

Diocese of  St Albans

Local Ministry Scheme

TOGETHER
WITH CHRIST



A Guide to the
Local Ministry Scheme
in the Diocese of St Albans

“I came that they have life, and have it abundantly”
(John 10.10)

A Vision for Action Resource



A Prayer about Service

Almighty Father
whose Son Jesus Christ has taught us
that what we do for the least
 of our sisters and brothers
 we do also for him:
give us the will to be the servant of others
 as he was the servant of all,
who gave up his life and died for us,
yet is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

(Collect for Maundy Thursday)

preface

Almost five years after its introduction in the Diocese of St Albans, the Local Ministry Scheme has undergone a complete revision. Based on experience, and the views of people involved in Local Ministry, establishing a formal Local Ministry Team is now more streamlined and the “*Guide*”^{*} more user-friendly. The emphasis has also changed. Mission now clearly has a place in Local Ministry and the “*Guide*” draws upon publications like “*The Mission-Shaped Church*” and, more recently published in our own Diocese, “*Vision for Action*.”

What remains the same is God’s continuing work through the care and leadership of ministers and congregations praying together and being alongside one another, giving of their best in Christian service. Much happens informally throughout the diocese and it is a privilege to be associated with some of the people involved. However, formal Local Ministry Teams are an important and exciting expression of God’s mission and ministry and I hope that our experience of such Teams so far will encourage others to seriously consider establishing one or more. It’s easier than you think, and it has several benefits including professional support, appropriate training and synodical backing.

The aim of this revised booklet is to help those interested in the Local Ministry Scheme to understand more about what is involved, in the hope that more Churches in our diocese will be encouraged to prayerfully consider whether a Local Ministry Team is a right step forward for them as they desire to grow in the service of Jesus Christ.

Robin Brown
Local Ministry Officer

Updated and revised May 2005

* “*A Step-by-Step Guide to Establishing a Formally Constituted Local Ministry Team*.”

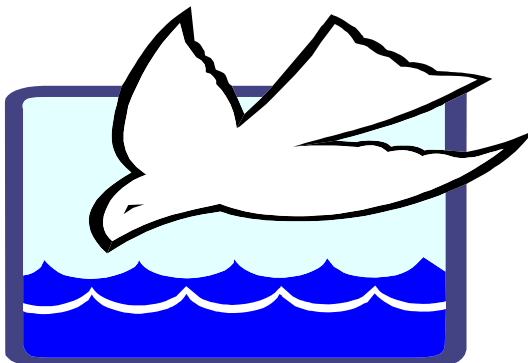
Where did it come from?

Most would agree that Local Ministry is of God who is the giver of life and love and care.

- The New Testament is our guide as we continue our journey of establishing Local Ministry Teams in Benefices across our Diocese.
- John 10.10 was quoted by Bishop Christopher when he preached about Local Ministry at St Albans Abbey when the first Local Ministry Officer was licensed. The Bishop told of his dream for all parishes to become increasingly places of growth in love and learning; sharing in that abundant life of which Jesus spoke.
- John Chapter 15, part of Jesus' final discourse to his disciples, is a constant source of inspiration as we consider relationships - both human and divine.
- Acts 2: 42—47 gives us a glimpse of how, from its earliest days, members of the Church tried to reflect God's love and care through the sharing of spiritual and material gifts.
- In Romans 12: 3 - 8 we find just one example of Paul's understanding about the Church as the Body of Christ, in which all its members are special and have an important part to play. (see also 1 Corinthians 3: 9 - 13).
- As with the Parish Communion Movement in the 1960s and the more recent Family Service 'movement', the Holy Spirit is seen to be encouraging the Church to look afresh at Christ's mission and ministry. We are just one of over thirty dioceses in this country which have Local Ministry Schemes.
- Much of the present thinking about Local Ministry has been influenced by a report published in 1983 called '*A Strategy for the Church's Ministry*'; more commonly named '*The Tiller Report*' after its author. That report was concerned about

Christian ministry in all its aspects. The aims were to seek a ministry that will respond to the demands of mission and also a ministry which is effective pastorally in the local community and, preferably, ecumenical.

- Publications like the “*Tiller Report*”, “*The Mission-Shaped Church*” and “*Vision for Action*”, together with our ongoing thinking, praying and studying, combine to help us recapture the early Church’s understanding that baptism, and not ordination, is the primary sacrament of God’s call.
- People like Robin Greenwood (Provincial Officer for Ministry in the Church in Wales) have become leaders in the field of Local Ministry, providing fresh understanding into the way the Church can positively respond to the call of God who lives in the community we know as The Trinity. If the Church is to fulfil its vocation then it will reflect God the Trinity in and through the way it relates to the local communities and parishes in which it is set.
- As our experience of baptism and the community of the Trinity grows, we find ourselves responding to the God who calls each of us to minister in his Name and for the coming of the Kingdom.



How did we get here?

Following an initial presentation and discussion at the Diocesan Synod in October 1998, the Synod unanimously supported the work undertaken by the Board for Christian Development towards the creation of a diocesan Local Ministry Scheme.

The Board then prepared a draft set of proposals which were widely discussed in deaneries and the Scheme was again presented at Diocesan Synod in June 1999 where it received overwhelming support. It was also agreed that there should be a Local Ministry Officer who would contribute (under the direction of the B.C.D. and the Archdeacon of Hertford) *“To the implementation of the diocesan Local Ministry Scheme”*, to provide *“support for adult Christian learning”* and assist with the provision of *Continuing Ministerial Education* for those who hold the Bishop’s Licence. The Local Ministry Officer began work in 2000.

Five year’s on, the Scheme has been reviewed and revised and the Diocesan Synod ratified the changes in March 2005. Please pray for the continuing growth of Local Ministry.



How does it work?

As laid out in the proposals agreed by our Diocesan Synod the Scheme offers a **variety of opportunities** for parishes, ‘clusters’ of parishes, Team Ministries, deaneries and ecumenical groups to explore ways of working together within their local communities and churches.

It also **provides resources, support and oversight of training** - through the work of the Local Ministry Officer and a team of consultants.

There is a **clear relationship between the Local Ministry Scheme and the Bishop’s Goals**, adopted by the diocese, for 1997 - 2002, especially:

maintaining and developing the parochial system into a network of outward-looking, mission-orientated congregations;

encouraging the sharing of good practice among parishes;

developing Local Ministry Teams;

increasing the depth of Christian discipleship, spiritual understanding and theological knowledge among Church members.

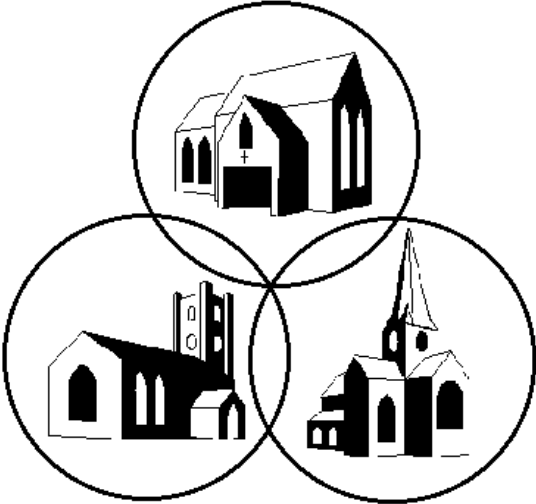
Collaboration is of the essence in all Christian ministry and it does not depend on the establishment of a Local Ministry Team. Informal shared ministry continues. But **the Local Ministry Scheme provides a framework** which benefices etc. can choose to help them further Christ’s mission and ministry.

The Scheme is part of the diocese’s strategy for developing ministry and strengthening parishes in **their** worship, pastoral care, education, evangelism and mission. At the same time, it fully **supports incumbents** in their crucial role, sharing with the Bishop as they do “*the cure of souls*” within a given benefice.

Members of a Local Ministry Team do not undertake the demanding training required for the ministry of a licensed Reader or an ordained Minister. Instead, all who are called by the local Church - together with Ministers and Readers - are **trained locally as a Team** and minister within the Church, and in the local community, in a formally recognised way. They receive ongoing support and encouragement from a professional consultant.

The number of stipendiary clergy will continue to fall slowly. However, the indications are that the number of Non-Stipendiary Ministers and Readers will keep rising. Local Ministry Teams are not established to “fill the gaps” but they do give **greater flexibility to meet the challenges we face together.**

Remembering the early Church’s model (see again Acts 2: 42 - 47) the Scheme encourages the mutual sharing of training, experience and skills. These can be shared across the Churches within a Local Ministry Team in a properly authorised way, without dismantling existing boundaries.



What about the adult Christian Learning Course?

Since the end of 2000, a one year Course of Christian nurture and discipleship has been available throughout the diocese. Called ***“Growing Together in Christ”***, it comprises 18 or 24* sessions, plus one assignment and one workshop each term. Purposely not academic, the Course is for anyone and everyone, whether Anglican or not. The Course was completely revised in 2003 and includes alternatives which a number of people have developed.

“Growing Together” can be used in a variety of ways and for different purposes:

- a Course for enquirers or new Christians. It begins where people are, covers a whole range of subjects and provides plenty of time for small group discussion.
- a follow-up, or even alternative to, Alpha or Emmaus. A meal can precede each session if that is desired. See it as a ‘diocesan Alpha or Emmaus course’.
- a Foundation Course before establishing a Local Ministry Team. Designed to help participants grow in confidence about their faith and to make connections between faith and daily living, ***“Growing Together”*** is ideal for those who will form a Local Ministry Team.
- a help for those considering, or pursuing Reader Ministry. Candidates for Reader Ministry in our diocese are being encouraged to enrol on ***“Growing Together”***.

Built in Flexibility

Over the years several hundred people in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire have completed the Course and many have gone on to do further learning and training. Those considering Reader Ministry have enjoyed it and the Course runs well within individual parishes, in multi-parish benefices and across deaneries.

- Participants can ‘dip into’ the Course or complete the whole year. Those who do the entire Course, including attending the workshops and completing assignments, receive a Certificate personally signed by the Bishop of St Albans. Whenever possible the Local Ministry Officer attends the final session of the Course in order to present the Certificates.
- Credits are given to those training for Reader Ministry, who successfully complete *“Growing Together”*, although it is important that all such students should contact the Senior Tutor for Readers to establish which are the appropriate assignments etc.

The Local Ministry Officer will be delighted to discuss *“Growing Together”* with you.

All who host the Course receive a grant of up to £500 to help towards administration costs and expenses.

We have a large number of clergy and lay people who have led sessions and the LMO is able to put enquirers in touch with those who have hosted the Course to get further help from them.

* The original syllabus includes 24 sessions. However the revised syllabus includes an 18 session Course (3 terms of 6 sessions). Those organising the Course can choose either depending on what is believed to be most appropriate.

What do we do next?

Those wishing to establish a formal Local Ministry Team go through a process of **three stages: Exploration, Initial Learning and Training, and Formal Constitution (called Mandating)**.

STAGE ONE: EXPLORATION

The initiative for a Local Ministry Team may come from an individual or several people. There is no right or wrong way to start.

The process begins when a decision is made by the PCC (or its equivalent) to establish a formal LMT, probably following at least one meeting of the parish priest and the LMO.

Church members are informed about the decision and are asked to pray regularly during the whole process.

The PCC carries out a “survey” to identify the needs and resources in the local Church(es) and local community(ies) and, having received nominations for potential LMT members and, respecting confidentiality, chooses a Team on the basis of gifts available to help meet some of the identified needs and the degree of support from within the congregation.

STAGE TWO: INITIAL LEARNING AND TRAINING

Those who are “called” by the PCC should have completed the course “*Growing Together in Christ*” or be participating in it at the time when a LMT is being considered. The timing is not critical, but all members of a mandated LMT should have completed the Course.

Specific training, appropriate to the area(s) of ministry to be undertaken, is provided as is **team building** which the consultants lead. **All training is locally based**, and clergy and lay members learn side by side largely as this prepares them to work better together.

STAGE THREE: FORMAL CONSTITUTION AND MANDATE

During the second Stage, the Deanery Pastoral Committee is informed whenever a new LMT is to be established. This is usually done by the parish priest contacting the Chair of the Deanery Pastoral Committee. Sometimes the priest and LMO meet with the Chairperson. Details are given about the proposed LMT in order that the members of the Pastoral Committee can encourage and pray for the Team. This information will include the names of Team members, the ministry/mission which they will exercise and the period of the Mandate—which can be between three and six years.

The Local Ministry Officer informs the Diocesan Pastoral Committee and the Board for Christian Development (which oversees the Local Ministry Scheme) of a parish's intention to establish a LMT. This, again, is to seek appropriate support and encouragement.

A decision is reached about the date and time of the giving of the Mandate. This always takes place during a public act of worship, usually on a Sunday afternoon or evening. It is hoped that members of the wider Church across the deanery will be able to attend. The Local Ministry Officer preaches and oversees the act Order of Mandate. The Rural Dean issues the Mandate on behalf of the Bishop and the Lay Co-Chair presents a porch notice (one for each church involved).

There is now a provision for “associate Team members” who assist the Mandated Team and receive support from its members. The associate members have gifts appropriate to the ministry and mission undertaken but, in most cases, they have not completed the Course *“Growing Together in Christ.”*



Would you like to help?

“Locally called, locally trained, to minister locally”. This is the essence of the Local Ministry Teams. Over the years we have drawn upon a good number of people to assist with the learning, training and support of potential team members. However, as Local Ministry develops we will need many more.

ARE YOU INTERESTED? Read on

Deliverers of Learning:

The *“Growing Together in Christ”* course provides opportunities for many people who will ‘deliver the learning’. The one year course is not academic, but will encourage all participants to make connections between their faith and life. It covers a wide-range of subjects including the Bible, Jesus, the Trinity, Prayer, Worship, the Church, Suffering and Death, Church and Community. Each session has a clearly defined aim, but the way the aim is met will vary so that it is appropriate to local circumstances. If you have knowledge of any of these subjects, ring the LMO who will be happy to give you more information.

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Team Consultants:

Support and encouragement is crucial to the effective and fulfilling ministry of LMT members and is provided through consultants to the Teams. Currently we have six consultants who meet each Team, on average, three or four times each year. As Local Ministry develops throughout the Diocese we will need more consultants. If you have experience in consultancy and would like to use your gifts to help others, please ring the Local Ministry Officer. The LMO and consultants meet twice each year for mutual support, encouragement and sharing of good practise and although they offer their time and skills on a voluntary basis, expenses are paid.

What others have said

“The essence of the Christian life is community: being with others. This is also the essence of the reign of God: to be together with God, face-to-face with God in community.”

(Enrique Dussel, a theologian from Argentina)

“What we need is a general framework which allows for the development of different patterns of ministry which are appropriate to the differing needs and circumstances of individual parishes.”

(Roger James, formerly Local Ministry Adviser for Lichfield Diocese)

“Local Ministry Schemes are injecting new energy in a growing number of dioceses. In the midst of many changes there are signs here also of a recovery of confidence.”

(Bryan Pettifer)

“The effectiveness of our ministry and mission in the future will depend on our ability to identify, train & authorize ‘local’ ministers.”

(Mission-Shaped Church)

“Through the whole process, focus should be on the horizon of the kingdom of God, not simply the horizon of the local church.”

(Steven Croft)

“The key characteristics of future ministry will be collaboration and flexibility. Christ’s ministry is the shared privilege and responsibility of all God’s people and the inter-related ministry of the whole people ...will be key to the ministry of the church in all areas.”

(Vision for Action)

For further reading

Clergy and Laity - Did Jesus Want a Two Tier Church?

Herbert Haag, Burns & Oats 1998. ISBN 086012282 - 4
Some will find this book very radical and all will be challenged by it, written as it is by a Roman Catholic theologian from Tubingen. Haag's question in the sub-heading is rhetorical.

A Strategy for the Church's Ministry

by John Tiller (C.I.O.) 0 7151 2539 7

Practising Community and The Ministry Team Handbook

by Robin Greenwood (SPCK)

Understanding Congregations

Malcolm Grundy, Mowbray 1998. ISBN 0-264-67482-0

This book explores how clergy and laity can work together more effectively in a practical and imaginative way. Grundy draws on extensive consultancy and training across denominations.

Being Anglican

Alastair Redfern, DLT Sept. 2000. ISBN 0-232-5236-9X

Rural Ministry

A Parish Workbook for Lay Ministry in the Country Church

Leslie Francis, Keith Littler, Jeremy Martineau.

ACCORA. ISBN: 0-9516871-66

This publication contains thought provoking and practical suggestions for all rural parishes.

Mission-Shaped Church

Church House Publishing. ISBN 0-7151-4013-2

Vision for Action (On website: officially launched autumn 2005)

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