

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

A short glossary

A: Church structures:

Diocese: A diocese, under the pastoral care of its bishop, is the local church, the basic unit in the Church of England. It is a geographical area, which is sub-divided administratively and pastorally into Archdeacons, Deaneries and Parishes.

Archdeaconry: Most dioceses are divided into two or more archdeacons.

Deanery: Archdeacons are further divided into Deaneries. Deaneries serve mainly as associations of parishes for the purposes of co-ordinated mission. However, they are important tier in the electoral process for synodical government (see below)

Parish: This relatively small geographical area is the main working sub-division of the diocese, within which the bishop shares his 'cure of souls' (his pastoral responsibility) with the incumbent.

Benefice: The total area, within which an incumbent exercises his or her role, is known as the benefice. A benefice can include more than one parish.

Team Ministry: Where more than one priest is given pastoral responsibility within a parish - and also frequently where there is more than one Church of England place of worship - the pattern of appointing an incumbent can be replaced with a system where one priest is Team Rector and others are Team Vicars.

Group Ministry: More informal than a Team Ministry - the incumbents of a number of benefices agree to work together as a group.

Conventional District: Where new housing developments make it desirable for parish boundaries to be re-drawn, part of a parish may be designated a Conventional District. In a Conventional District, a priest-in-charge can be appointed directly by the bishop in place of the incumbent.

Extra-Parochial Place: The Church of England recognises that the life and ministry of the local church (i.e., the diocese) is expressed in parishes, in institutions such as hospitals, colleges, etc, and in various other 'extra-parochial places'.

Pastoral Re-organisation: This is the normal term for any programme of re-drawing parish boundaries or linking parishes to be part of a single benefice.

People:

Bishop: The chief pastor in a diocese with a personal episcopate which he shares with his clergy and within the Church of England's synodical system.

Archdeacon: A senior clergyperson in the diocese - part of the bishop's staff team - with special responsibility for the pastoral care and discipline of the clergy and for property matters.

Rural Dean: Clergyperson with leadership role in the deanery.

Area Dean: Alternative name for the Rural Dean.

Incumbent: A clergyperson with whom the bishop has shared his pastoral responsibility in a benefice is known as the incumbent. An incumbent, usually referred to either as 'Vicar' or 'Rector', thus gains his or her freehold entitlement to a stipend. Assistant clergy are often known as curates. Ordained ministers of partner Churches may be licensed by the bishop to be engaged in the 'cure of souls', but it is not possible for them to be appointed as incumbents.

Vicar: Title given in most parishes to the clergyperson who is their incumbent.

Rector: Title given in a minority of parishes (mostly of ancient foundation) to the clergyperson who is their incumbent.

Team Rector: The senior clergyperson in a Team Parish.

Team Vicar: An associate clergyperson in a Team Parish.

Churchwardens: Lay people appointed annually by the whole parish as officers responsible for the fabric, and generally for the good order, of the church.

Readers: Trained volunteer lay ministers who are licensed by the bishop to serve in parishes. Traditionally they have special authority to preach and lead worship.

Synodical Government

Church Representation Rules: The rules by which ordained and lay people are elected to Church Councils and Synods in the Church of England.

Church Electoral Roll. Those who participate in the life of the Church of England, whether as parishioners or habitual worshippers (including those who are members of many other Christian Churches), may register their names on the Church Electoral Roll for the purpose of voting (or standing for election) within the Church of England's system of synodical government.

Parochial Church Council: The elected body within a Church of England parish that is responsible with the incumbent for the life, ministry and mission of the local church. Churchwardens are ex officio members.

District Church Council: The elected body that is responsible with the designated ordained minister (under the authority of the incumbent or Team Rector) for the life, ministry and mission of a district church - usually within a Team Parish.

Deanery Synod: The body consisting of clergy and elected lay people that has responsibility for the shared mission of the parishes in a deanery.

Deanery Chapter: The meeting of Church of England clergy working in a deanery. The meeting may be extended to include Readers and ministers of partner Churches in LEPs.

House of Laity: The lay people on the Deanery Synod form the House of Laity and elect the members of that House in Diocesan and General Synod. Synodical decision-making can sometimes also take place by Houses.

House of Clergy: Ordained ministers of the Church of England meet as the House of Clergy in the Deanery Synod in order to elect the members of that House in the Diocesan and General Synods.

Diocesan Synod: The synodical body sharing responsibility with the bishop for the life and mission

of the diocese. Diocesan and General Synods also include a House of Bishops.

General Synod: The national synodical body for the whole of the Church of England,

Worship in the Church of England

Common Worship: The newest collection of worship authorised for use in the Church of England alongside the Book of Common Prayer.

Church Calendar: The traditional timetable for Sundays and holy days followed by the majority of Christian Churches across the world. Details, with local variations, are contained in Common Worship.

Common Lectionary: The programme of Bible readings for the set services of public worship that has been agreed between the major Christian Churches. The Church of England uses the slightly adapted Revised Common Lectionary.

Intercessions: The period within the structure of liturgical worship where people are led in prayer for the needs of the Church and the world.

Other terminology

Bishop's Instrument: The legal statement, sometimes issued by bishops when setting up a Local Ecumenical Partnership, detailing what has been authorised in the LEP. Some bishops prefer to provide a simpler letter of authorisation.

Shared Building Agreement: The legal agreement, under the Sharing of Church Buildings Act, which regulates the way in which partner Churches may use the church building. Sometimes also exists for other property, e.g., the Vicarage.

County Sponsoring Body: The responsible group of people representing the Churches (in an 'ecumenical instrument') within the area of a diocese, whereby the bishop shares with other partner Church leaders the oversight of LEPs.

Parish share: Each Church of England diocese has its own system for apportioning the cost of ministry and Church administration among the parishes. Most commonly this is known as the parish share, although other titles are used.