

# **THE ARCHDEACONS' FORUM**

**for the Church of England and the Church in Wales**

## **Resourcing Archdeacons**

### **1. Introduction**

With the varied size and nature of archdeaconries, and the different diocesan approaches, it might be thought impossible to suggest some guidelines for the resourcing of archdeacons. But good practice guidelines have been developed for various aspects of national church and diocesan life, and there is an argument that the same should be done for archdeacons. While such guidelines need to be flexible to allow for the different situations of different archdeaconries, that reality should never be used as an excuse for archdeacons to be poorly resourced or inadequately supported. This paper seeks to suggest such good practice guidelines for resourcing archdeacons in their ministry.

### **2. Housing**

2.1 While there is no standard for an archdeacon's house, the Green Guide recommendations should serve as a minimum. The house needs to be large enough to house the archdeacon's family, (four bedrooms and two reception rooms, with adequate kitchen, bathrooms and toilets) and also provide a study for the archdeacon to work when at home. It also needs to be suitable for entertaining clergy and church officers of the archdeaconry and colleagues.

2.2 Sometimes the house may be provided with the other part of an archdeacon's dual role, so the house is the benefice house or that of a canon residentiary. It is undesirable that any house offered an archdeacon should be below the Green Guide standard; however, it is also important that an archdeacon's place of residence should not be too much larger or dissimilar to that of most beneficed clergy.

### **3. Personal Assistant**

3.1 If an archdeacon is not to be over occupied with basic administrative tasks, it is essential that they should have their own PA who works for them, manages their diary and carries out those administrative tasks. Sometimes this PA may be shared with another archdeacon, or with an area bishop, but it is essential that each PA has time to carry out the necessary functions for their archdeacon.

3.2 A good and able PA may often be able, with experience, to answer certain queries or field certain matters without needing to consult the archdeacon, but this is a matter of personal agreement with each archdeacon.

3.3 Not to provide an archdeacon with this support is seriously to hamper their ministry and impede their role.

#### **4. Office**

4.1 Every archdeacon needs to have an office where their PA is based and from which they can also work. There is no “one size fits all” for this, as circumstances vary across the country, and the geographical size and location of the archdeaconry in relation to the diocesan office may well play a factor. Here are a few comments on the various possible locations

4.2 **The diocesan office.** Many archdeacons’ PAs are based in the diocesan office and their archdeacons also have accommodation there. The advantage of this arrangement is that the archdeacon and their PA is more connected with the rest of the diocesan team, and it can be much easier to sort matters and to network. This is often a very successful arrangement in urban or moderately compact dioceses. It can also sometimes work even in a more widespread rural diocese, where the archdeacon may only visit the office once or twice a week.

4.3 **At the archdeacon’s house.** In largely rural areas, where mileage can be challenging, this may be the best solution. But there are two concerns which must be addressed.

- It is important that the building is suitable. The PA’s office may join onto the archdeacon’s study, but it should have its own entrance, and be provided with its own kitchenette and toilet facilities. It is highly undesirable for an archdeacon’s PA to have to access the kitchen and toilets of the archdeacon’s personal living space.
- This arrangement can lead to an archdeacon’s PA being quite isolated, both from other diocesan personnel, but also personally if the archdeacon and his/her family are absent from the property for most of the working day. There should be an assessment under the lone working policy, and also provision for the PA to meet regularly with other diocesan staff.

4.4 **In an area office.** In larger dioceses with an area system, the area bishop and archdeacon may share an area office where their PAs are also based. Sometimes, other members of the area team may also be based there. This can work very well in terms of co-ordination and communication within the area; it may mean that extra work has to be done to ensure communications between the different areas and the whole diocese are well maintained.

**5. Information technology.** Wherever the archdeacon’s office is located, it is essential that both at home and in the office archdeacons have full access to information technology, with the best possible broadband connection and the ability to access the diocesan intranet, database and all relevant information. This provision should include a printer / photocopier convenient for their use. A suitable smart phone should either be provided by or paid for by the diocese so they can access the system on line wherever they are. They should receive full support from the diocesan IT support service.

## **6. Expenses**

6.1 There is no separate guidance on the expenses for archdeacons. The booklet *Parochial Expenses of the Clergy* may serve as a useful guide, remembering that an archdeacon may be offering more hospitality than an average incumbent. All expenses should be properly claimed every month, and evidence provided where possible of expenses incurred.

6.2 It should be remembered that the archdeacon is answerable to the diocesan bishop for their ministry but it may not be thought practical to ask the diocesan bishop to authorise payment of expenses. If someone else is so authorised, there needs to be a clear understanding that they are carrying out this function on the bishop's behalf and are answerable to the bishop.

6.3 The archdeacon's house is their official base in terms of their ministry (and so attracts an HLC allowance) and all mileage expenses should be claimed with that house as their base.

## **7. Provision of Car**

In many dioceses, it is unusual for a car to be provided for an archdeacon in their ministry. Archdeacons use their own cars and claim the mileage allowance as approved by HMRC. This is often the most economical provision to avoid tax implications for the archdeacon concerned. But in large rural dioceses, where the annual mileage is substantial, a car may be provided under arrangement from a leasing firm. Where this is to be done, it is important to check that this is the more economical provision, and that there will not be adverse tax implications for the archdeacon.

Agreed by the Archdeacons' Forum Executive 21<sup>st</sup> November 2017

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