

Background

Deaneries are groups of Anglican parishes in a geographical area - the size of the area and the number of parishes varies widely. Parish Clergy in the Deanery are called together by the Area Dean for mutual support in the Deanery Chapter. All Licensed Clergy in the Deanery are automatically members of the Chapter and Deanery Synod.

Deanery Synods also have Lay Members, i.e. those who are not Clergy. Deanery Synods are formal meetings, which are mainly for information and discussion about mission and ministry in the area. Occasionally they are required to take formal decisions, sometimes by means of a vote. Every three years, Annual Parochial Church Meetings (APCMs) elect their Lay representatives to Deanery Synods. The next occasion is 2014. Crucially, the Lay representatives form the electorate for the House of Laity on the Diocesan and General Synod; the next elections for both of these take place in 2015.

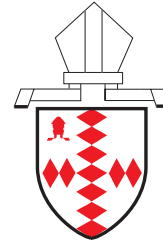
In all of these matters it is important to be clear about the distinction between Deaneries and Deanery Synods - Deaneries are much more than their Synods, although the Synod forms a crucial focus for the activity within the Deanery. Deaneries form an important bridge between parishes and the wider church, including the Diocese.

The role of APCMs

APCMs may select/elect up to eight Deanery Synod representatives, depending on the number of people in the congregation, so it is a question of looking for a range of qualities amongst a team of representatives. The list of qualities and attributes of effective Deanery Synod members shown on the previous page is offered so that, across the whole of the Synod, there are the skills, experience and enthusiasm to make change happen and move things forward.

Deanery Synod lay representatives are ex officio members of the PCC, so they will bring these skills to the PCC too.

PREPARED by the Deaneries Group following feedback from Diocesan Synod on 9 March 2013.



The Diocese of Southwark



Deanery Synod Lay Representatives

*- an opportunity to serve
the wider church*

Prepared by the Strategy for Ministry Deaneries Group

May 2013

Breathing new life into Deaneries

Bishop Christopher has made 'Breathing new life into Deaneries' one of his three priorities for his episcopal ministry. The other two are - 'Renewing Vocation and Discipleship' and 'Empowering the Laity'. This is all set out in more detail in the Strategy for Ministry Report. It is clear that Deaneries need to become more important in the life of the Diocese. To make this happen, it is vital that the most suitable Lay people are elected onto Deanery Synods. Deaneries and Deanery Synods offer training opportunities and experience, where the skills of all can be developed and future leaders of the Church identified, so it is important to look for future potential rather than just fill the gaps.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Deanery Synods exist to serve the **witness and mission of the wider Church** and so need to be able to take strategic decisions to **advance mission and ministry in the Deanery and the Diocese**.
2. Deanery Synod meetings are concerned with seeking God's will for the mission of the Church in the Deanery and so they need to be **Christ-centred, prayerful and open to the Spirit** speaking through all.
3. It is important that the Deanery Synod, as any representative body, broadly reflects the **diversity** of all the congregations - in gender, ethnic origin, age, experience etc.
4. It is important for APCMs/PCCs to think carefully and **pray hopefully** about who they choose, using principles of **succession planning** - including looking for the leaders of the future and playing to people's strengths and potential. Deaneries are entering a new phase and need fresh ideas.
5. It is important that Deanery Synod representatives are **enthusiastic** about the potential for changing the role and effectiveness of Deaneries and have the **commitment and energy** to attend and participate in the meetings and be active between them.

AS A LAY REPRESENTATIVE DO YOU HAVE OR COULD YOU DEVELOP SOME OF THE FOLLOWING QUALITIES?

- A vision and passion for the wider church to flourish
- Committed to work with others in prayer, listening and study to seek God's will for mission in the Deanery
- Able to think and act strategically - able to see the role of your own parish within the bigger picture and understand and accept differences of view
- Committed to mission, growth and engagement across boundaries
- Open to new/different approaches and willing to listen to and learn from others, share ideas and experience and embrace change
- Able to speak confidently and challenge in a respectful way
- Able to provide inspiring feedback to your PCC/congregation
- Committed, reliable and able to see things through
- Dynamic and energetic and able to lead others to shape the future
- Excited about 'breathing new life into Deaneries'

