

**MINISTRY
DISTRICT
HANDBOOK**

**DIOCESE OF WILLOCHRA
2007**

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Prepared by
Dorothy Thorpe
Ministry Development Officer
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The development of our understanding of Ministering Communities in Mission is ongoing. This booklet is an attempt to describe what is and might be as we understand things in this Diocese at this time. Suggestions for inclusion in any revised Guidelines may be made to the Bishop or the Ministry Development Officer.

1. AN OVERVIEW

The Vision: Our aim is that each congregation will be a self-sustaining unit of the Church where the Word is proclaimed, the Sacraments celebrated, the gifts of people are acknowledged, nurtured in the faith, their talents are used, and the love and care experienced by the Christian community extend outwards to the community beyond.

1. The Ministering Communities in Mission way of being the Church is now being adopted in Australia in rural dioceses and in other parts of the world, particularly in remote parts of Canada and USA and parts of New Zealand. The Diocese of Willochra is a leader in this style of ministry in Australia. Other rural dioceses are at various stages of development of Ministering Communities.
2. The thinking about Ministering Communities is based around the ideas of Roland Allen (see Roland Allen **Missionary Methods – St Paul’s or Ours** ISBN: 0-8028-1001-2) which have come into focus again in the last few decades. His views were founded on his experience as a missionary in China over a century ago. Briefly Roland Allen had an unwavering trust in the Holy Spirit indwelling the converts and the churches they belong to. This belief is as relevant today as it was in the formative years of the Church. Allen suggested we need to
 - understand the Church as the Body of Christ (Romans 12, 1 Cor. 12)
 - hand over” the gospels and the creeds to local people and let them be the Church in that place without requiring years of education
 - acknowledge that Baptism is commissioning for ministry and mission
 - recognise the spiritual gifts and the needs of the congregation and call forth those ministries
 - let each congregation control and manage its own affairs without subsidy
 - let the community share the message with unevangelised neighbours
 - ensure Bishop has oversight of each congregation in the role of guardian and teacher of the faith

3. In Willochra there are four **Ministry Districts** whose congregations are at various levels of maturity in the model. In the initial establishment of Ministry Districts in 1997 there was financial pressure to change, but now there is a realization that this is “the emerging Church” for us:
 - ~ **Wakefield:** Clare, Riverton, Auburn, Belvidere, Mintaro, Snowtown, Tothill Creek, Watervale, Balaklava, Goyder, Hamley Bridge, Yacka, Bungaree, Penwortham.
 - ~ **Southern Flinders:** Jamestown, Georgetown, Gladstone, Laura, Melrose, Wirrabara, Wilmington, Orroroo, Peterborough, Terowie, Spalding.
 - ~ **Eyre:** Colton, Elliston, Sheringa, Minnipa, Wudinna, Cummins, Tumby Bay.
 - ~ **Lower Yorke Peninsula:** Yorketown, Edithburgh, Warooka, Minlaton, Stansbury, Port Vincent, Mt Rat, Curramulka.

4. **Total ministry** is encouraged, ie the gifts of everyone in the congregation are acknowledged, developed and used. Licensed Lay Ministers are discerned and acknowledged by the local community and licensed for their various roles: to lead services, to administer the reserved sacrament in a service of Extended Communion, to administer the chalice, to preach, to provide pastoral care, to lead children’s ministry, and to evangelise.

5. **Clergy licensed for local ministry** are called not only personally but also by their communities to ordination. This call is confirmed by the wider Church when they attend the SA Provincial Ministry Advisory Conference. They are licensed to minister in their own congregation and are not peripatetic pastors. Since these people are non-stipendiary, still learning, and often have other jobs, they do not lead all services in their congregation.

6. **District Priests** give leadership in Ministry Districts. They take on the role of “Equipping Pastors”, being there to “equip the saints” in addition to having a sacramental and pastoral role.. As such they sit outside each community to

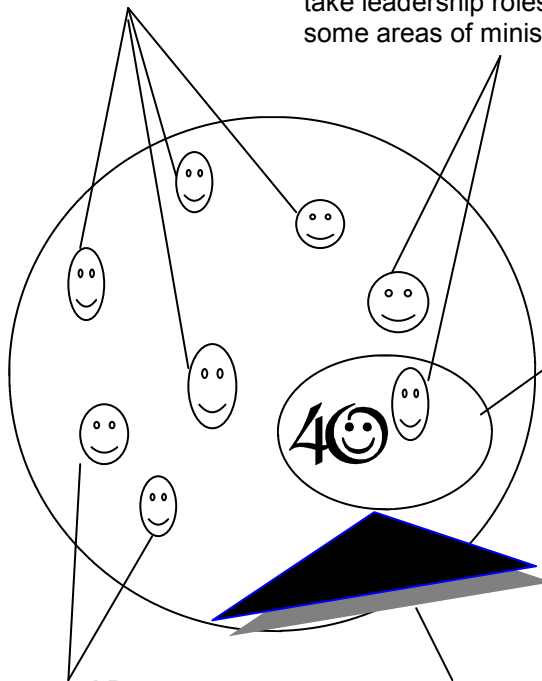
some extent as the people themselves, through Vestries and Church Councils and Worship Teams, make their own decisions about ministry, management, mission. Of course, some congregations are more self-sustaining than others and some resist change from their dependence on the Priest. There is a Ministry District Committee for co-ordination of the shared responsibilities of the congregations in a District. The Ministry District Committee is not some kind of “super Parish Council”. There are regulations governing the committee.

7. The District Priests, and the Ministry Development Officer, share the **Bishop’s episcopate**. The vision is kept clear before the people in the Bishop’s sermons, letters, and in *The Willochran*. The educational ministry in the Diocese reinforces the ministry of all the baptized.
8. The people who belong to Ministering Communities are encouraged to be involved in educational and formational activities. Indeed they need to be **Learning Communities**, discerning and developing the ministry of all those who belong.
9. If a congregation is large enough it may develop **teams** to provide for areas of ministry such as pastoral care, worship, op shop, schools ministry, children’s ministry and so on.
10. **Positive outcomes:**
 - ~ a healthy understanding of the Church as the Body of Christ and that no matter what the size a congregation, it can be the Church
 - ~ greater involvement by lay people in the ministry of the Church
 - ~ deepening discipleship and Christian maturity as people learn formally and informally
 - ~ growing congregations in some places
 - ~ a willingness to look out is beginning to emerge
 - ~ a greater understanding of the identity of the Church and thus a capability to give leadership in ecumenical activity

2. THE IDEAL MINISTERING COMMUNITY IN MISSION

All members take some responsibility for ministry

Licensed Lay Ministers take leadership roles in some areas of ministry



Some congregations develop teams e.g. in pastoral care, children's ministry, worship, outreach and catering.

Priests and Deacons ordained for local ministry represent the priestly and diaconal nature of the local Church

The District Priest has a sacramental pastoral and enabling role in each congregation

In this diocese we are clear that the primary order of ministry is the *laity*, and that the other three orders of ministry are there to provide service and leadership for each Christian community as it seeks to live out its call to discipleship and apostolicity

Bishop Garry Weatherill

in his Presidential Address to Synod, 2007

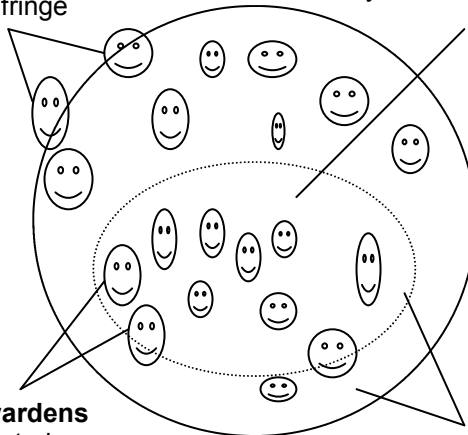
The primary place of decision-making in a Ministry District is the congregation. The Vestry is the whole congregation

Some people will always be on the fringe

A Church Council may be elected

Two wardens are elected

A secretary and a treasurer are elected.



Size of a Ministering Community

Ministering Communities may range in size from a few people to scores of people. The essential thing to understand is that that group of people is the Body of Christ in that place. In that understanding they will have all the gifts necessary for the ministry to which they are called in that place. As their numbers increase then ministry needs and abilities will grow.

Support of Ministering Communities

With the support of the Ministry District Priest and Ministry Development Officer they will be able to develop suitable ministries in worship, pastoral care, education, service and evangelism for that congregation. If a needs assessment is carried out across a Ministry District, and similar needs are discovered in several congregations, then it is appropriate to arrange for joint consultation or education. Education and formation opportunities are available in a wider sense, for example, in a District Trinity Studies group, or at diocesan events organized by the Ministry Development Officer, such as Ministry Weekends and other seminars

The Eucharistic Community

One of the most powerful "marks" of the Anglican way of living out our Christian faith is the importance we place on the sacrament of Holy Communion in our ongoing life and witness. But it would be a mistake to think that having the service of Holy Communion is what constitutes a Eucharistic Community. For too long, many Anglicans have seen the regular attendance at the Eucharist and the reception of the Sacrament as the primary act of their worshipping lives. To put all the emphasis on the private reception of Holy Communion and not to recognise the implications of the Eucharist for every part of our lives is to miss the point of Jesus great gift to us, in commanding that we should "do this in remembrance of me." When we pattern our lives on the life of the Lord Jesus, when we do in our time and place the same things he did in Taking his life as an offering to be given in the service of others Blessing God for all that is

*good and true Breaking the hard shells of our hearts, of our pride, of our sinfulness so that we might become agents of the Kingdom of God Sharing the hope and joy that comes with an intimate relationship with God and with our fellow travellers, then we might begin to talk about ourselves as Eucharistic Communities. A Eucharistic community is not simply a group of people gathered for the Eucharist, rather it is a group of disciples who live out the Eucharistic principle of thanksgiving through the Eucharistic actions of taking, blessing, breaking and sharing. This happens in Church on Sunday, and in the lives of Christian disciples every day. You can see why I am not keen to promote the service of Extended Communion. When there is no Eucharistic Prayer, no Thanksgiving, the central heart of the service is missing and the only action present is the sharing of the Sacrament. It is hard to avoid this becoming a highly privatised view of receiving "my" Holy Communion. Discipleship invites us to repentance, to mission, to loving service, to self offering. (Bishop Garry Weatherill, adapted from his letter in *The Willochran*, August, 2007)*

In a Ministering Community where a celebration of the Eucharist may not be possible every week, the services of Morning and Evening Prayer and A Service of Prayer Praise and Proclamation are encouraged. The Reserved Sacrament may be used in a service of Extended Communion under some circumstances but Morning Prayer should be regarded as the norm when no priest is present. Some congregations find that sharing with the UCA or Lutheran Churches once a month is also appropriate. The New Revised Standard Version is the Bible authorized by the Bishop for public worship

Sustainability

If a church community feels that it can no longer be sustained, then with the assistance of the District Priest the people need to make arrangements for closure and for provision of ministry to those people who do remain in the area. There are options such as traveling to another church, combining with another denomination, particularly with the Uniting Church, or Lutheran Church or establishing a house church group which can be supported by the District Priest.

3. VESTRIES AND CHURCH COUNCILS

Regulations: The Synod regulates the affairs of Ministering Communities and the Ministry Districts. Clauses B1-B25 are provisions relating to Ministry Districts and Clauses C1-C28 apply to both Parishes and Ministry Districts. These are now available on the Diocesan website [www.diowillochra.org.au/Constitution and Regulations](http://www.diowillochra.org.au/Constitution%20and%20Regulations).

The Vestry is a meeting which comprises all the members of the congregation. The vestry is responsible for 'the general direction of the affairs of the Congregation, including the pastoral, educational, evangelistic and missionary work of the Congregation, and also the property in the care of that congregation. If a congregation wishes it may elect a Church Council. The District Priest is not required to attend a Vestry meeting. Clergy licensed for local ministry are members of the vestry.

The Church Council is subject to the Vestry and acts on its behalf. In our Diocese some larger Ministering Communities have Church Councils while smaller congregations have regular vestry meetings. The Regulation is flexible to allow for differences in numbers and preferred way of working. The District Priest is not a member of the Church Council. Clergy licensed for local ministry may be elected to a Church Council but are not members ex-officio.

Powers and duties of Vestries and Church Councils are detailed in the Regulations.

What is important

- All members of the congregation should be involved in decision-making
- The leaders need to encourage the use of the gifts of everyone
- Good communication within the congregation is very important.

Annual General Meeting of the Vestry

Requirements for the AGM are detailed in the Regulations. In preparation for the AGM, the Churchwardens should do the following:

1. Decide on a date for the meeting (no later than the last day of February)
2. Notify the congregation of the date with at least two weeks notice
3. Ensure that people sign the Vestry roll.
4. Prepare an agenda
5. Ensure that the following documents are available and preferably distributed beforehand to vestry members
 - Previous minutes of the Vestry AGM or other meetings
 - District Priest's report
 - Ministry District Committee reports including financial statement
 - Churchwardens report
 - Other reports as felt necessary
 - Audited financial statements of the Church.
 - Audited financial statements of any church groups
 - Budget for the next year
6. Prepare election papers for
 - Two churchwardens
 - Other positions as determined e.g church councillors, secretary, treasurer, and other officers as appropriate.

If the agenda is prepared beforehand and all papers have been read before the meeting, then a vestry meeting should not take very long. An AGM should not be a planning meeting for the coming year. Keep that agenda for another occasion.

Vestry meetings are to be chaired by one of the Church Wardens. If the wardens lack the skills for good chairmanship, then the duties of chairperson of the meeting may be delegated to another person.

4. THE MINISTRY DISTRICT PRIEST

The Ministry District Priest shares with the Bishop in the **oversight** of the congregations in a Ministry District. Usually the District Priest will have tertiary qualifications in theology and ministry and will be experienced in pastoral ministry.

The Ministry District Priest maintains a sacramental and pastoral role in addition to being an enabler of the ministry of others.

He/she will normally preside at the Eucharist in each centre once a month. It is essential that the priest fulfils the normal priestly duties, being welcome among the communities where he/she ministers, yet not being the one leader of each congregation, and not being with them for all services.

He/she will also maintain a pastoral role, while not doing all the pastoral care, or being responsible for all of it in a Ministry District at all times. The Ministry District Priest needs to be available as a priest when the ministry of a priest is requested. So, he/she may be called on by those who maintain regular visiting from the congregation to make a specific visit to the sick, elderly or dying, and to people in distress. He/she may conduct baptisms, weddings and funerals, sometimes even in those congregations where there is a Priest Licensed for Local Ministry.

The Ministry District Priest may be a very active visitor, particularly encouraging and supporting those involved in ministry and encouraging others to recognize the gifts they have for ministry.

In addition, his/her role will be characterized by these attributes:

An **ability to enable**, equip, coach and encourage clergy licensed for local ministry and licensed lay ministers in their roles in their congregations.

A desire to mentor local clergy, working with them as equals in priesthood, acknowledging the particular gifts and experience of life and ministry they bring, yet imparting to them the benefit of the District Priest's education and experience

Listening skills so that the real needs of people can be discerned and responded to appropriately.

Reflection and flexibility. An ability to reflect on the experience of ministry and adapt to changing needs. The Ministry District Priest needs to be tolerant of the ways congregations develop, within the flexibility within Anglicanism.

Teaching skills for a variety of needs. People are encouraged to undertake the Trinity Certificate in Theology and Ministry. The District Priest may mentor a group within a congregation or a group gathered from various congregations in the Ministry District. From time to time, the Ministry District Priest might gather people for seminars or workshops on particular aspects of theology or ministry where he/she feels there is need for instruction.

Awareness of current resources for sharing with lay ministers and local clergy. Resources for use in worship: special services, sermons or sermon alternatives and music particularly are required to maintain inspiring worship. Recommending websites is often helpful.

Encouragement of laity to be involved in the education and formation programs offered by the Diocese and to encourage them to step into new areas of ministry.

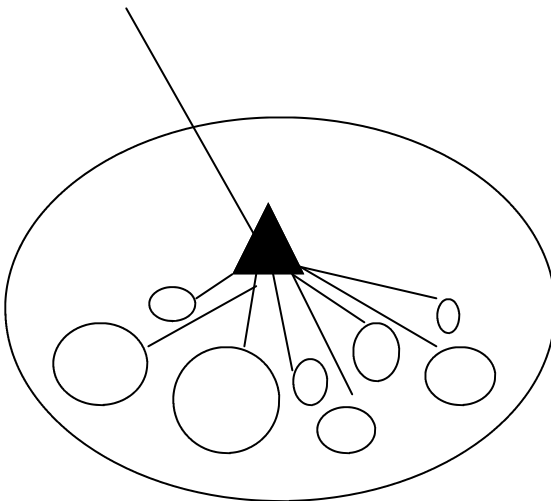
A willingness to love people, relate well to them, and

be prepared to spend time with them in the development of their ministries. He/she may communicate with them sometimes by email and telephone as well as in person

A degree of detachment so there is an ability to **stand outside a community** and not to feel the need to be needed, yet to be part of that community when amongst them. A person who has strong personal needs for affirmation, friendship and attention will not be able to function well in this role.

Accountability: The Ministry District Priest is responsible to the Bishop. In addition he/she will provide a written report to each meeting of the Ministry District Committee.

The Ministry District Priest relates to each Ministering Community as priest, pastor and enabler according to their specific needs, regardless of the size of the congregation.



5. CLERGY LICENSED FOR LOCAL MINISTRY

Priests and deacons ordained for local ministry

- may be men or women who are already involved in ministry in their own congregation
- are at least 23 years of age
- receive no stipend
- are ordained for life
- are licensed for ministry in their own community
- are licensed for three years and may have the licence extended every three years after an evaluation process
- work in a team in a ministering community
- do not have the responsibilities of parish or district priests. The role of clergy licensed for local ministry is separately regulated from professional clergy.
- do not work full-time and are expected to have adequate rest from duties. are entitled to be called “The Reverend...” and may wear clerical dress
- participate in a one year (at least) spiritual formation program (prior to or after ordination)
- are encouraged to engage in theological education appropriate to their abilities and circumstances, although there are no prior educational attainments required
- participate in a two-year post-ordination program and thereafter Gatherings of Local Priests or Local Deacons for further reflection on ministry
- are invited to attend diocesan Clergy Conferences and Retreats and to participate in other continuing education offered by the diocese if circumstances allow
- are encouraged to remain in spiritual direction
- minister under supervision of the Bishop, the Parish or District Priest and the Ministry Development Officer

- may be licensed to officiate at weddings (Priests only)
- are members of the House of Clergy in the Synod
- will be acknowledged as ordained by the whole Church, but, if they move to another diocese, may not be licensed there until that diocese's requirements are satisfied
- need to be called by the local congregation if they move to a different congregation from the one which originally discerned them
- need to be stable members of the community in which they reside
- need to undergo a Police Check and Mandatory Notification Training, and abide by the Safe Practices Guidelines of the Diocese

The priest is the community gatherer, responsible for the sacramental worship of the local church community. The priest may have other gifts as well but will not have all the gifts needed for the ministry of that congregation. The ordained person is just one minister in a ministering community. The priest represents to the community their priestly character which is sacrificial. A sacrificial community is made up of people who offer their lives to God, their worship, their money, their talents and time, and then corporately are submissive to the will of God. Such a community will learn to listen to God through praying together, through breaking open the word of God, through feeding on the Body of Christ in the sacrament and through discerning together what God would have them do as a community in the world.

As a general rule priests in local ministry are expected to preside at the Eucharist once a month, other services being taken by the Ministry District Priest and lay ministry team. Generally they are expected to develop other areas of pastoral ministry but not to take responsibility for leadership of all or most of the ministries of the congregation.

The deacon is concerned with the needs, concerns and hopes of the town and district served by the congregation. He or she brings these to the attention of the Church and gives leadership within the Church so that they can make an appropriate response. He or she may help to train people for ministry and plan for ministry to meet a local need. The deacon's liturgical functions are restricted to reading the Gospel, setting the table and announcing the dismissal. The deacon's involvement in worship is representative of the fact that the whole community is diaconal.

Clergy licensed for local ministry need to work as team members in their ministering communities. They are not to take responsibility away from lay people but to work with them in priestly and diaconal functions in the community.

6. LICENSED LAY MINISTERS

The term Licensed Lay Minister is given to any lay person who is licensed by the Bishop for leadership in a congregation.

He or she may be licensed to one or more functions as listed

- Conduct Divine Worship
- Lead a Service of Extended Communion
- Prepare and preach sermons
- Administer Communion at Worship
- Administer Communion at Home or Hospital
- Youth / Children's Ministry
- Pastoral Care
- Outreach
- Education and formation

according to the needs of the congregation and the gifts of the person. Not all ministry tasks require a licence.

A Licensed Lay Minister is licensed to serve in his/her own congregation. So a person who is licensed to one congregation cannot as a general rule serve in another congregation, even in the same Ministry District.

The Vestry and Parish Priest or Ministry District Priest will commend people to be Licensed Lay Ministers to the Bishop. A person must agree to his or her nomination as a Licensed Lay Minister

All ministers in the Diocese, whether lay or ordained, function by means of the delegation of the Bishop's authority and not by personal or congregational authority. The licence from the Bishop is 'the person in the pew's' guarantee that ministry is performed in the pattern of the apostle's teaching and according to Church Order.

The Licence is valid for a specific period. They are renewed each triennium of Synod, so if a licence is granted within that period it is valid only until the beginning of the triennial synod. This means that a person need not feel that they are 'trapped' indefinitely in the role of Licensed Lay Minister. The congregation needs to understand that they cannot take for granted that a person will con-

tinue as a Licensed Lay Minister. Some people may feel possessive about the title or role, but it is only logical that in a Ministering Community, others may grow into the position and it will be right for those who have held the position for some time to draw back so that others may serve.

In fact, one of the 'dangers' that Ministering Communities need to avoid is the problem of lay leadership which becomes entrenched, dominant, and set in patterns which are not life-giving to a congregation. With the concept of total ministry in mind, good lay leaders will always be aware of the possibility of talents and gifts in others, and the need to call forth those gifts, to nurture people in their development, and to give others opportunities for service. Reticent people may sit back while more outgoing people will do it for them unless you actively encourage. It is a good idea for lay leaders to make sure they have an 'apprentice' by their side.

Before a person is licensed to preach, he or she needs to submit four written sermons and two taped sermons to the Bishop or to the Ministry Development Officer for assessment. Ongoing submission of sermons to the Ministry Development Officer for comment is recommended. Preachers may also seek evaluative feedback from their congregations. A form for this is available in the booklet **Preaching in Ministering Communities in the Diocese of Willochra**, available from the MDO or the website.

Lay Ministers licensed for children's and youth ministry need to undergo a Police check and should undertake training as mandated notifiers of child abuse. Contact the registrar re police checks and the Ministry Development Officer re training for mandatory reporting.

All Licensed Lay Ministers are encouraged to attend the Ministry Weekends offered by the Education Committee twice a year. They are also encouraged to do study for the Trinity Certificate in Theology and Ministry (also known as Lichfield studies). Theological study by extension is also available through Coolamon College (Adelaide) or St Mark's College (Canberra).

7. THE MINISTRY DISTRICT COMMITTEE

Regulation 5 Parishes and Ministry Districts regulates for the Formation, Powers and Duties of a Ministry District Committee. (pp 176-177 of the Diocesan Regulations). It exists 'to enable efficiency and co-operation in areas of mutual concern'.

It does not have the powers and duties of a Parish Council. It has a limited role. It is unwise therefore to presume that the District is a large parish council and try to arrange things like fund-raising or enforce programs on congregations which will each have their own needs.

The Chair of the Ministry District Committee is selected from among the representatives of the congregations The Chair is chair of the Committee not of the Ministry District itself and is responsible for the following:

- Calling the Committee meetings—at least four a year
- Preparing the agenda for a meeting within the boundaries of the duties as outlined in the Regulations
- Chairing the meetings
- Helping to maintain the principles on which ministering communities are based i.e
 - ~ The congregation as the primary place of decision-making
 - ~ The equality of all ministering communities in the District, despite differences in size, location, wealth
 - ~ Fairness in allocation of financial responsibilities, synod representation, and in sharing the District Priest's time and attention,
 - ~ Respect, mutuality and co-operation
- Dealing with matters from the District Priest's report as applicable within the powers and duties of the Ministry District Committee.

- Ensuring that a written report and audited financial statements are available before the annual general meetings of congregations each year.

The Secretary of the Ministry District Committee will keep a record of the minutes of the District Committee meetings and deal with any correspondence.

The Treasurer of the Ministry District Committee needs:

- to report at least quarterly on the finances of the committee
- to prepare a budget for the Ministry District Committee based on mutually agreed allocation of shared costs
- to oversee the payment of the stipend for clergy, and any other ministry costs.
- to oversee payment of contributions to the Diocese.
- to approve and arrange for all expenditure and outgoings from the Ministry District accounts

Most congregations hold reserves of capital. Sometimes this comes from the frugal saving of the past and present generations. Sometimes from bequests. This can result in inequalities between congregations with income from interest and those which rely on the stewardship of present members. Capital should be preserved wherever possible and used in exceptional circumstances. However, with good stewardship, the income from reserves can be used once provision for capital growth has been made. If possible, it should not be used for normal running costs such as payment of stipend and assessments. Nevertheless, when a congregation is small in number and income from capital is large, then that congregation may be called to extraordinary generosity in helping to augment the ministry of the district.

If a Ministry District cannot manage its own finances, the management of Ministry District accounts can be contracted to Church Office for an annual fee. In that case, the Treasurer needs to approve any cheques drawn on the account.

The Ministry District Priest is a non-voting member of the Ministry District Committee, reporting on his/her activities in relation to worship, education, pastoral care , lay ministry development and support and so on. His/her ultimate responsibility is to the Bishop.

Committee membership is designed to give equitable power to each congregation in the District. It is essential, therefore, that each congregation is represented at every meeting of the Committee.

Synod representation should be equitably distributed between congregations as much as possible . Synod members and the Ministry District Council should ensure that synod matters and decisions are communicated to congregations.

8. PROPERTY

Each congregation is responsible for its own property. That means it pays its own maintenance and development costs and is responsible for all running costs.

The Ministry District is responsible for any property held in common. In particular this applies to the maintenance and development costs of the Rectory. The distribution of responsibility for these costs should be done equitably depending on the size of the congregation, its assets and income, and the ability to pay.

Notice boards should be maintained in excellent condition. Since times of church services and other notices are often changed, it is appropriate to make provision for typed sheets or chalk notices which can be protected from the rain. Telephone numbers of appropriate local contacts in addition to the number of the District Priest should be readily available. If the notice board is unattended and has out of date information it is a sign of a closed and inactive community.

Similarly, grounds should be maintained well. One of the mission responsibilities of the Church is to care for the earth and to be good stewards of creation. Our church grounds are signs that we take this responsibility seriously.

No property will be closed or disposed of against the wishes of the local church community.

When church property is sold the funds are generally not available for day to day running of the parish/district, but must be treated as a resource for ministry which should at least maintain its value. This is because such property is a legacy from the faith and work of those who have gone before us in the church and is not simply a mine for funding recurrent expenditure. Current expenses are the responsibility of the current generation.

The wishes of the parish/district always carry the most weight in Diocesan Council's deliberations. Like many farmers, the diocese and its parishes are often asset rich (in terms of property) but cash poor (when faced with the need for new fences or property improvements). But just as a farmer will soon go broke if he sells off bits of the farm in order to meet day to day expenses, so too the church would soon lose its ability to minister if we sold off property to meet day to day costs.

Should a congregation wish to sell property, it needs to contact the Archdeacon of their District and prepare an application for Diocesan Council to consider.