



Esgobaeth Abertawe ac Aberhonddu The Diocese of Swansea and Brecon

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



NOTES ON DECREE

Introduction

Each Ministry Area will be brought into being by the Decree from the bishop which sets out the legal position between the members of the Ministry Area which sets out their working practices.

The intention for the organisation of the Ministry Area is to empower mission for 'gathering, growing, and going' in the Diocese of Swansea & Brecon. The Decree gives a Ministry Area Conference the authority to organise mission in their area, and to free them from as much red tape as possible. Anything not specifically required by the Constitution or the Decree, which has been kept to a minimum, or by Anglican faith and discipline, is open to local decision by the Ministry Area. If in doubt, consult either the Registrar, or any member of the Bishop's Staff.

The Decree document is necessary to allocate the powers conferred by the Constitution of the Church in Wales to the various bodies. The intention behind the Decree is to redistribute authority to give the Ministry Area Conference authority to lead in mission. In order to do this, the model adopted for the Decree is to create the Ministry Area as if it were a single parish.

We are seeking to establish something new and less fragmented in a spirit of co-operation in mission, in which the Ministry Areas free to lead with the Shared Ministry Team in Mission, and where Church Committees can continue to provide the necessary care for our individual churches. These brief notes can be read in conjunction with the Decree to explain how it is to operate. Each note explains sections of the Decree. A great deal of freedom is given to each Ministry Area to shape the application of the Decree with their own Mission Action Plan, where they can work out in detail how they want the Shared Ministry Team and the Ministry Area to work in routine Church life.

Purpose

The overview of page 1 outlines the purpose of Mission Areas which is to renew the lives of our churches, to become a fruitful provision of those in our care, by encouraging co-operation and mutual inter-dependence. These paragraphs remind us that the purpose of Ministry Areas is to renew the lives of our churches to grow, by encouraging co-operation and mutual interdependence.

Legal Authority: Paragraphs 2-5 &7 -8

These sections outline the legal authority for the changes. In Anglican polity, the bishop has the authority to order the territorial arrangement of the diocese. This is why the creation of Ministry Areas happens by a Diocesan Decree signed by the bishop. The Bishop does not act alone, however, but with the cooperation and agreement of the Standing Committee of the Diocesan Conference within the Constitution of the Church in Wales.

Pastoral Oversight: Paragraph 6

This paragraph reminds us that we are better and more fruitful working collaboratively together, offering pastoral oversight for those in our care across the Diocese.

Section 1:

List of parishes affected by the Decree.

Section 3

Combines the ordained clergy and licensed lay ministers in the Shared Ministry Team in the Ministry Area. This section makes provision for fees relating to any particular pastoral office (Marriages and Funerals) to be paid to the minister who actually does the work. Clergy of a Ministry Area, unless they are Assistant Curates, share equal status, practicing the model of *primus inter pares*, one among equals, particularly in relation to Ministry Area Leaders.

Each priest in the Ministry Area is given authority to lead in the pastoral care of particular named churches, being rooted in those churches, so that every church and congregation can know who their priest is. Section 2 of the decree specifies clergy are expected to live in their usual vicarages or parsonages, and will continue to use their traditional titles, such as 'vicar of...'

Ministry Area 4.1-4.8

These sections decree the parishioner will now be resident in the Ministry Area, not parish church, and clearly sets out the practice of the occasional offices in the churches across the Ministry Area.

Ministry Area Conference: Section 4.9-4.13

These paragraphs create the Ministry Area Conference, which has all the authority belonging both to the Deanery and PCC old model. The rules for election to the MAC are decided by the Ministry Area itself, to ensure fair representation of each of the churches. The MAC has the powers to set up sub-committees and calculate the Ministry Share in accordance with the Diocesan formula, or create its own formula.

Ministry Area Church Committees: Section 4.14-4.17

These paragraphs allow for each church in the Ministry Area MAY appoint its own Church Committee to be responsible for running itself, and to do all those things which PCCs did, except for the matter now given to the Ministry Area Conference. The Ministry Area MAY choose to have a single Church Committee for a cluster of parishes.

Miscellaneous

Assets and liability are retained by individual churches. Where there is a Church in Wales school in a Ministry Area, the Ministry Area Council will appoint foundation governors. Ministry Areas are encouraged in this section of the decree to foster and maintain positive relationships with all schools in the Ministry Area.

Conclusion

Ministry Areas have the powers to make its own decisions. Support by Ministry Area Administrators will free clergy and licenced lay minsters to engage fruitfully and purposefully in the oversight of ministry and mission. The Decree gives you permission to be bold in mission, and to take responsibility for leading churches into growth.

May God bless you all as you share this task.

Dean of Brecon
13 March 2023
Distribution: Bishop's Staff