, but broadly, the process is:

- fill in your personal details
- have your identity verified by a local person – ideally, your parish priest or a Child Protection Appointed Person
- send the form to the Bishops' Office in Wells, where it is countersigned on behalf of the Diocese, and sent to the CRB
- CRB make their checks with police records and other sources
- CRB sends Readers their Disclosure, with a copy to the Bishop's Office. No-one else sees the Disclosure.

Typically, the CRB process can take between ten days to a month from receipt of a completed form to receipt of the Disclosure. You should not be alarmed if they take their time. If you keep a note of your form reference number, there is an online progress tracker on their website at [www.crb.gov.uk](http://www.crb.gov.uk)

Alongside the CRB form, Readers also have to fill in a Confidential Self-Declaration form, which simply allows Readers to state they have not withheld any relevant information from the Diocese. This is kept securely in the Diocesan Warden of Readers Office.

## The three-year renewal cycle

Our current policy is that each person must undergo a CRB check at the beginning of their ministry. **They must also have a further CRB check every three years.**

- Forms and a reminder will be sent to each Reader well before a current CRB clearance expires, these forms must be returned promptly to ensure 'continuous cover'.
- If a current CRB expires before the Reader receives a new disclosure, the Reader's licence will be withdrawn until the new CRB comes through. Readers may not minister unless they have a current CRB Disclosure.
- It is a Reader's responsibility to fill in the forms sent to them, get them checked, and send them to the Bishops' Office. If the form is not received within the stated time, Readers will be notified that their licence is going to be withdrawn, and their incumbent and the Diocesan Warden of Readers will also be advised.

## It looks complicated: who can give me advice?

Readers should find their incumbent or Appointed Person for Child Protection is familiar with the forms. There is a contact person at the Bishops' Office, who is able to offer advice over the phone if necessary. The CRB website [www.crb.gov.uk](http://www.crb.gov.uk) has much useful information about how the CRB process works.

*These notes apply only to Readers and Clergy [including those with Permission to Officiate]. There is a similar procedure for volunteers who work in parishes with children [such as children's club staff, leaders of young people's groups, etc], which is administered by the Parishes and Deaneries team at the Old Deanery in Wells.*

## During A Vacancy

This can be a very positive experience for a parish or benefice particularly when there is good communication between Readers, Churchwardens and PCC. People's talents can prayerfully be used to the full to help lessen the void and a feeling of loss when a priest leaves.

It is good practice for Churchwardens and Readers to meet regularly for prayer, fellowship, support and a sharing of news. Relationships are strengthened and communication channels are opened which are both vital when the selection process begins.

Good teamwork is essential and there needs to be a clear definition of roles and responsibilities so each person feels valued and is allowed to blossom in their ministry or task. A Reader's pastoral skills in the church and the community at large may be put to use far more as well as the almost certain likelihood of taking more services. This can be a very rewarding experience, but care should be taken about doing too much.

It is normal for the Reader's ministry to continue, during a vacancy, under the supervision of, and with the support of, the Rural Dean. Churchwardens are encouraged to value and endorse the Reader's role and authority. In the event of any conflict the Rural Dean or Deanery Warden should be contacted. A potential incumbent should be made aware of existing Readers within the benefice and be asked to affirm their willingness to work with the Reader[s] if appointed, and to accept the principles and practice of Reader ministry. When it is time to appoint a new parish priest the best possible involvement of Readers in the process will be sought. However because of the rights of patrons it may not always be possible to include Readers in the selection process.

### **Expenses - Working Costs**

The Readers' Council acknowledges the voluntary nature of Reader Ministry and recognises that in the past, there has been a wide variety of practice regarding the payment of working costs. However it is the policy of the Council that working costs should be paid to Readers for the following reasons:

- to give recognition to the invaluable ministry of Readers within the Church
- to recognise the professional nature of Reader Ministry
- to show a Reader that their ministry is appreciated
- to prevent a Reader being barred from ministry on financial grounds
- to enable the Church to know the true monetary cost of ministry

Equally it is recognized that some Readers see the non-claiming of working costs as part of their giving to the Church. As laudable as this is, a precedent is set for the future which other Readers may not be able to match. Additionally, if Readers claim their working costs they are at liberty to give them back in full to the Church and this could be done by way of Gift Aid which would greatly increase the value of their giving.

The Reader's Council has agreed Readers should be reimbursed in full for:

- Travelling Expenses when taking Services. *These should be at the full Diocesan rate when taking services within the benefice. Where a Reader takes a service in another benefice that benefice should offer travelling expenses in full*
- Training Costs - *during Formation Training, for Continuing Ministerial Development and attendance at Diocesan and Archdeaconry training events eg. Travelling and course fees.*
- Annual Subscription to The Reader Magazine
- Annual Subscription to the Diocesan Reader Council
- Teaching and Preaching Resources
- The cost of telephone calls, stationery and postage

It is good practice to give an allowance for the purchase of books, up-keep of robes and participation in Quiet Days and Retreats.

The parish/benefice is expected to pay the Reader's Annual Subscription Fee direct to The Readers Council.

Benefice Treasurers will need documentation, for their accounts, of any payment made and therefore Readers should to keep receipts and appropriate records where required.

In [Appendix G](#) there are sample claim forms in respect of travelling expenses when taking a service outside of the benefice and for claiming working costs within the benefice.

## ***Funeral Ministry***

Readers may conduct a funeral service after undergoing suitable training. Recently qualified Readers will have received this training as part of their Formation Year 2 course and their licences are suitably endorsed. Readers who have not undergone training or whose licence is not endorsed should in the first instance talk to their incumbent. If the incumbent wishes the Reader to undertake a funeral ministry they should contact the Archdeaconry Warden for further guidance.

Normally the Reader will conduct a funeral service at the request of the incumbent, but during a vacancy the request may come directly from an funeral director, churchwarden, etc. In either case the Reader needs to be assured that their ministry is welcomed and supported by those responsible for arranging the service.

The Reader does not receive the minister's fee for conducting a funeral service, this goes to the incumbent or during a vacancy to the Diocesan Sequestration Fund. The Reader is entitled to full expenses, including travel.

## ***Ministry Specification***

Those being newly licensed as Readers are required to have a Ministry Specification. However all Readers are actively encouraged to have one. The object in drawing up a ministry specification is to ensure that the Reader, incumbent, PCC, churchwardens and the whole ministry team [whether formally constituted or not] know what the Reader is expected to do, thereby removing doubt and helping to avoid disagreements. The document also provides a basis for periodic review of experience and achievement and should be a useful tool in the conversation between Reader and incumbent when completing the Annual Return. The Ministry Specification has to be agreed between the incumbent and Reader and approved by the PCC. A copy should be sent to the Archdeaconry Warden for information. Please see [Appendix F](#) for advice on how to draw up a Ministry Specification

## ***Placements***

Several Dioceses in the Church of England have recommended the use of placements to help and support Readers in both their initial training and their continuing development. It is a practice that the Reader Council encourages.

The main fruit of a placement is that a Reader will be able to see a different situation and assess its strengths and weaknesses at first hand. Through doing this, and reflecting upon it, new experience of church life is gained, which enables the Reader to return to a home parish with a heightened awareness of what ministry is about. In a sense it is like emerging from the wood in order to see the trees.

Clergy are given the opportunity every few years to spend a little time out of the parish in some kind of study leave. They often find that an experience of church life elsewhere renews their vision and refreshes their spirituality. It is hoped that a Reader placement in another parish can have something of the same effect. A paper dealing with the practicalities of arranging a placement is provided through the School of Formation.

The placement is an ideal opportunity for learning and growing in ministerial leadership. It is a privilege to be invited into another church as a guest. If it is undertaken sensitively, the results will be beneficial to both the Reader and the receiving church, and constructive to the growth of ministry and church life in the area.

## ***Reader Review***

As well as regular discussions with incumbents all Readers have the opportunity to meet with a Reader who has been trained to carry out peer reviews.

The review provides the Reader the opportunity to consider and describe succinctly their ministry to someone independent who usually does not know the Reader, their ministry or situation but who does know about Reader ministry.

During the Review the existing ministry, relationships, resources, personal spirituality and developments for the future are considered and a statement may be agreed.

The discussions are confidential but the Reviewer will have contacted the incumbent of the Reviewee. The incumbent and the Archdeaconry Warden receive copies of any agreed statement.

A review, about 18 months after licensing, is part of the training of Readers and reviews can be requested by any Reader on the Annual Reader Return Form or by contacting their Archdeaconry Warden.

### ***Spiritual Life and Direction***

The need for a healthy spiritual life cannot be over emphasized. If the spiritual life of a Reader is not good it follows that the rest of their ministry is going to be impoverished and both the individual and the Church suffer as a result. To keep it alive there needs to be stimulation, which is provided through daily prayer, bible reading and through such things as reading - both 'sacred' and 'secular', attending courses, retreats and Spiritual Direction. Saying the Daily Offices with others is also a good spiritual discipline.

All new Readers are required to have someone, usually called a Spiritual Director, to help them with their spiritual life. We recommend all Readers to have one. A spiritual director needs to be someone you feel confident with and to whom you feel free to discuss the intimate parts of your spiritual life with. Your director will be able to advise you on course of actions you could take at times of difficulty as well as providing encouragement. A regular spiritual 'check-up' is a good way of ensuring your spiritual life stays on course. Your parish priest should be able to advise you on how to obtain a spiritual director if you don't already have one

### ***Working Outside the Benefice***

#### ***Occasional Services in another Benefice***

The incumbent from another benefice may directly approach a Reader to take a service in their benefice. The Reader must confirm this with their incumbent if they wish to accept the invitation. With the introduction of Local Ministry Groups it is reasonable to expect Readers to be available to take services within the LMG when not required within their own benefice.

If a Reader is asked to conduct a service outside of the Diocese they need to be assured that they have permission to do so under the Diocesan Regulations of the Diocese they will take the service in.

Incumbents wishing to invite a Reader from another Diocese to conduct a service or preach in their benefice should ensure that the Reader is bona-fide before issuing the invitation

#### ***Local Ministry Groups [LMGs]***

The mission and ministry of the Church of England is expressed largely through the life of its parishes, a life which embodies the vision of a Church serving the whole of society. Parochial life as we know it today has been shaped, not so much by a carefully worked out strategy, but rather by the circumstances and indeed accidents of history, as well as by a profound awareness which the Church of England has had for over four hundred years of its unique role within English society.

Historically, each parish has had its own church building, patron, incumbent, churchwardens, and [since the beginning of the twentieth century] parochial church council. In some places these arrangements have been modified in recent years, partly as a result of deepening ecumenical work [which, in a number of cases has led to the establishment of local ecumenical projects], and largely through the provisions of the Pastoral Measures of 1968 and 1983 which have seen parishes combining and new structures introduced.

Some aspects of our parochial system are wholly good, for instance, the provision of pastoral and spiritual care to every person who wishes to avail themselves of this ministry. However, many of our parochial structures no longer serve the Church or society in the ways which were originally intended. These need to be updated and replaced and one way in which this is happening is through the creation of LMGs.

LMGs can be defined by three words, local, ministry and group.

*Local* could be geographical. It could be described in terms of the milkman, pub, paper or Council - they all serve an area and LMGs similarly serve their area. But local can also mean, similar or familiar and not necessarily have to include that which is adjacent. Some LMGs are finding their common purpose around similar or like things, including those who have the same sort of aims.

*Group* means being together and some LMGs have opted to work at being together, over coffee, in the pub, around the Bible, or trying a day out together.

*Ministry* is of course what the LMG is called to engage in and includes mission. This is explicit in some cases, in others, more an implicit commitment to the community through supporting the school or nursing home, etc.

LMGs are local groups of Christian people called to serve. Whichever way they choose to define what each of the three words mean, when they are put together, the result often exceeds the sum of the parts.

In an LMG churches will:

- provide opportunities for all to be transformed by the Gospel message of God's kingdom
- effectively equip members to seek and serve Christ in all people, through worship, nurture and discerning of gifts and abilities
- creatively engage with the local community of all ages through pastoral work, outreach and service
- acknowledge Christ's authority over all human society, in prayer, defending the weak and seeking justice and peace
- be an open fellowship; repenting of its own failings and inviting membership, proclaiming by word and example the good news of God in Christ

As LMGs are becoming more widely established, there are increased opportunities for Readers to exercise their ministry more widely, eg as Course Facilitators for their LMG, in preaching and teaching. Please contact the School of Formation for more details of courses which can be supplied to enable these things to happen.

### ***Secondment and Regular Commitments outside the Benefice***

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for a Reader to be seconded to another benefice for a limited period. There are also circumstances where a Reader is regularly asked to conduct services in another benefice. In both cases the Archdeaconry Warden should be contacted in the first instance who will consult with all those involved.

It should be noted in all of the above the importance of a Reader having a spiritual home and to be able to worship regularly in their 'home' Church

### ***Worshipping Together***

Often difficult decisions need to be made in a parish and these can be tense times. Sometimes leaders need to guide the direction of the vision of God, or hold a congregation to what God has already made clear. Worship and prayer are obviously crucial at times like this. However, the daily round of prayers is a tradition that Christian people have followed for years. In both the case of special prayers and the ordinary discipline of spiritual life Readers have an important role.

In a survey of Reader opinion in the Diocese, it was clear that Readers were keen to support and share in the spiritual life of the leadership team. Meeting together with the incumbent and other leaders was, for those who engaged in this, extremely valuable. There was no set pattern, just a common purpose to worship God together and intercede for the parish and community.

It is impossible to prescribe how Readers will develop a pattern of prayer with other leaders, but we strongly encourage each Reader to review how the duty and joy of prayer and collective worship may be expressed.

## ***Licences Including Renewal of Licences, Permissions to Officiate, Surrendering of Licences, Reader Emeritus Status. Licensing of Readers Transferring into the Diocese or to a Different Benefice***

All Readers are asked to check regularly that their Licence or Permission to Officiate [PTO] is valid and to request the renewal when necessary. All licences and permissions to officiate are valid for five years, after which renewal is necessary. The flow chart in [Appendix B](#) gives details of the process for renewing a Licence and in [Appendix C](#) are the details of how to apply for a Permission to Officiate and its renewal.

A new licence is required if the Reader's incumbent changes, or the parish or benefice is joined to/by others.

Outlined below are the circumstances where action to renew a Licence or PTO is required

*To renew a Licence/PTO [required every five years] or to change from a Licence to a PTO of the Parish in which a Reader lives or habitually worships,*

The Reader must obtain a letter of support from their incumbent, and a resolution of the PCC supporting the renewal or application for a PTO. These should be sent with the Reader's current Licence or PTO to the appropriate Archdeaconry Warden, who will arrange for the Licence/PTO to be renewed or for a PTO to be issued.

### ***Change of incumbent.***

Six months after the arrival of a new incumbent the Reader should arrange an appointment to discuss the continuation of their licence. If the Reader and incumbent agree to work together the procedure above '***renew your licence or PTO, etc***' needs be followed. The incumbents should consult the PCC's, Benefice Council similar before supporting the application.

### ***Change of Benefice Boundaries***

If this happens Readers need to have their Licence renewed but this only needs to be accompanied by resolutions from PCC's which have been added to the Benefice

### ***What to do when a Reader reaches the age of 70 years***

A Reader's licence automatically expires on their 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. Readers wishing to continue in ministry after their 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, must to apply for a Bishop's Permission to Officiate [PTO]. To obtain a PTO, please follow the procedure above '***renew your licence or PTO, etc***'.

### ***Becoming a Reader Emeritus***

Reader Emeritus status is given to those who have to cease to have an active ministry. It is given in recognition of a Reader's previous service to the Church by the Bishop. Incumbents who think a retiring Reader should be awarded this recognition should contact their Archdeaconry Warden.

### ***Transferring from another Diocese or from another Benefice in the Diocese***

The course of action to be followed is given in [Appendix D](#). Readers and incumbents should note that this is can be a lengthy process to complete since a licence cannot be given without a satisfactory reference and the completion of the CRB process [*see separate notes on this*].

## ***The Role of Diocesan, Archdeaconry and Deanery Wardens***

Much of the administrative and pastoral care of Readers in the Diocese is given by the Wardens. Their functions are described below and from these descriptions it should be possible to see who is the appropriate person to approach with any question regarding Reader Ministry.

### ***Ministry Specification of the Diocesan Warden of Readers***

The Diocesan Warden [DioW] has a presiding role, overseeing the work and welfare of Readers within the Diocese. As a member of Bishop's Staff the DioW is the major link between the Bishops and the Readers and exercises the role of oversight on behalf the Diocesan Bishop. The emphasis is on pastoral care and good practice. Many of the DioW's tasks are in practice delegated.

### ***Leadership***

- Is Chairman of the Reader Council, which reports to the Diocesan Council for Ministry.
- Promotes the work and profile of Readership throughout the Diocese.
- Represents the Diocese, with others, further afield at the Central Reader Council and other forums.
- Meets quarterly with the Archdeaconry Wardens and the Reader Training Team. The DioW is the line-manager in their Reader work.
- Line-manages the Co-ordinator of the Reader Support Scheme [peer review and development].
- Writes for the Diocesan Reader News and in other ways encourages, including among the clergy, good practice in the ministry of Readers.

### ***Selection and Training***

- Meets with Readers in training at the start of training and when possible during their training. The DioW attends the pre-admission retreat.
- Gives final approval for Reader Candidates to be presented to the Bishop for admission and approves their Ministry Specifications [worked out between the Readers and Incumbent].
- Meets with the Moderator annually and is directly involved with the visit of external moderators.
- Becomes involved when a candidate for selection for Reader training has not been recommended and wishes to make a formal appeal.

### ***Readers and their Fellowships***

- Visits Reader Fellowships when invited.
- Becomes directly involved with Readers and Clergy if called upon to do so by the Archdeaconry Wardens, who otherwise deals with administration, difficulties or conflicts. The DioW always receives copies of correspondence on the latter.
- Oversight of the Annual Readers' Service, when new Readers are admitted and Readers new to the Diocese are welcomed. A working group designs and organizes the service. The DioW selects the preacher for this service and the conductor of the pre-licensing retreat.

### ***Licences***

- The DioW has authority, delegated from the Bishop, to renew licences after processing by the Archdeaconry Wardens

## **Ministry Specification of the Archdeaconry Wardens**

Archdeaconry Wardens [AWs] are appointed by the Bishop on the recommendation of the Diocesan Warden of Readers. They are accountable to the Diocesan Warden and normally continue in office for five years renewable for a further term of three years.

AWs expenses are met in full by the Readers' Council. Administration expenses include the following: use of a computer, a part-time secretary [2 hours per week], stationary, postage, phone calls, travelling expenses at the Diocesan rate, occasional entertainment costs

The Role of the Archdeaconry Warden is:

*To nurture vocation and good practice within the Archdeaconry*

### *Candidates*

- responding to requests for selection by potential Readers
- recommending to the Selection Secretary candidates to attend selection conference , including the preparation of the AWs contribution to the Licensing process
- following up selection conference decisions
- to keep a list of all those who have been recommended for training
- occasionally attend training events, to liaise with candidates in the archdeaconry

### *Archdeaconry*

- talking to Clergy Chapters, Deanery Synods, PCCs and congregations to try to foster new vocations to Readership, promote Readership and encourage good practice

*To encourage fellowship within the Archdeaconry amongst Readers*

- by attending Reader Fellowships from time to time
- by initiating new groups as appropriate
- by occasionally writing articles for the Reader News

*To monitor relationships between Readers and Incumbents*

- to listen to any problems that occur either to the incumbent or the Reader
- to suggest referral to the Review and Support process, or other source of help
- to liaise with Director of Reader Studies over potential action to be taken and training which may be necessary

### *Licences*

- to maintain a list of all Readers in the Archdeaconry
- to ensure the five yearly renewals of Licences and Permissions to Officiate
- to ensure the issue of new licences when there is a change of incumbent or changes are made to the boundaries of the benefice
- to arrange for Readers transferring into the Diocese to be licensed

### *Pastoral Care*

- to monitor and respond to the Annual Reader Return

### *Annual Service*

- The AWs take it in turns to chair the working party which organizes the Annual Reader Service

The role of the Archdeaconry Warden is very important in the nurture and growth of Reader ministry within the Diocese. AWs stand as advocates and reconcilers between Readers and Incumbents in times of challenges. They meet regularly with the DioW and Director of Reader Studies as part of the Diocesan Reader leadership team, enabling best practice to be shared and problems to be resolved. AWs also meet together as a group whenever they wish.

### ***Ministry Specification for a Deanery Warden***

The Deanery Warden [DW] is the representative of the Readers in a deanery on the Reader Council. The DW is elected by the licensed Readers and those holding a PTO within the deanery according to rules and regulations agreed by the Reader Council.

The DW is accountable to the Readers who have elected him or her, and also to their Archdeaconry Warden and the Diocesan Warden of Readers.

The role of the DW has four parts:

#### ***Communication to and from the Reader Council***

The DW is the primary channel of communication between Readers in the deanery and the Readers Council. This role includes:

- being aware of developments in Reader ministry in order to share information around the deanery
- being familiar with the processes of selection and recruitment in order to encourage Reader vocation

#### ***Service on working teams***

The day to day work of the Council in its responsibility for the promotion of Reader ministry throughout the diocese is divided into 5 working teams which are:

- selection of new Readers
- Reader training
- production of the Reader News
- organisation of the Annual Service
- finance

It is hoped that each member of the Reader Council will join one of these. Other working teams may evolve as circumstances dictate.

#### ***Ministry link***

A DW may help the Rural Dean to provide cover during a vacancy.

DWs and Rural Deans should consult together, exchange news and make recommendations on the provision and placement of Readers within the deanery and on presentation of Reader matters to the deanery.

#### ***Pastoral care***

The incumbent has responsibility for the pastoral care of Readers licensed to him or her but, following the best models for collaborative ministry, the DW has a share in the pastoral care of Readers in his or her deanery and encourages them to care for each other.

The DW maintains contact with the Readers in the deanery, including Readers in training, prays for them and is a "friend in ministry" to them.

The DW is given the names of those in the deanery who are recommended for Reader training and of Readers who move into the deanery. He or she is informed of any changes to the licences of Readers or PTOs in the deanery by the Diocesan Warden of Readers.

The DW should receive information about the Reader Fellowship meetings which serve the deanery and encourage Readers to participate.

Support for DWs in fulfilling their role will include the:

- availability of the AW and Diocesan staff for consultation
- receipt of regular issues of 'The Reader'

The DW is often approached in situations where a Reader experiences difficulties in their parish. The DW informs the Archdeaconry Warden if appropriate.

The DW may assist with placements for Readers in training.

Where appropriate and with the agreement of the parties concerned, the Archdeaconry Warden may give the DW feedback from the annual Reader Return of Readers in the deanery.

## ***The Reader Council - Role and Structure***

The role of the Reader Council is to support and enhance the work of Readers within the Diocese. The Council exercises this role through

- dealing with all the legal requirements as to the licensing and registration of Readers
- maintaining a register of Readers in the Diocese
- the selection and training of potential Readers
- the moderation of Reader training
- promoting continual ministerial education among Readers
- encouraging fellowship and mutual support among Readers, including those in training
- an Annual Service of Admission and Re-dedication

In support of this the Council publishes regular Newsletters and Information Sheets, promotes the running of conferences, training days, etc. There is an administrative structure where by an individual or small group deals with much of the day to day work including selection and training, finance and the processing of licences

### ***Membership of the Council***

The Diocesan Warden  
Archdeaconry Wardens  
*[one in each Archdeaconry - Bath, Taunton and Wells]*  
Deanery Wardens  
*[one elected by Readers in each Deanery of the Diocese- 19 in total]*  
The Moderator  
Director of Reader Studies  
Assistant Director of Reader Studies  
The Secretary  
The Treasurer  
The Selection Secretary  
2 Bishop's Nominees

### ***Structure of the Council***

The day to day work of the Council is carried out by five working teams:

- Selection of New Readers
- Reader Training
- Production of the Reader News
- Organisation of the Annual Reader Service
- Finance

These teams interact with the Council, each other as necessary and with the Diocesan and Archdeaconry Wardens. The normal route for communication between the Council and the Bishop and Council for Ministry is through the Diocesan Warden of Readers.

The principle source of income of the Council comes from the Readers annual subscriptions. This together with a small grant from Diocesan Funds enables the Council to finance the work it undertakes.

### ***Flow Chart for the Selection of Potential Readers for Training***

After potential candidate/incumbent have discussed the possibility of a vocation, contact is made with a Vocations Advisor [VA].

This approach may be via an Archdeaconry Warden [AW].

If a potential candidate directly approaches a VA/AW incumbent is informed



VA meets candidate to help them discern their call.

If VA thinks candidate's vocation is as a Reader informs appropriate AW



AW meets candidate.

Candidate asked to bring a prepared statement of their story so far to meeting.

AW discerns call against Advisory Board of Ministry guidelines.

Once AW satisfied, process is discussed - reference made to Assistant Director of Reader Studies [ADRS] if required.

Application Form is given to candidate and copy of 'Bridging the Gap', if not already supplied.

AW contacts incumbent to discuss future for candidate and to advise progress



Candidate sends AW the following : Completed Application Form, Proof of Baptism and Confirmation, PCC resolution[s], It is a requirement of the Bishops Regulations that all PCC's in the area where the Reader will serve give their approval to possible selection of a candidate, Completed Childrens' Act and Ethnic Monitoring Form.

AW takes copies of Baptism and Confirmation Certificates and returns originals to candidate



AW prepares a report on the candidate and sends this to the Selection Secretary [SS] with all the documentation described above, keeping copies for Archdeaconry file



SS obtains references from referees and incumbent



Candidate attends Selection Conference. Training requirements are discussed with ADRS



SS notifies Diocesan Warden, AW, Director of Training and Council Secretary of Selectors' decision and sends a copy of the Selector's Report to each



AW informs candidate and incumbent of decision



#### ***IF SELECTED FOR TRAINING***

AW discusses with candidate any issue raised by the Selectors.

AW notifies Deanery Warden of candidate's success.

ADRS makes contact to agree training needs and likely start date



#### ***IF NOT RECOMMENDED FOR TRAINING***

AW discusses with candidate the Selector's decision. Consider possible appeal

### **Flow Chart for Renewal of Licence**

***Licences are required to be renewed every five years***

Reader sends to Archdeaconry Warden [AW] their Licence and letters of support from Incumbent and the PCC of the parish in which the Reader lives or habitually worships



AW checks documentation and sends to Diocesan Warden [DioW]. DioW issues 'Bluey' giving notice of renewal

The Archdeaconry Wardens make annual checks of their lists to ensure compliance with the Bishop's Regulations regarding the renewal of licences

### **Flow Chart for Raising a New Licence**

A New Licence is required for the following reasons

- a] When an incumbent changes - this process takes place six months after the arrival of the new incumbent
- b] When the boundaries of the benefice have changed - a new licence is required immediately the changes take effect
- c] When a licence has been lost - usually comes to light when the licence is due for renewal

A fee is payable to the Diocesan Registrar for the raising of a new licence. In cases a] and b] this is paid by the parish/benefice, in case c] by the Reader

Situation A	Situation B	Situation C
Reader sends licence to AW Letter of support from incumbent	Reader sends licence to AW Letter of support from PCC[s] not previously served by the Reader	AW receives request from Reader stating Licence has been lost with supporting letters from incumbent and PCC in which the Reader lives or habitually worships.



AW checks documentation and sends to Diocesan Registry with letter explaining reasons for the need for a new licence - copy of letter sent to Reader and Diocesan Warden  
Copies of documentation are kept by AW

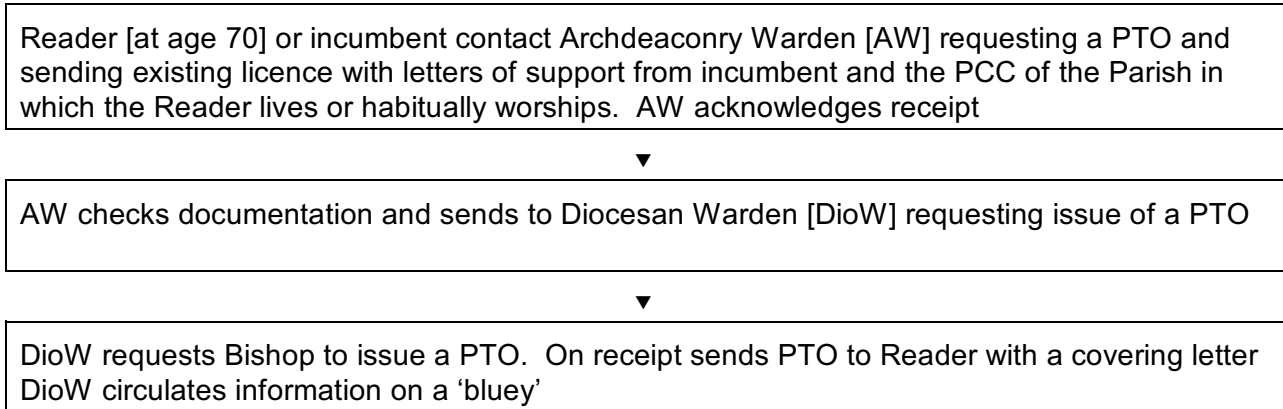


Registry prepares new licence for Bishop to sign. Once signed sends licence to Incumbent



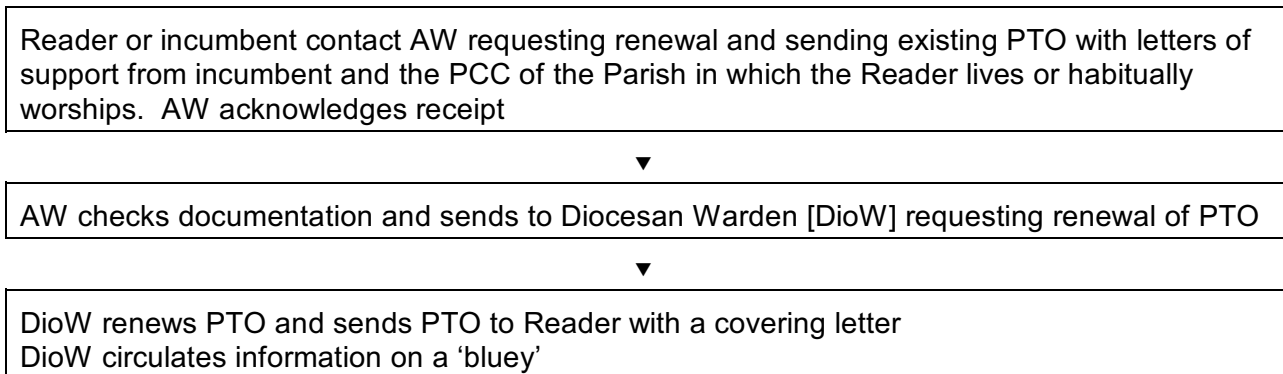
Diocesan Warden sends 'bluey' giving notification of new licence

**Flow Chart for the Issuing of a Permission to Officiate**



**Flow Chart for Renewing a Permission to Officiate**

*PTOs are required to be renewed every five years*



The Archdeaconry Wardens make annual checks of their lists to ensure compliance with the Regulations regarding the issue and renewal of PTOs

***Flow Chart for the Licensing of Readers Transferring  
From Another Diocese or Another Benefice Within the Diocese***

Normally a Reader transferring from another Diocese or Benefice will quickly make themselves known to their new incumbent. The incumbent in the first six months of the Reader being in the benefice may invite the Reader to preach and lead worship on three occasions under supervision in order that the Reader may become known within the benefice. The incumbent notifies the Archdeaconry Warden [AW] of potential new Reader in the benefice



After six months, if incumbent and Reader agree, an approach is made to the AW for licensing



For Readers transferring into the Diocese the AW sends them a Personal Details Form together with Children's Act and Ethnic Monitoring Forms. For Readers Transferring within the Diocese the AW obtains the Reader's details from the appropriate AW  
AW makes an appointment to meet the Reader - not always necessary if a Reader is transferring within an Archdeaconry.  
At the same time the incumbent consults with other Readers in the benefice, seeks a resolution supporting the licensing from the PCC of each parish in which the Reader will serve and writes their own letter of support. Both of these are sent to the AW



After meeting the Reader and receipt of all the documentation, including Certificate of Admission as a Reader and current licence, the AW will seek a reference from the sending Diocese or previous incumbent and ask the Bishop's Office to instigate the CRB procedure



On receipt of the reference and having received clearance under the CRB procedure the AW will ask the Diocesan Registry to prepare a Licence. A Fee is payable to the Registrar for the preparation of the licence by the Benefice. AW notifies incumbent and Reader



Incumbent and Reader decide the occasion when the Licence is formally presented in front of the congregation



Registry sends licence to the incumbent for presentation



Readers transferring from another Diocese are invited to attend the Annual Reader Service to be formally welcomed to the Diocese by a Bishop

**Flow Chart for Application for Reader Emeritus Status**

Archdeaconry Warden [AW] receives request from Incumbent - Incumbent provides letter of support



Reader sends AW  
Letter requesting Emeritus status  
Existing PTO/Licence



AW sends to Diocesan Warden [DioW] the following  
Letter requesting Emeritus status, with  
Letter from Reader requesting Emeritus status  
Existing PTO/Licence  
Letter of Support from Incumbent  
  
Letter copied to Reader and Incumbent



DioW requests Bishop for Emeritus status



Bishop's Office sends Certificate to DioW, who forwards this with a letter of thanks to the Incumbent for presentation to the Reader



DioW creates and circulates 'Blue Form'

## ***A Ministry Specification for a Reader***

A Ministry Specification will form the basis of a Reader's work in the coming years. Below are some questions, a moral contract and a specimen ministry specification, which will act as a guide when drawing up a ministry specification. This Appendix before should be read in full before attempting to write a personal specification.

### ***How to write a Reader Ministry Specification***

It will be found helpful to read the Grove Booklet 'Readers and Worship in the Church of England' and the Bishops' Regulations for Reader Ministry and to consider the questions outlined in the moral contract section before attempting to write a specification. These questions should form the basis of the discussion between Reader and incumbent. It may be of help to write notes of possible answers before meeting together. When the specification is complete, it needs to be approved by the PCC and a copy sent to the appropriate Archdeaconry Warden.

At the date of review the Reader and incumbent might evaluate how the specification has worked out and make adjustments for the future.

#### *Introduction*

The object in drawing up a ministry specification is to ensure that the Reader, incumbent, PCC, churchwardens and the whole ministry team [whether formally constituted or not] know what the Reader is expected to do and provides a basis for periodic review of experience and achievement. The following headings and notes provide a framework for the compilation of a Ministry Specification. They are intended to prompt systematic, careful thought about a Reader's ministry in a particular place and at a particular time. The resulting specification should be factual, specific and concise.

#### *The Framework*

##### *Preamble*

- What is the formal status of Reader?
- How would you summarise the role of a Reader?
- Where will the Reader exercise his or her ministry?
- How do the legal and official C of E documents describe Reader ministry?

This provides an opportunity to state the formal position of Readers in the Church of England together with any important facts about the Reader's ministry in the parish[es]. [See 'The Bishops' Regulations for Reader Ministry']

##### *Purpose*

In one sentence, what is the main purpose of the Reader's ministry?

Not to be confused with tasks, this heading is intended to give a broad overview of the Reader's ministry in the parish[es]. Especially in places where other Readers are already working, it is important to identify the particular contribution, which the Reader will make. Please note that Readers are not automatically ex-officio members of the PCC. If the PCC has already taken a decision to admit Readers then the ministry specification should reflect this. However, if the PCC still need to take a vote on this, the ministry specification should indicate the intention.

##### *Accountability*

- Describe the line of accountability of the Reader [*example given in specimen*]
- What opportunities are intended for meetings between the incumbent and Reader?
- What freedom to make decisions will the Reader have?

In accordance with the Bishop's licence, the Reader is accountable only to the Bishop and the incumbent. This is worth stating. This heading also provides an opportunity to set out the means by which the Reader and incumbent will keep in touch, eg by the frequency and timing of saying the office together and meetings at specific intervals to review experience and plan future participation in worship and other activities.

The incumbent and Reader [and others] must be clear about what authority and responsibility has been delegated to the Reader and on what matters the Reader must consult the incumbent [and/or others]. Where authority is delegated, the Reader must get on with the job without seeking constant reassurance; equally, he/she must be allowed to do the job without constant intervention or oversight.

### *Tasks*

- In which areas of ministry will the Reader seek to operate?
- In what ways will the Reader exercise his or her ministry in those areas?
- List the specific tasks that the Reader will fulfil.
- Group this list into the areas as above.

Initially, every task [no matter how small] that the Reader undertakes or will undertake, should be listed. At a second stage, these tasks can be ranked in order of importance and some may then be grouped together. Some tasks currently performed by the Reader may, more appropriately, be transferred to other lay people so that the Reader can concentrate on the more important aspects of ministry for which he/she has been trained.

Each task should be briefly described in specific, positive terms.

### *Allocation of time/workload*

- How will we assess an appropriate workload for the Reader?
- How will we assess if the Reader is being overloaded/under used in his or her work?
- What steps will be taken if the workload becomes excessive or under used?

It is important to estimate, as accurately as possible, the amount of time, which the Reader will devote to his/her ministry. This is best expressed in hours per week or month and must include training, study, drafting and preparation, attendance at meetings and all associated travelling time.

### *Expenses*

- What expenses are claimable by the Reader?
- When should the Reader claim expenses and what method should be used?

The ministry specification needs to have a clear statement of what expenses are to be claimed. This needs to be communicated to or approved by the PCC. It is also helpful to consider how funeral expenses work.

### *Review*

- When will the Reader's ministry be reviewed and by whom?

The ministry specification will include a date for its review by the incumbent and Reader. The fact that a ministry specification has been written down does not mean that it cannot be changed. Indeed, it will need to be changed in the light of experience. Nor does the existence of a specification preclude changes, at short notice, in an emergency.

The ministry specification is not a contract. It is a guide, an aid to clarity in relationships, a benchmark for the future and a form of reassurance for all involved in building God's kingdom in a particular place and time.

### *The Moral Contract*

These questions refer to any licensed minister or volunteer within the church and are for use in the drawing up of a ministry specification. You may wish to discover the answers to these questions as 'raw' information before writing the specification.

1. What exactly do you want me to do?
2. What freedom to make decisions will I have?
3. Over what period?
4. How much of my time will it involve?
5. Where will I do it?
6. Who will I answer to and how?
7. What resources will be available to me?
8. What support will I receive and from whom?
9. How will any possible problems between us be handled?
10. Will I be able to talk through with someone how the job is going and when?
11. What will count as success?
12. What particular objectives do you want me to fulfil?
13. What preparations/training will I receive and from whom?
14. What opportunities for further training will there be?
15. Who will I work with?
16. How will I relate to others in the pastoral team?
17. Will there be other opportunities for ministry in the benefice or LMG, which I might be able to undertake when I have done this?
18. Will I be able to give up the job gracefully at the end of this period, or if I find that it is too much for me?
19. Who will arrange for my replacement?
20. How will people know what I have been appointed to do?
21. Will the church reimburse me for expenses incurred in doing this appointment?

## ***Specimen Ministry Specification***

### *Preamble*

The ministry of Readers is a voluntary, nationally-accredited, episcopally-licensed role which is governed by Canon. The role of Reader is often summarised as: 'preaching and teaching in a pastoral context'. The following paragraphs describe .....’s role in his/her ministry as a Reader in this parish/benefice of .....

### *Purpose*

.....will exercise his/her ministry in ... by learning to serve God and all his people in those communities. In worship, he/she will endeavour to raise the hearts and minds of all people to God. He/She will persevere in prayer, Bible study, and in the understanding of our faith. He/She will encourage all people to exercise and extend their personal ministries.

### *Accountability*

... is licensed by the Bishop and is accountable to .... as *Incumbent/Priest in Charge*, for such tasks and responsibilities as he/she may, by agreement, allocate to him/her. The Reader and Incumbent will maintain close contact by:

- Attendance when possible at staff meetings
- A *monthly* meeting to review recent experience and make detailed plans for participation in forthcoming services and other church activities.

### *Tasks [examples]*

Preach not more than once a month

Lead, or share in leading, the worship at Morning and Evening Prayer, and other services as and when agreed

Share in the planning and leadership of All-Age Services

Read lessons, lead intercessions and distribute the Holy Sacrament, publish banns of marriage and receive and present the offerings of the people, as and when appropriate

Serve as co-opted member of the PCC [to be confirmed by vote]

Undertake Continuing Ministerial Development

### *Allocation of workload*

... will have no set number of hours, but will regularly review with the ..... the level of commitment with which he/she feels comfortable.

### *Expenses*

All reasonable expenses will be reimbursed. Car mileage will be reimbursed at the full Diocesan rate.

..... should submit an expenses form quarterly to the PCC Treasurer.

There will be a review of this specification every ..... years

### Sample Expenses Claim Forms

#### **For Taking a Service in Another Benefice**

TRAVELLING EXPENSES CLAIM FORM	
Name of Reader	
Address	
Travelling expenses in connection with taking a service on from home to _____ and return	
_____ miles @ 40 pence per mile *	Total Claimed £
Signed _____	Date _____
Date paid and signature of Treasurer	

#### **For Working Costs Within the Benefice**

Parish/Benefice of _____			
Claim for Reimbursement of Working Costs incurred in my Ministry as a Reader			
Name _____			
Address _____			
Period of Claim	From _____	To _____	
Use of Car <i>[see attached Journey Record]</i>	_____ miles @ 40 pence per mile*	£ _____	: _____
Postage <i>[receipts attached]</i>		£ _____	: _____
Stationery <i>[receipts attached]</i>		£ _____	: _____
Telephone <i>[see list of calls made and cost]</i>		£ _____	: _____
Maintenance/Replacement of Robes <i>[receipts attached]</i>		£ _____	: _____
Books/Teaching & Preaching Resources <i>[receipts attached]</i>		£ _____	: _____
Training/Courses <i>[excluding travel - see use of car]</i>	Fees	£ _____	: _____
	Subsistence	£ _____	: _____
	Materials	£ _____	: _____
Quiet Days/Retreats <i>[excluding travel - see use of car]</i>	Cost	£ _____	: _____
	Incidental Expenses	£ _____	: _____
Other <i>[give details and receipts]</i>		£ _____	: _____
		<b>Total Claimed</b>	£ _____ : _____
Signed _____		Date _____	
Signed <i>[PCC Treasurer]</i>		Date _____	

\* correct at 11 March 2008

**Current Post Holders***correct at 30 November 2007*

Diocesan Warden of Readers	The Venerable John Reed 4 Westerkirk Gate, Staplegrove, Taunton TA2 6BQ ☎01823 323838 fax:01823 325420 ✉adtaunton@bathwells.anglicam.org
Bath Archdeaconry Warden of Readers	The Reverend Paul Burden The Vicarage, Bathampton Lane, Bathampton, Bath BA2 6SW ☎ 01225 463570 ✉ p.burden@tiscali.co.uk
Taunton Archdeaconry Warden of Readers	The Reverend Peter Martin The Rectory, 27 Brook Street, Cannington, Bridgwater TA5 2HP ☎ & fax 01278 652953 ✉ revd.petermartin@tiscali.co.uk
Wells Archdeaconry Warden of Readers	The Reverend Rose Hoskins Springfields, Weston Bampfylde, Yeovil BA22 7HZ ☎ 01963 440026 ✉ revrose@weston-bampfylde.freemove.co.uk
Secretary to the Readers Council	Mr Richard Brown Pathway Cottage, Westhay, Glastonbury BA6 9TU ☎ 01458 860262 ✉ rcb5069@hotmail.com
Treasurer to the Readers Council	Mr David Martin 68 Chilton Street, Bridgwater TA6 3HX ☎ 01278 456061
Selection Secretary	Mr Adam Green The Vicarage, Pitminster, Taunton TA3 7AZ ☎ 01823 421232 ✉ adamgreen@summit.me.uk
Director of Reader Studies	Prebendary Graham Dodds Diocesan Office, The Old Deanery, Wells BA5 2UG ☎ 01749 670777 ✉ graham.dodds@bathwells.anglican.org
Assistant Director of Reader Studies	Mrs Jennifer Cole Diocesan Office, The Old Deanery, Wells BA5 2UG ☎ 01749 670777 ✉ jennifer.cole@bathwells.anglican.org
Reader Formation Chaplain	Mrs Anne Ward 5 Vicars Close, Wells BA5 2UH ☎ 01749 671409 ✉ ANNEATNO3@aol.com
Moderator	The Venerable Judith Rose 4 Glebelands, Cheddar BS27 3XP ☎ 01934 741708 ✉ rosegwyer@tiscali.co.uk
Review and Support Administration	Miss Susan Green 3 Abbots Way, Pilton BA4 4BN ☎ 01749 890524 ✉ s.green37@btinternet.com

### ***Further Reading***

The following may be of interest to anyone wishing to know more about Readership

'Bishop's Regulations for Reader Ministry' published by the Ministry Division of the Archbishops' Council

Information on particular aspects of Reader Ministry are available in:

ABM Policy Paper No 7 *Selection for Reader Ministry*

ABM Ministry Paper No 19 *Servants and Shepherds*

ABM Ministry Paper No 20 *The Deployment of Readers*

'Readers and Worship in the Church of England' by Carolyn Headly - Grove Books Limited

ISBN 1 85174 463 0

### ***Websites***

Central Readers Council: [www.readers.cofe.anglican.org](http://www.readers.cofe.anglican.org)

Diocese of Bath & Wells: [www.bathandwells.org.uk](http://www.bathandwells.org.uk)

This site also has some useful link pages