

How we run our chaplaincies

This User Guide seeks to help Chaplaincies to find their way through some of the complexities of our diocese being constitutionally one of the 42 dioceses of the Church of England.



Being a part of the Church of England means we are part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church

This may be a new experience for some in our congregations (and indeed some of our Chaplains) where they have come from different parts of the Anglican Communion or indeed from other Christian traditions or none.

Being a part of the Church of England means we are part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. The Church of England framework of governance, worship and doctrine is the norm in all our Chaplaincies. This brings with it a mutual framework of responsibilities, support and accountability including the following important matters:

It is the authority which appoints and licences our Bishops, selects and trains the majority of our clergy and, through the Bishop, enables them to be licensed and to serve in our Chaplaincies.

It determines and operates the synodical structure through which, Bishops, clergy and lay people all have a voice.

It provides a range of guidance, support and services.

It defines the roles, and responsibilities of the Chaplain who is primarily accountable to the diocesan Bishop.

It also defines the roles, and responsibilities of lay people and this User Guide provides some basic information on their role in Chaplaincy life.

What are the roles of the laity in Chaplaincy life?

Chaplaincy Constitution

All chaplaincies must have a constitution (indeed it is a legal requirement in some countries) and a diocesan template for this is available. This sets out in a formal document how your Chaplaincy is structured and organised. If you have any queries then your Archdeacon will advise you.

Churchwardens

Churchwardens have very specific duties which you can find explained in the links given at the end of this User Guide.

They are the officers of the Bishop

They shall be foremost in representing the laity and cooperating with the Chaplain.

They are required to promote unity and peace within the Chaplaincy and to work in cooperation with the Chaplain.

Churchwardens are obliged by the Diocese to have a safeguarding check.

NB the term 'Churchwardens' is to be used rather than, as has been the case in some Chaplaincies, the term 'Chaplaincy Wardens'

Chaplaincy Councils

Chaplaincy Councils should work in cooperation with the Chaplain, in the running of the Chaplaincy Council, with Council members taking on specific duties by agreement with the Chaplain.

Their primary roles are set out in detail in the diocesan constitution. In summary they are:

Working in cooperation with the Chaplain, to promote the whole mission of the Church within the Chaplaincy;

To consider and discuss matters concerning the Church of England;

To implement locally matters agreed at Diocesan, Archdeaconry or Deanery Synods (or General Synod);

To consider matters that the Council may wish to raise at Diocesan, Archdeaconry or Deanery Synods;

To be responsible for financial, insurance and fabric issues within the Chaplaincy (NB this includes local arrangements where church buildings (places of worship) belonging to other denominations are used by the Chaplaincy)

Councils are required to meet at least quarterly every year.

The Electoral Roll

Only those who have applied to be included on the Chaplaincy Electoral Roll can vote in Chaplaincy elections and hold elected posts. Full details can be found in the '[Church Representation Rules](#)'.

NB It is perfectly permissible for people to be on the Electoral Roll in more than one place (provided they meet the attendance or other criteria) but there are restrictions on, for example, holding office in more than one place.

Chaplaincies and congregations where there is more than one place of worship

Where a Chaplaincy serves in a number of locations (sometimes called churches or 'worship centres'), it may be helpful to supplement the Chaplaincy Council by local representatives elected to serve that local congregation, all under the authority of the Chaplain, the two Churchwardens and the Chaplaincy Council. These are matters for local agreement in consultation with your Chaplain and Archdeacon and should be included in your Chaplaincy Constitution.

Chaplaincy Standing committees

Standing Committees help in the running of the Chaplaincy where urgent business arises between Chaplaincy Council meetings.

As a minimum, they should consist of the Chaplain(s), the 2 Churchwardens, and two further Lay members of the Chaplaincy Council.

Assistant Clergy, Clergy with PTO's, Lay Readers & Worship Leaders

In preparing for the arrival of a new Chaplain it is important to remember that Assistant clergy, clergy with Permission to Officiate, and Lay Ministers (Readers) who hold the Bishop's Licence, exercise their ministry under the authority of the Bishop and the Chaplain (Canon E6). Congregational Worship Leaders and those who assist with the distribution of Holy Communion are nominated after a resolution from the Chaplaincy Council, and then duly authorised after suitable training.