

SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF CLERGY AND MINISTERS IN LOCAL ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIPS (LEP) IN HERTFORDSHIRE

Introduction:

When a priest or minister is to be appointed to a church within an LEP, certain important elements should be understood. Particular needs may seem to override established denominational principles. It needs to be recognised that selection from a short listed group of candidates is seldom possible.

Normal Procedures:

- **Anglican:** The Patron of a Benefice consults with the Bishop and two representatives of the Parochial Church Council (PCC); a Parish Profile is drawn up. A Patron's nomination, when agreed by the PCC, is given to the Bishop for his endorsement, archdeacons normally share in such consultations. The Bishop may suspend this process and license a **priest-in-charge** which makes it a little easier when other members of a team are involved. An incumbent may nominate an assistant member of staff directly to the Bishop.
- **Baptist:** A local Church consults with the Regional Minister about suitable candidates. The deacons meet with one, and invite him/her to "preach with a view". An informal meeting with Church members may be included. An invitation to appoint is issued by the Church Meeting.
- **Methodist:** Each autumn, the District Chair consults with circuit stewards of churches where ministers are due to move. The stewards prepare a profile of the appointment taking into account the local ecumenical situation. A match is made of available ministers and profiles at a meeting of all the District Chairs before Christmas. The minister who is matched then visits the circuit and meets circuit stewards, potential colleagues, local church representatives and hopefully ecumenical colleagues. If the match doesn't work from either side then there will usually be a later match. Matches are made right up to the Methodist Conference in July when all appointments due to begin in September are confirmed.
- **Roman Catholic:** The Bishop has absolute discretion in making appointments, except where the Parish is served by a Religious Order, when the Provincial Superior decides.
- **United Reformed:** Elders of a local Church consult with Area Committees and the Moderator. Moderators meet to look at vacancies and potential candidates. Suitable suggestions are made to local Elders, who invite a candidate for interview, to "preach with a view" and to meet Church members. The local Church Meeting issues an invitation to appoint which is ratified by the Area Committee.

Consultation over intended changes:

Early consultation is vital to avoid delays. As soon as a potential vacancy is known, responsible officers should inform the **Secretary of the LEP** who informs

- the Chair of the LEP,
- the local leaders of all other Churches involved in the LEP,
- the County Ecumenical Development Officer,
- the denominational leaders and Ecumenical Officers of the other Churches in the LEP,
- the appropriate Link Person.

Each particular situation demands an individual plan of action, including the distribution of any necessary papers. A person from the appointing Church (eg that denomination's representative on the LEP Committee) is suggested. In cases of difficulty the advice of the County Ecumenical body is always available.

Papers and consultations should involve:

- any priests, ministers or paid lay leaders already working in the LEP,
- lay representatives appointed by the LEP Council,
- the Link person (or representative),
- any others who would normally represent a congregation within an LEP (eg Church Warden, Church Secretary, Circuit Steward),
- a representative of any other body interested in the appointment (eg through chaplaincy)

The LEP Council should prepare a brief profile of the member Churches with a history of the partnership, and its hopes and expectations. This could be prepared in advance and updated as necessary; it is a useful document in its own right.

Finding Candidates:

The appointing Church is responsible for finding suitable candidates. However, the member Churches in an LEP should identify the most appropriate course of action. A candidate should be fully informed about the LEP with its covenant or constitution, as well as having a profile of the particular Church.

Making the selection and appointment:

The appointing Church decides on the process of selection, interviews, visits and so on, but for the sake of unity should of course consult with the other Churches involved. Agreed procedures of consultation should be properly adhered to. All consultations should be undertaken in the light of Constitutions and should clarify the question of identifying specific ministries. The role of the Staffing Consultative Committee should be carefully defined, ensuring fair representation of all interests. All denominations involved should have opportunity to meet a likely candidate.

Welcoming a new appointment:

Once a decision on appointing a candidate has been made, it should be made known. The service of welcome (or installation etc) should involve representatives of all denominations concerned, and include an acceptance by the new priest/minister of the place of the LEP in the new ministry. Access to further understanding should be made available through the Chairman of the LEP Council, including advice on national training courses for those new to LEP ministry.

Approved by the Officers of Churches Together in Hertfordshire on the direction of the main committee on 26 September 2007, following an initial recommendation by the LEP Sub Committee.