



Diocese of Monmouth Ministry Areas – Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Ministry Area?

Very simply, it is a group of churches, served by a team of lay and ordained ministers where resources are shared and churches join together in their common life of faith and worship, witness and service.

It is planned that all Ministry Areas will be a single legal entity. They will all be registered charities and the members of the PCC will be the charity trustees.

How many stipends will there be for each Ministry Area?

Each Ministry Area will have 2 full-time stipends and some will have more, depending on their size. House for duty posts, non-stipendary and lay ministers will also be equal members of the ministry team. In addition to those already licensed, we need to work together to build discipleship and vocations to encourage more lay involvement in our ministry teams.

What is the timescale for these changes?

The Bishop and her staff team have had their first meetings with the Standing Committee and Clergy whose posts will be affected by these plans and we are now making them available on the Diocesan website. The next stage, before Christmas, is to work with members of these groups to discuss the detail so that we can produce the Ministry Area toolkits.

Once those toolkits are agreed, we will be able to start discussions with Ministry Areas in the New Year.

The Standing Committee will be working towards a Spring Conference on Saturday 8th May where some of these changes to the structure of the diocese can be brought before the Diocesan Conference.

We aim to have the process complete by the end of 2021 so that we can look forward to 2022 with a renewed vision and a sustainable future.

Are these plans just about reducing clergy numbers so that fewer clergy can deliver ministry over larger areas?

No! There is very little difference to clergy numbers in these plans. The plans are not about reducing the number of clergy but about enabling a way of working that is more effective. A team of ordained and lay ministers will complement one another and enable each other to flourish in their ministries. It is about creating different and diverse ways for people to discover faith in Christ and grow in their discipleship.

We are gathering our resources and putting ourselves in a place from which we can build.



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We have already spent the last 5 years forming Ministry Areas and now we are expected to change again. What assurance can the Bishop give that we will not have to go through this process again in another couple of years?

You will see that the Ministry Areas are larger than we currently have. They have been drawn up with a view to their future sustainability and to be a place from which we can grow. We do not want to do this again for a least 10 years because concentrating our energy and resources on structural change is a distraction from the mission and ministry of the church.

There is a concern about the size of the planned Ministry Areas because they seem very big.

The areas have been planned with a view towards to them being sustainable for 10 years and for them to be a basis for future growth. They have been drawn up so that they can support a minimum of 2 full-time stipends as well as House for Duty posts, non-stipendiary and lay ministers.

What do these plans mean for Deaneries?

This is currently an open question and we need more discussion on this topic, particularly with the current Area Deans. The current plan is that the Deaneries should be co-terminus with Archdeaconries, so there would be one Area Dean for each Archdeaconry. However, there are a number of other options and these will all need further discussion.

Parishes may be worried about the impact of these plans on their finances.

It is planned that all Ministry Areas become single legal entities and registered charities. As such, the charity trustees will have over-all responsibility for the finances. However, this does not diminish the role of church treasurers who can have delegated powers for their individual churches.

More discussion is needed as a diocese on this topic. In other diocese in Wales who have already gone through a similar process, although all assets and liabilities are the responsibility of the Ministry Area trustees, the funds received from each church have been restricted for the future use of that particular church. Likewise, any existing debt remains with the church that incurred it.

In other words, it is envisaged that, the assets of your church at the point that you join the Ministry Area will be restricted for you.

The Ministry Area Toolkits will provide more detail on the financial arrangements in a Ministry Area and should be ready towards the end of December.



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Why are we discussing our internal structural changes when we should be talking about mission and evangelism?

These structural changes are intended to enable mission and evangelism and they are not an end in themselves. However, it is acknowledged that concentrating our energy and resources on structural changes is a distraction from the mission and ministry of the church. That is why we would like the changes to be complete by the end of 2021 so that we can look forward into 2022 with a renewed vision and a sustainable future.

Will all the churches in the Ministry Areas remain open or is there also a plan to reduce the number of church buildings?

We do not yet know the impact that Covid-19 will have on our churches and congregations and we don't know who might decide to continue to worship on-line and not return to our church buildings. However, these plans are not about closing churches and they have been drawn up to provide more resources to our smaller churches and not less.

Under these plans the members of the Ministry Area Council will become the charity trustees. Does this make them liable if something goes wrong?

Members of our PCC are already charity trustees because all parishes are currently excepted charities. When we move to Ministry Areas, the Ministry Area Council will be the PCC and we will need to make sure that our governance structures are formed properly and trustee training will be provided so that all trustees understand their responsibilities. If we get this right, then we can reduce the risks to the trustees. Trustee liability is also covered by the Ministry Area insurance policy with EIG.

Is this a consultation process? If congregations do not like these plans can they say no and continue in their current parish structure?

We know that change can be difficult and unsettling but, for the future of our churches, we cannot continue as we are. This is also not something that we are doing alone – the other dioceses in Wales are either working within the Ministry Area structure already or they are working towards it, just like us. Over the next few weeks and months, we will be able to discuss these changes with you and to examine how they might affect you, your congregations and your communities, including local meetings in all of our planned Ministry Areas. We believe that this is the right way to move forward and that it will provide the most sustainable basis for growth.

However, we do want your comments on the plans at this stage and we would encourage you to get in touch by e-mailing Monmouthadministration@cinw.org.uk



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Within the ministry teams is there any opportunity to consider diversity of worship?

Yes! By building bigger teams and sharing resources we can ensure that each MA can have a range of ministry from fresh expressions to traditional worship. Schools ministry will be an important part of our vision as a diocese and by sharing resources across our new Ministry Areas we can make sure that we are connecting with the next generation in our church and community schools.

How will we decide who is in the PCC? Will there be a representative from each church?

We don't know this yet, because we need to discuss this further with the members of the Standing Committee and the Ministry Area Leaders. It is possible that there won't be a 'one-size-fits-all' for the diocese and that issues like this can be decided on a local level so that the governance structure best fits the local context.

The Ministry Area Toolkits will answer questions like this and will be finished towards the end of December.

Will each church get their own committee?

Again, we don't know yet because we need more discussion on this topic. We hope that we don't need to be too prescriptive on individual church or congregational committees so that the governance structure can best fit the local context.

The Ministry Area Toolkits will answer questions like this and will be finished towards the end of December.