



Esgobaeth Abertawe ac Aberhonddu
The Diocese of Swansea and Brecon

Cyd-gyfarfod, cyd-dyfu, cyd-genhadu
Gathering, growing, going



Ministry Areas

Your Questions, Answered

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Archdeacon with Responsibility for Ministry Areas

Version 2

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Why Ministry Areas?

How will all of this grow the Kingdom of God?

We need to become a people focused on mission, freed from things that consume our time in church and delegate or surrender them to others who can deal with 'business matters' for us.

We need to be thinking of where we currently are and where we want to be; taking every opportunity to celebrate what we have in our churches as places of welcome and faith, of history and hospitality and somewhere where they can discover afresh for themselves the Love of God.

We need to allow the clergy to be not desk-bound rota organisers and Health and Safety inspectors, but free to be out in their parishes being visible to the people and doing what they felt called to do, their first love of faith and their purpose along with laity in fulfilling the Commission of Christ which to paraphrase would be to go out, to gather and bring in to grow!

Time frame:

1. When do MA's start and what is the process of going from today into the MA structure?

We will be Licensing Ministry Areas from Pentecost onwards with the first meeting of the Ministry Area Councils expected soon after.

2. How long will the autonomy of our present PCC last?

The autonomy of the present PCC is in place until the new MA is constituted and the MA council begins its work

The AVM this year will be the last of the AVM's of the old Parish System. This year's Parish report will be the last, next year's will be a Ministry Area Annual report. The first AVM of the new MA AVM's would be in 2024.

3. How and when will we need to carry out elections for the new MAC?

At the 2023 Parish AVM, elections will need to be held in each church nominating one representative per church to sit on the new Ministry Area Council.

A Ministry Area Council Chair will have to be sought out, as would a Ministry Area Treasurer. The Chair would be one of the elected reps, the Treasurer would be ex officio.

Two Wardens will be elected.

It is possible that the new MA administrator will be the secretary to this body, however the administrator cannot be an elected member of the MAC as they will be employed by the Diocese and is therefore ex-officio.

The elections to the new body will be dealt with in a similar way to current elections to PCC and no doubt prior to Easter paperwork from the Diocese will be distributed explaining how this process can be facilitated.

Team Members:

1. **When the existing Parishes are abolished and all Clergy are relicensed to the Ministry Area, does that mean they are no longer in charge of an individual church?**

Clergy will be licensed to the Ministry Area with responsibility for named churches, for which they will have direct pastoral oversight and undertake the traditional duties of visiting and offices.

They can be asked to be deployed to cover and to provide a variety of duties in other parts of the Ministry Area, but would mainly be leading worship in the churches they are allocated to. "

The exact nature of the Licenses is being worked out at present

2. **What does clergy having specific pastoral responsibilities mean for us?**

There will always be a cleric who has pastoral responsibility for a cluster of churches, and they will always be the focal minister to whom people would go for weddings and funerals as a first port of call. However, by working as a team if the 'go to' cleric is unavailable someone else in the team may step in.

3. **How many ministers and/or curates will be allocated to each ministry area?**

There will be an allocated number of clergy for the Ministry Area, and therefore their 'Parochial' Boundaries in the new Ministry Area will change to a 'Ministry Area' Boundary.

The exact number of ministers and curates allocated to an MA is a matter for the Bishops staff and there have been recent announcements regarding this matter

4. **How will the role of Church Wardens change?**

The Church wardens of the Parish/Benefice will become sub wardens in their own churches, and the newly elected wardens will be the wardens for the Ministry Area

- 5. Will the new sub-wardens be elected by the congregation and become ex-officio members of the church committee, or will they be elected from within the church committee? Do we need nomination forms as we used to do prior to the Annual Vestry Meeting, for the election of wardens and members of the PCC?**

The sub wardens for the Local Church Council will be elected by the congregation of individual churches.

- 6. Is there still an upper age limit for the sub wardens, and those elected to represent a church on the MAC?**

As the constitution states, there is an upper age limit for wardens and the interpretation is that this applies to sub wardens.

- 7. How will the lay worship leaders be used, and will they be expected to operate outside their parish?**

Lay Worship Leaders will be licensed to their Ministry Area and can, if they wish, be used in any part of the Ministry Area or they may choose to assist only in their local church. Lay worship Leaders form an integral part of the Ministry Team and should be used to reflect the investment of training in them

Ministry Area Council:

1. How best should benefices or churches be represented in a Ministry Area Council?

The Governance document which has been distributed suggests that each church has equal representation at the Ministry Area Council. Therefore, each church in the MA has an equal voice. However, they should remember they are not just to shout for their corner but to work for the good of the Ministry Area as a whole.

2. How many people sit on the MAC?

There will be a maximum of 25 elected lay members. Each church may nominate, all voices should be heard.

3. Some have commented that the MAC seems vast and unwieldy. Is the idea that the MAC is simply a rubber-stamping body or could they veto projects in other churches?

The MAC is there to provide guidance and advice on best practice with the collective experiences across the Ministry Area.

The purpose of the MAC is to build up the body of the church.

4. How often does the MAC meet?

Legally, 4 times a year plus AVM. However, meetings may be more frequent to begin with and chaired potentially by a Lay person.

5. Are all the suggested sub-committees really viable at MAC level? If an Executive meeting exists, what is the point to the MAC - will all the decisions not be made by the Executive?

An Exec is the body that undertakes the work of the MAC, it should undertake the decisions of the MAC.

6. Are the local church wardens' automatic members of the MAC?

No.

7. Does the MAC overrule the local church committees - does all the power lie in the MAC?

The MAC is the legal governing body of the Ministry Area and is responsible for reviewing and approving large building projects to ensure that there are sufficient funds and also to ensure that the correct Safeguarding and Health and safety procedures are carried out. However, each church has control over its own matters of outreach and mission to its community, its fundraising and the management of its own ringfenced finances.

8. What happens if the local committee does not agree with a MAC decision or vice versa?

This is what the MAC is for, to discuss and debate projects but to work together with the churches for the common good and it should come down to trust and mutual understanding

9. For example an ongoing building project - whose decision, is it ?

Any Church project is currently under the control of the PCC. With an MAC the project legally transfers to the MAC but the project stays in the day to day hands of the Church Council at that church reporting to the MAC its progress and funding

10. Does the MAC decide if a church closes?

A Buildings and grants group as a sub-committee of the MAC needs to undertake a buildings exercise. This identifies issues from quinquennials, funds available, work done, and work not done. However, the final decision on church closure comes from the 'local', after a process of consultation with the Bishop's staff.

Buildings:

- 1. Who will have responsibility for the fabric of the churches & the maintenance of their churchyards - and how will this be funded?**

This is still incumbent on the individual church, although the setting up of an MA buildings and grants committee will prove useful in sharing experiences/grant applications/best practice/builders etc. From March 2023 we will have in post a new Diocesan Churches inspector to fulfil all Quinquennial inspections and to assist churches in their MA building reviews. The MA Council is not there to direct the closure of churches; however, all buildings need to be looked at realistically with an eye for the future and their use.

- 2. Why is the decision to close churches required to be made at a local level? Would it be more sensible to take this decision up the level of Archdeacon or Bishop?**

This has been a burden on our local congregations that has now been recognised by the RB and the regulations were changed at the end of last year. We will now be asking MA's and their property committees to review all properties and develop action plans for the future. Any church closure will require agreement from the Churches & Pastoral Committee and will include discussion at local church level and liaison with the diocese.

It is important to remember that these decisions can not only be based on poor fabric reports or low regular worshipper numbers; consideration also needs to be made how best to retain an Anglican presence in an area and to review what other local facilities may be used to provide a pattern of worship if the church was to close.

- 3. Will we retain control of the church halls etc - a crucial community resource and source of income in many churches?**

All the buildings will be under the overall supervision of the legal body which will be the Ministry Area Council. However, in the Ministry Area Agreement it should be agreed that the income from a hall or other building should be retained by the specific church it belongs to, in order to fully pay its allocated share. Local ring-fenced monies and monies for repairs etc are managed by the local church council.

Although a limit of how much the church council can spend on one off repairs needs to be agreed as the Ministry Area Council will be the legal body responsible and therefore churches will need to show they have sufficient funds before repairs can proceed.

- 4. Who organises insurance, Electrical inspections, etc?**

This is a matter for the MA buildings and grants committee but could be devolved to the local church who then report to the MA when these things have been done, and provide certificates.

5. Where will the Clergy personnel be housed?

The Diocese is currently looking at the housing needs for deployment across the whole of the Diocese.

Vacancies:

1. How will an appointment of a new priest relate to the rest of the Ministry Area?

As the Ministry Area only has an allocated number of stipendiary clerics allocated then the recruitment if necessary becomes a Ministry Area process undertaken through the Ministry Area Council in conjunction with the Ministry Area Leader and the two Archdeacons.

The overall need of the Ministry Area is taken into account and a profile based on the Ministry Area is written. The cleric of course will have a specific place of residence and will have pastoral oversight and be the first call parishioners living in their allocated area.

2. Will a vacant Church still produce a parish profile?

If the Ministry Area is recruiting, then the profile will in a sense be a Ministry Area Profile.

This will be something undertaken with the Archdeacon and myself but in conjunction with the clergy team and a small subgroup from within the MA.

3. Will the local church committee of a vacant church be well represented in the recruitment process, or will this be undertaken by members of the Ministry Area Council instead?

Currently in a Benefice representation is chosen from the benefice, so you may have the MAL, MA Wardens and two reps from the church that the candidate may have pastoral oversight of.

4. Will Provincial payments of ministry expenses in vacant benefices cease when the ministry area is up and running properly in the Spring?

The current system will be maintained.

Finance:

1. How will a Ministry Area be funded – what is the budget?

The Ministry to the Area is funded from the Ministry share allocated to the entire Ministry Area.

2. Who decides on how Ministry Share is divided up?

The figure is the actual cost of Ministry. It is reviewed by the DBF, who may agree to taper extreme variances over a longer period. How that is divided up within the MA is the responsibility of the MAC. The MAC should devolve this work to the MA Finance committee (the treasurers of the MA) to come to an agreement or formulae that is both fair and transparent. The Diocesan Office can help with providing scenarios and data.

3. How best could the Ministry Share be divided amongst the benefices?

Each MA should devise a formula.

4. What happens to ministry share arrears in different Parishes as they move to be ministry areas?

They stay with the individual church. Once MA's are up and running, the arrears should be reviewed within the new MA working group, and how arrears are to be managed should be included in the Working Agreement.

5. Will the inability to pay Ministry Share affect the number of stipendiary clergy in the short and longer terms?

Ministry Share allocations to the MA are based on Actual costs. The change from allocation to Deanery, to allocation to MA has produced some significant variances which will be phased over a 3-year period to lessen the impact.

Ability to pay is considered at the time of vacancy and forms part of the ministry area profile review.

Bishop's staff have secured funding for additional posts where we believe additional stipends are required to retain sound Ministry across the Diocese. These will be excluded from share calculations for an initial 6 years to allow a period of growth before the costs are allocated to Share.

6. How will the new Ministry Share or contribution be calculated? Will it reflect the economies of scale inherent in this new format?

The example that has been set for this is a meeting of the Treasurers of the Ministry Area Churches (the MA finance Sub-committee) to bring to the table their ideas and to look realistically how the share set will be achieved.

7. What is the Cost of a stipendiary cleric for 2023?

This is not straightforward as there are other costs associated with ministry that are shared across the Diocese. When the full share figures are given this year there will also be with those figures as in the past a full breakdown of the additional costs of ministry as well.

8. Who is going to pay the clergy expenses? Will it be the individual parish or the ministry area?

As it is a Ministry Area Ministry cost, there will be a central fund for all Ministry Share and Clergy Expenses and this will be undertaken by a Ministry Area Treasurer.

All clergy within the Ministry Area will submit their expenses on the HMRC and CinW guidelines so that there is a fairness and also a reality to the MA as to the true cost of ministry. Saying that clergy expenses cannot be afforded is not a reality going forward.

9. If the finance is held locally - why does the MAC need to collect and send the share up - why can it not go directly ?

There needs to be a central fund for Ministry Share, Clergy expenses and sundry costs for the MAL. A single account will be needed by the charity commissioners as the account for the MA. This is current practice in benefices as well. As the Trustee Body the MAC needs to be fully aware of all income and payments.

10. How best can a central, common fund in the Ministry Area be established?

The Common Ministry Area Account needs to be set up with a Ministry Area Treasurer in charge of it.

However once the level of share and annual expenses is known (Share details will be supplied by the DBF and clergy can supply their expenses claim figures for 2022). This then is the total figure that needs to be raised for the year. This total figure can then be divided up between the churches based on a method agreed at MA level.

The treasurers from each of the churches can meet with the MA treasurer to decide this division under the guidance of the Ministry Area Leader. Clergy however should not be out of pocket.

11. Once MA finances are managed through the central fund, how will the recoupment of Gift Aid from HMRC be managed to ensure that churches receive what they are owed, and who will be overseeing Gift Aid Claims?

The Charity Commissioners have indicated that they will require each MA to make a single claim to HMRC., although we are seeking confirmation on this in the ongoing discussions.

However, if this is the case then good record keeping should maintain a trail as to what each church has claimed and should be credited with. There are a number of ways that recoupment of Gift Aid could be handled:

- a) All Gift Aid being paid back to the central fund so that all Ministry Share is met.
- b) Running totals kept by each church and in conjunction with their treasurers and the MA treasurer from a single claim made to HMRC and then reimbursed funds being allocated back to the churches.
- c) It could also become one of the duties of the MA administrator whose job descriptions are currently being defined based on existing models.
- d) New software is there for Ministry Areas to use in their accounting so it may be that this is something that may help,
- e) It is the intention that no church should lose out on its gift aid claims.

The management of this will be agreed by the Treasurers (MA finance sub-committee) and form part of the MA Working Agreement.

12. What will happen about legacies to Individual Churches?

These are traditionally allocated in a deed to a church and held either by the Diocesan Trust or the RB. They can however also reside in the church's accounts and be 'restricted' meaning the legacy must be used for the purpose to which it was given. It should be declared as such in the Ministry Area annual accounts.

13. Who bears the running costs of the MAC?

It depends on what running costs the MAC envisions itself raising. The MAC on Gower did not incur any costs. If running costs are identified then the MA Finance sub-committee (the treasurers) can agree how these costs are met.

14. Will the MAC charge a levy to the local churches - so an additional cost?

Again, it depends on what costs are envisioned. Ministry Share, Clergy expenses and some expenses for the MAL are proportioned out to the churches by the same formulae as the Ministry Share. Clergy are the clergy for whole MA so their expenses need to be met by the MA.

Again, this is a piece of work for the MA Finance sub-committee, which should then be ratified by the MAC.

Organisation:

1. **We understand that it is not intended that the structure of the Ministry Area be set in tablets of Stone, and we think we can see how it is to take shape. We do however think it would be helpful if we could be provided with a Ministry Area Organogram showing in graphic form how it is all intended to hang together?**

I will bring this issue to Bishops Staff, and it may become another item in the 'Toolkit' that is being produced. However, my understanding is as follows

- a. Ministry Area Council consisting of ex officio and elected members
- b. Ministry Area Executive (Lay and Ordained) that act on decisions made at the Ministry Area Council
- c. Ministry Team who develop and deliver the ministry strategy for the MA
- d. Sub-committee with specific delegated powers (e.g. property, finance etc)
- e. Individual Church councils dealing with their daily affairs, financially and in the context of Mission and Ministry

2. **The Ministry Area Toolkit explains how the Ministry Area will look like when it is set up, but it does not tell us how we are to get there. Will details of this be included in the documents being produced by the Diocese, and are they available for perusal?**

The Swansea and Brecon Documents are in the process of being prepared by the Registrar and will be a deed that brings into being the formal structure of the Ministry Area and there will also be a 'Working Agreement' between the churches that may be tailored to suit a particular area.

3. **We believe that the PCCs of each of the three Parishes in our Ministry Areas are registered with the Charity Commission as separate registered Charities, and each of the members of our PCC are acutely aware of their personal duties and responsibilities as Charity Trustees. How are they to continue and/or amalgamate after the existing Parish goes?**

There are discussions happening at present between Louise Pearson at the DBF and Matthew Chinnery at the RB, who is in touch with the Charity Commissioners, as to how this process will take place. This of course ensures that the legality of the new MA's and the responsibilities of the new MA Council members as Trustees is quite clear, and that existing trustees who may in future not be trustees if they are not appointed to sit on the MAC.

The existing charities will cease and, if they are registered, will need to notify the Charities Commission. A new charity in the name of the new MA will need to be registered, listing the new Trustees. It is possible that an existing charity could be modified to be the new MA charity and information on how to do this will be provided.

4. Will the PCCs remain or how will their function change?

The current PCC's will be dissolved. The new legal body will be the MAC. Local Churches will each have a church council to deal with the day to day running of their churches and their local outreach into their communities.

5. In the future will there just be one Annual Vestry meeting and report?

Yes there will be one meeting and one report as each Ministry Area will be a single benefice unit and will in due course be registered with the charity commissioners; therefore a single report and meeting will be required. Churches will need to have their own meetings to choose people to be their officers and church council members.

6. How will disagreement and possible withdrawal of commitment to the ministry area be handled by the diocese?

Any disagreements need to be addressed by the Ministry Area Council and the Ministry Area Leader in the first instance.

However, should this prove to be non-productive then the involvement of the Archdeacons can be sought."

There is no option to withdrawal from the Ministry Area, as all churches are part of a legal Benefice - the structure that makes up the Ministry Area. No church currently can withdraw from their benefice as it is dependent on the benefice together for the payment of share, provision of service and the support of the Diocesan Offices and the representative Body in Cardiff.

7. What will accountability actually look like in our ministry area?

Accountability is to one another through the forum of the Ministry Area Council and your common bond as the Body of Christ.

The word I prefer to use is trust, trust that all are working for the common good and not 'going it alone', trust that the Ministry Area Agreement is being worked towards and adhered to. Trust that decisions made are for the common good of all churches in the Ministry Area.

It also requires an element of putting the past behind and laying aside any disagreement's churches may have had historically. It also requires an element of redrawing the map.

I know as someone brought up on the Eastside of Swansea and Lived in Birchgrove and served my Curacy in the Old Deanery in the Swansea Valley that the identity of individual communities is different from North to South and that old Parish boundaries have in the past been so important. It's now time to, in faith and Trust, leave these behind and work together to not just keep 'the show on the road' but to together ensure the life of the church continues in a credible and realistic way beyond this current decade.

8. Will the frequency of services in each parish church be restored?

The rota for services needs to be discussed by the new Ministry Team (part of the MAC) based on the availability of clergy and lay Ministers.

9. How will non regular churchgoers know how to contact their vicar when needed?

The Church notice board should have contact details of the MA administrator (Email and Phone) and the phone number of the assigned cleric. The clerics will be Vicars in the Ministry Area but will have assigned churches in their care and therefore will be the first point of call for all of the current local needs.

10. If two churches currently function with one treasurer for both churches and one church committee for both, will this be able to continue under the new structure?

You can operate as a cluster as you have always done although the PCC will have the status of a Church Council.

11. Who will coordinate, support & encourage fundraising within each parish?

As the parish in itself will cease to exist fundraising will fall to the individual churches although there will be some coordinating of events and dates via the MA Council

Administration:

1. What will be the role & the responsibility of the MA administrator & to whom will they report?

Each MA will be appointed an administrator, who will be employed directly by the Diocese so all HR and training will be dealt with through the Diocese and the RB. An MA administrator supervisor will also be appointed, as their line manager at Diocesan level. On a day-to-day basis the administrators will report to the Ministry Area Leader and the Ministry Area Council when it meets. Their role will vary from MA to MA but in the MA based at Llandrindod Wells an already established MA administrator coordinates various building matters, safeguarding issues, Health and Safety reports, rotas and the 101 administrative tasks that land on a cleric's desk. The role of the Administrator is to free the cleric to be a cleric.

2. When are the ministry area administrators going to be appointed and what hours will they be working?

The Diocese will be recruiting the administrators, and this is a process that will begin in early 2023. More details on this have been released in the most recent announcement from the Diocese.

3. Where will the Area office be located?

The office is a matter for the MA to decide itself but a central or readily adaptable location should be considered.

4. What is the future of the Parish Website Scheme?

The Ministry Area needs to establish a Ministry Area website. An example to look at is www.gowerma.org

Local church websites can continue as well, but there needs to be a connection between both sites. Sharing links to and from each website will allow any information, activities and events to be displayed on the Ministry Area website as well as on the local church website.

Ultimately it is about identifying as a Ministry Area, and a Ministry Area website is a better way of holding all the constituent churches and their activities together.

If you need help setting up a new website, please contact Eryl Jones (Diocesan Communications Officer) who will be able to help.